The “Great Church Crisis,” Public Life, and National Identity in late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain

Author: Bethany Tanis

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Boston College

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Department of History

THE “GREAT CHURCH CRISIS,” PUBLIC LIFE, AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN LATE-VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN BRITAIN

a dissertation

by

BETHANY TANIS

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This dissertation explores the social, cultural, and political effects of the “Great Church Crisis,” a conflict between the Protestant and Anglo-Catholic (or Ritualist) parties within the Church of England occurring between 1898 and 1906. Through a series of case studies, including an examination of the role of religious controversy in *fin-de-siècle* Parliamentary politics, it shows that religious belief and practice were more important in turn-of-the-century Britain than has been appreciated. The argument that the onset of secularization in Britain as defined by both a decline in religious attendance and personal belief can be pushed back until at least the 1920s or 1930s is not new. Yet, the insight that religious belief and practice remained a constituent part of late-Victorian and Edwardian national identity and public life has thus far failed to penetrate political, social, and cultural histories of the period. This dissertation uses the Great Church Crisis to explore the interaction between religious belief and political and social behavior, not with the intent of reducing religion to an expression of political and social stimuli, but with the goal of illuminating the ways politics, culture, and social thought functioned as bearers of religious concerns.

The intense anti-Catholicism unleashed by the Church Crisis triggered debate about British national identity, Erastianism, and the nature of the church-state relationship. Since the Reformation, Erastians – supporters of full state control of the church – and proponents of a more independent church had argued over how to define the
proper relationship between the national church and state. This dissertation demonstrates that the Church Crisis represents a crucial period in the history of church-state relations because the eventual Anglo-Catholic victory ended Parliamentary attempts to control the church’s theology and practice and, therefore, sounded the death knell of political Erastianism. In short, tensions between Protestant and Catholics reached a high water mark during the years of the Great Church Crisis. These tensions catalyzed both a temporary revival of Erastianism and its ultimate descent into irrelevance.
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O’Toole, who provided needed commentary on Roman Catholic history and American comparisons; and my advisor Peter Weiler who never missed a stray comma in a footnote, corrected more dangling modifiers than I care to admit, and generally ensured that I eventually produced a credible piece of scholarship. *Soli Deo Gloria*
Introduction

In 1898 Liberal MP Samuel Smith declared that one issue “LAY MORE AT THE ROOT OF THE NATION’S WELFARE THAN ALL THE OTHER QUESTIONS THAT WERE BEING AGITATED.”\(^1\) This issue, rocking the nation at the century’s end was not such obvious disputes as the massive engineering strike the year before or the Fashoda incident that was just unfolding, or even the expanding suffrage movement. Rather, the problem was the introduction of incense into services of the Church of England. The conflict over sweet-smelling smoke was a symptom of what contemporaries called the “Great Church Crisis,” a conflict between the Protestant and Ritualist (self-described “Catholic”) parties within the Church of England that lasted roughly between 1898 and 1906.\(^*\) During this period increasing numbers of Britons embraced Ritualism and even converted to Roman Catholicism. Consequent fears that Catholicism – whether Anglo or Roman – was undermining the “Protestant” heritage of the established church led to a moral panic.

What constituted the Church Crisis? Three developments constructed a sense of crisis about the growth of Anglo-Catholicism within the Church of England and the growing assertiveness of Roman Catholicism from outside: (1) the 1897 publication of Walter Walsh’s *Secret History of the Oxford Movement*; (2) the 1898 anti-Ritualist protests of John Kensit; and (3) Liberal leader William Harcourt’s 1898 Parliamentary speeches against Ritualism. The sense of crisis remained acute until 1906 when a Royal

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\(^1\) Samuel Smith, *What Ritualists Teach the Young: An Address Delivered at Buckley, 4th July, 1898 on Ritualism and Elementary Education* (London: Chas. J. Thynne, c. 1898), 45. Capital letters in original.

\(^*\) See the Appendix for an explanation of my use of terms such as Protestant, Evangelical, Ritualist, and Anglo-Catholic. In general, I have tried to use ecclesiastical terminology as it was used at the time.
Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline issued its report, ending serious attempts to impose liturgical conformity by calling for compromise.

- **The Church Crisis in Historical Context**

  The roots of what contemporaries called the “Great Church Crisis” lay in the influential Oxford or Tractarian Movement. Tractarian leader John Henry Newman proposed that the Oxford Movement started on July 14, 1833, with John Keble’s “National Apostasy” sermon attacking Parliament’s plan to disestablish the Anglican Church in Ireland. Oxford fellows Newman and Edward B. Pusey joined Keble in his anti-Erastian crusade, arguing that the state had no right to interfere with the spiritual matters of the Church of England. Newman, Pusey, and Keble, along with others, spread their ideas through the publication of ninety *Tracts For Our Times* that outlined an innovative theological program generally following the High Church tradition, which included a renewed emphasis on the visible church, belief in apostolic succession, the model of the early church, the sacrament of Holy Eucharist, and liturgical aesthetics. In 1841, Newman argued in the controversial *Tract 90* that the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England did not conflict with Roman Catholic doctrine. Protestant fears about the Romanizing influence of Tractarianism seemed confirmed in 1845 when Newman converted to Roman Catholicism, although Pusey and Keble remained within the Anglican fold. Following the conversions of Newman in 1845 and of Henry Edward Manning in 1850, Protestants generally saw Ritualism, or Anglo-Catholicism, as crypto-

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3 *Tract 90* was controversial because by arguing that Anglican doctrine was compatible with Roman Catholic doctrine, Newman implicitly denied the Protestantism of the Church of England.
Romanism. This fear was further exacerbated by the “Papal Aggression” of 1850.⁴ By the late 1850s the connection between Romanism and Ritualism was unquestioned by most Protestants.

To Protestants the most obvious sign of “Romanist” influence within the Church of England was the increasing amount of Catholic ritual performed during services, such as the Elevation of the Host. During the mid-nineteenth century the Ritualist English Church Union (ECU)⁵ highlighted six points of Catholicity: the Eastward position, Eucharistic vestments, a mixed chalice, altar lights, unleavened bread, and the use of incense.⁶

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⁴ Protestants referred to the restoration of the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy in England and Wales as the “Papal Aggression.” In 1850 Pope Pius IX issued a papal brief restoring the hierarchy. Nicholas Wiseman became the new Roman Catholic archbishop of Westminster and responded to his appointment by issuing an intemperate pastoral letter beginning “from the Flaminian Gate of Rome.” The triumphant language of both Pius’s papal brief and Wiseman’s pastoral infuriated Protestants, including Queen Victoria and Prime Minister John Russell.

⁵ The English Church Union was formed in 1860 when a group of Ritualists transformed the English Protection Society into the ECU with the intention of forming a group capable of defending Ritualists against Protestant accusations. ECU was closely associated with the controversial Society of the Holy Cross (Societa Sanctae Crucis), which had been founded in 1855 by Father Charles Lowder as a society of celibate Anglo-Catholic priests.

⁶ See figure 1.
The introduction of these “points” into Anglican worship often created conflict between supporters of Ritualism and Protestantism, especially since the civil legality of each point was questionable at best. While the introduction of Catholic rituals actually triggered riots and violence in some cases (a rash of fist-fights over the use of vestments broke out in 1856), most concerned Protestants chose to combat Ritualism through the law. For example, in 1853 the outraged evangelical Anglicans of St. Paul’s, Knightsbridge began...
prosecutions against their Ritualist priest. The Evangelicals sought to have the new high altar, cross, candlesticks, and colored paraments removed in order to save the church from Roman infiltration. In 1865, Protestant Anglicans founded the Church Association in order to fight Ritualism in the Church of England through (usually) legal means.

The Church Association had its hands full but sprung into legal action with gusto, initiating a series of high-publicity Ritualist cases. In 1867 the Association offered £50,000 to help aggrieved parishioners sue their Ritualist priests. Parishioners of St Alban the Martyr in Holborn gladly took up the offer, suing Rev. Alexander H. Mackonochie for the use of altar candles, kneeling during the consecration, elevating the Eucharistic elements, using a mixed chalice, and using incense. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council found Mackonochie guilty on all points.

Despite these early successes, the 1870s brought mixed results for the Church Association. In a celebrated 1871 court case, the Privy Council found Rev. John Purchas, the Ritualist vicar of St. James in Brighton, guilty of several ecclesiastical violations such as the use of altar candles. However, in a stunning defeat for the Church Association, the Privy Council also ruled that Anglican ministers could and should wear a surplice according to the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer. In an effort to prevent further Ritualist legal victories, the Church Association started to lobby for new anti-Ritualist legislation. In 1872 Parliament passed the Act of Uniformity [of Worship] Amendment Act, and in 1874 Archbishop Tait and Benjamin Disraeli pushed the Public Worship

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10 Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 149.
Regulation Act (PWRA) through both Houses. These acts officially outlawed Anglo-Catholic Ritualist practices within the Church of England.

The PWRA initially appeared to be a popular measure, having passed Parliament and supported by a 150,000 signature petition. Disraeli and most Conservatives supported the PWRA, while the Liberal Party split over the issue. Gladstone fought the bill, although many of his allies, such as William Harcourt and W. E. Forster, supported it. Disraeli declared that the goal of the bill was “to put down ritualism” and destroy “the Mass in masquerade.” After the bill passed the House of Commons on August 5, John Walter, MP for Berkshire, stated that “Popery” was “not a fit religion for Englishmen.” According to Lord Portsmouth, “the State was the bulwark of Protestantism, of free thought, and of religious liberty,” and by stifling ritualism, Britons guaranteed their liberty.

Much to the chagrin of the Church Association, however, the PWRA soon proved to be a massive failure. The act outlawed actions such as mixing the chalice and kneeling during the consecration. But well-organized Ritualists continued their ceremonies in an act of civil disobedience that led to the arrest of five priests. Sending often elderly clergymen to prison endeared neither the Church Association nor the PWRA to the public.

Indeed, the tide of public opinion clearly turned by 1888, when the Association made the

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11 Scotsman Archibald Campbell Tait (1811-1882) became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1868. A broad churchman, Tait never approved of the Oxford Movement, issuing a formal protest against Tract 90 in 1841. Before becoming an Archbishop, Tait served as the headmaster of Rugby (succeeding Thomas Arnold in 1841), dean of Carlisle (1849), and bishop of London (1856). In addition to his involvement in the Ritualist crises of the 1860s and 1870, Tait became involved in the controversy regarding the use of the Athanasian Creed in 1872.
13 Bentley, Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain, 68.
14 Qtd. in ibid., 68-69.
15 Qtd. in ibid., 75.
16 Eddows’s Shrewsbury Journal (24 October 1874), 2, qtd. in Bentley, Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain, 75-76.
profoundly unpopular decision to prosecute Bishop Edward King, whom all parties considered saintly. Public outcry against the spectacle of an aged bishop in the dock caused anti-Ritualist Protestants and the Church Association to reconsider their tactics.

Meanwhile, Anglican Ritualism continued to develop in the direction of contemporaneous Roman Catholicism. By the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century the six points had become passé and advanced Ritualists began insisting on prayers for the dead, the Reservation of the Sacrament, the service of Benediction, the use of the rosary, and other Marian devotions – in short, all of Roman Catholic devotional practice without the inconvenience of a pope. As one anonymous author wrote,

One by one innovations came in due course,
High Altars, bright brasses, great candles in force,
Uplifting of arms most decidedly high,
Turning backs on the people as if they were shy.
…………………………………………………..
There were chasubles white with the sign of the yoke,
Albs, copes, capes, birettas, and volumes of smoke.18

Needless to say, Protestants – both evangelical Anglicans and Nonconformists – continued to be outraged by the open display of Catholicism within what they considered to be a Protestant church body. Moreover, the apparent unwillingness of the Anglican bishops to prosecute Ritualists for violating the PWRA through the performance of unlawful ritual caused further outrage.

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17 The Privy Council acquitted King, the first bishop since the Reformation to wear a miter, of most charges. See Reed, Glorious Battle, 254-255; Hylson-Smith, Evangelicals in the Church of England, 1734-1984, 131; and Martin Wellings, Evangelicals Embattled: Responses of Evangelicals in the Church of England to Ritualism, Darwinism, and Theological Liberalism, 1890-1930 (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003), 102.

Within this context in 1898 three developments constructed a sense of crisis among Protestants about the growth of Anglo-Catholicism within the Church of England and the growing assertiveness of Roman Catholicism from outside.\footnote{See “Letters to the ‘Times’ (June-December, 1898) by the Right Honble. Sir William Harcourt, M.P.” \textit{Edinburgh Review} 189:387 (January, 1899): 1-23.} First, in 1897 author Walter Walsh published \textit{The Secret History of the Oxford Movement}. Walsh claimed to have uncovered the Catholic conspiracy behind the Oxford Movement and its contemporary incarnation, Ritualism. Walsh invited readers to join the warfare against
superstition and priestcraft, as they enjoyed a voyeuristic exposé of lecherous Catholic secret societies bent on reuniting the Church of England with Rome.\textsuperscript{20} According to Walsh, “the great object of the Ritualistic Movement from its very birth in 1833, was the Corporate reunion with the Church of Rome.”\textsuperscript{21} The book proved to be wildly popular, selling over 32,000 copies by 1899 and going through five editions in sixteen months.\textsuperscript{22} Walsh’s influence is evident in the speeches and letters of both powerful politicians like William Harcourt and ordinary Britons.\textsuperscript{23} The Church Association published a popular (sixth) edition at the “request of friends of the Protestant cause” so that the poor could afford and read the \textit{Secret History} before the next General Election.\textsuperscript{24} In fact, largely on the strength of the \textit{Secret History}’s sales, Walsh became a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.\textsuperscript{25}

\textit{The Secret History} had an immediate impact, both fueling and coinciding with John Kensit’s anti-Ritualism campaign, launched in January of 1898 at St. Ethelburga’s,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[21] Ibid., 182.
\item[23] For example, see Frederick Wood, \textit{The Church of England and Ritualism} (Bradford: William Byles and Sons, Printers, 1898), 5. Wood told his audience that “Those of us who have read Mr. Walsh’s book on the Secret History of the Oxford Movement, know that there exist in Church several semi-secret societies for the purpose of teaching the very doctrines and practising the ceremonies lately condemned by the Primate as illegal, and contrary to the teaching of the Church.” See also, See also A. D. Pringle(?) to Harcourt, 6 January 1899, MS Harcourt, dep. 240, ff. 64-5. Pringle wrote to congratulate Harcourt on his anti-Ritualist stance and mentioned having read \textit{The Secret History}. Others, like William Thwaites, the vicar of Whittington, Norfolk, used language, such as “honeycombed” obviously derived from the \textit{Secret History}. See William Thwaites, letter to the editor, \textit{English Churchman}, 23 June 1898, p. 404. See also J. C., “The Tractarian Movement,” \textit{Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine} 123 (February 1900): 157. While speaking to the Protestant Alliance in 1898 Liberal MP Samuel Smith also acknowledged his debt to Walsh. See T. A. Denny, S. W. Brett, G. H. Hewitt, C. F. Ward, Samuel Smith, W. C. Minifie, C. H. Wainwright, W. Cuff, and John Kensit, \textit{The Protestant Alliance Verbatim Report of Speeches Delivered at the Great Demonstration held in the Queen’s Hall, Langham Place on Tuesday Evening, May 3rd, 1898} (London: Rowland J. Haynes, F.I.P.S., 1898), 12-13. See also \textit{Parliamentary Debates}, 8 February 1899, 66: 251. Smith argued before the House of Commons that the Church of England was “honeycombed” with secret societies.
\end{footnotes}
Bishopsgate. Kensitite riots broke out throughout the spring of 1898. Although most Britons, Protestant and Catholic alike, saw Kensit as a radical, he nonetheless had the backing of the respectable and powerful Church Association, which was chaired by Col. Alexander Cobham and had ties to members of Parliament such as Samuel Smith, William Harcourt, W. D. Cruddas, and J. W. Mellor. In fact, before commencing on his protest campaign in January, Kensit sent a letter to the council of the Church Association “asking the assistance of the Council in the legal expenses which might be involved in the attempt which he was determined to make in clearing the church from its idols and illegal ritual.” The council agreed to “favorably entertain” Kensit’s request. Later, the council agreed to pay for a faculty suit for the removal of St. Ethelburgha’s tabernacle on Kensit’s behalf and to pay for Kensit’s defense in police court proceedings.

Kensit had first come to prominence as a publisher of Protestant materials and as the founder of the Protestant Truth Society (1889), an organization for the promotion of Protestantism within the Church of England. In the spring and summer of 1898 he organized the Wickcliffe Preachers as a traveling band of anti-Catholic lecturers. Nevertheless, Kensit’s fame and influence were based upon his protests. His basic strategy was to attend Ritualist church services and cause a disturbance at a crucial moment, such as the Elevation of the Host or the adoration of a crucifix. J. Guinness

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26 W. D. Cruddas was the millionaire financial director of Armstrong, Mitchell and Company. A Conservative MP for Newcastle-on-Tyne, Cruddas also served as a Church Association Vice President and as the president of the National Protestant Church Union. He donated the enormous sum of £10,000 toward the Protestant educational work occurring at Wycliffe and Ridley Halls. See Church Times, 26 January 1900, p. 87. J. W. Mellor was a Liberal MP for Grantham from 1885 until he lost the seat in 1886. In 1886 he became a Gladstonian Liberal when the party split over Home Rule. He was the Gladstonian Liberal MP for the Sowerby division of Yorkshire from 1895 until 1904, when he accepted chiltern hundreds.
28 Ibid.
29 Church Association, Council Minutes, 18 April and 21 April 1898, C. S. 11, Lambeth Palace Library.
Rogers, a well-known Congregationalist minister who frequently wrote on topics related to the Liberal Party, argued that Kensit’s fame disabused secularists of the idea that its [Protestantism’s] force has materially abated. To those who have been living under this pleasant illusion the success of Mr. Kensit’s agitation must have been an unpleasant awakening. He has simply appealed to the strong Protestant instincts of the people, and without any apparent influence in his favour, in fact despite much which must have told against him, he has achieved a very conspicuous success.30

The popularity of Kensit disappointed an increasing number of elite secularists who had hoped that England was growing less religiously “fanatical.”31 Although most Protestants disapproved of Kensit’s militant tactics, he did attract some emulators, such as Rev. R. C. Fillingham, the vicar of Hexton, who also disturbed a service during the Elevation of the Host.32 Such disturbances were not uncommon. According to historian Robert Rodes,

> One rector dealt with a protest from a member of his congregation by inviting the protester to meet him outside after the service and settle the matter man to man. The rector, who had been middleweight champion of the Royal Navy before taking orders, proceeded to knock the protester down, pick him up, shake his hand, and go ahead with his liturgical program.33

Despite appearances, Kensit and Fillingham did not view their protests and violence as a solution to the Ritualist problem in and of itself. Rather, they aimed to force the bishops to “do their duty and at once stop lawbreaking at all hazard.”34

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31 See Erik Sidenvall, After Anti-Catholicism?: John Henry Newman and Protestant Britain, 1845-c. 1890 (New York: T & T Clark International, 2005) for a recent discussion of the growth of the virtue of tolerance in Britain, especially regarding tolerance of Catholicism.
32 Wellings, Evangelicals Embattled, 109. See also Robert E. Rodes, Jr., Law and Modernization in the Church of England: Charles II to the Welfare State (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 315. Fillingham also applied to the Church Association for help, but was refused. Church Association, Council Minutes, 1 December 1898 and 15 December 1898, C. S. 11, Lambeth Palace Library. See also Church Association, Council Minutes, 21 February 1901, C. S. 12, Lambeth Palace Library.
33 Rodes, Law and Modernization in the Church of England, 314.
34 John Kensit, “Rioting in the Church,” Times, 18 April 1900, p. 5, col. G.
Liberal Parliamentary leader Sir William Harcourt added more fuel to the fire lit by Walsh and Kensit in 1898 through his speeches during the Benefice Bill debates on June 16 and 21. Harcourt then went on to reach a much larger audience through his letters to The Times. The series, called “The Mutiny of the Priests,” began on July 16 in the midst of increasing public concern about the growth of Ritualism. The editors of both secular and church periodicals responded to the increased interest in Ritualism with numerous articles relating to the Church Crisis. The Protestant newspaper The Record even began a weekly column in July called “Lawlessness in the Church,” which was designed to make the public aware of churches practicing illegal rituals.

In the October 1899 edition of Nineteenth Century, Lady Cornelia Wimborne attempted to enlighten her readers regarding certain illegal Palm Sunday rituals and wound up sparking a bizarre controversy. Wimborne claimed that the Ritualist church of St. Alban’s, Holborn had used a live donkey in their 1899 Palm Sunday procession. But unfortunately for Wimborne, St. Alban’s priests vigorously denied the charge and despite the best efforts of the Church Association to get to the bottom of the case (they hired a private detective), no evidence for the existence of the donkey was ever produced. Harcourt’s equally controversial series of letters ended on February 4, 1899,

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36 Paul Nicholls, Khaki and the Confessional: A Study of a Religious Issue at the 1900 General Election in England (Melbourne: History Department, University of Melbourne, 2000), 32.

37 Wellings, Evangelicals Embattled, 96. The column was eventually renamed “The Crisis in the Church” and continued until 1902.


and he then collected them into a book entitled *Lawlessness in the National Church*. Among the three of them, Walsh, Kensit, and Harcourt managed to arouse public outrage over the growth of Anglo and Roman Catholicism and succeeded in keeping the danger of Catholicism before the public eye for several years to come. In 1898 Alfred Barry, the turn-of-the-century rector of St. James’s, Piccadilly and former Bishop of Sydney, could claim that “the word ‘Ritualism’ is on every man’s mouth, and the public mind is greatly excited, and not a little perplexed by the ‘Ritualistic Crisis.’”

A ruling from Lambeth Palace kept the Church Crisis at the forefront of the public mind in the summer of 1899, following the outbreak of the Boer War. In a joint opinion, the Archbishop of Canterbury (Frederick Temple) and the Archbishop of York (William Dalrymple Maclagan) announced that processional lights and the ceremonial use of incense were illegal within the Church of England. On May 1, 1900 the Archbishops issued two more opinions stating that any form of the reservation of the sacrament was also illegal within the Church of England. The rulings prompted resolutions promising disobedience from the Anglo-Catholic English Church Union, an action which served to

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41 Alfred Barry, “What is Ritualism?” *Contemporary Review* 74 (November 1898): 643. The *Contemporary Review’s* founders meant for it to be an Anglican *Fortnightly Review*. Under the editorship of Henry Alford (1866-70), the magazine promoted ecumenical and scholarly articles, despite Alford’s personal dislike of Ritualism.
further enrage the Protestants. Additionally in 1900, Walter Walsh published his follow-up to *The Secret History*, called *The Romeward Movement of the Church of England*. As both Evangelical Anglicans and Nonconformists began calling for new legislation against the growth of so-called Catholic worship within the national church, they forged a pan-Protestant anti-Ritualist political alliance.

Moreover, during the first few years of the twentieth century anti-Ritualist Protestants and Catholics increasingly debated the proper relationship between the English government and the Church of England. In 1901 the death of Queen Victoria led to fierce controversy as Roman and Anglo-Catholics fought to have the Monarch’s Declaration against Transubstantiation abolished. Following Queen Anne’s ascension to the throne in 1702, all British monarchs had been required to swear that “the sacrifice of the mass, as … now used in the Church of Rome, [is] superstitious and idolatrous” in order to prevent a Roman Catholic from becoming sovereign. Irish MPs found the monarch’s declarations against Catholicism both offensive and unnecessary. Lord Braye and John Redmond both sponsored bills calling for the abolition of the declaration. Nevertheless, despite the declaration’s potential for angering the Irish, Protestants argued that the declaration was necessary to maintain Protestant succession in the face of the Romanist infiltration of the Church of England. According to prominent historian and genealogist J. Horace Round, due to the advanced Anglo-Catholicism of Lord Halifax

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42 Following Queen Anne’s ascension to the throne in 1702, all British monarchs were required to swear that “the sacrifice of the mass, as … now used in the Church of Rome, [is] superstitious and idolatrous” in order to prevent a Roman Catholic from becoming sovereign.


and others, the transubstantiation clause could not be sacrificed, since without it an Anglo-Catholic could ascend to the throne.  

1902 witnessed the Education Bill controversy. The Government’s bill offered state support to schools controlled by the Church of England. Many Nonconformists responded to the passage of the act by forming a Passive Resistance League and refusing to pay taxes that would be used to fund Anglican schools. While historians have written about this event in the context of the disestablishment campaign and of increased Nonconformist concern for social issues around the turn of the century, few have analyzed opposition to the 1902 Education Act in relation to the Ritualist controversy in the Church of England. In fact, in large part, Nonconformists refused to support Anglican schools because they believed that Anglo-Catholics had captured all the schools and were teaching their pupils Roman doctrines such as the sacrifice of the mass and auricular confession.  

In response, throughout 1903 Protestant MPs such as Austin Taylor, William Harcourt, and Charles McArthur struggled to pass a Church Discipline Bill. In this context Walter Walsh published another anti-Catholic exposé entitled *The Jesuits in Great Britain* in 1903. W. E. Bowen’s 1904 book *Ritualism in the Church of England* and the pamphlets on the topic that he sent to MPs galvanized enough support to force House of Commons leader Arthur Balfour to appoint a Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline. The Commission heard evidence throughout 1905 and delivered its final report in 1906. By legitimating greater elasticity in worship, this report

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46 Chapter 7 deals with this topic in much greater detail.
effectively ended serious Protestant attempts to impose liturgical conformity within the Church of England: Practices “plainly significant of teaching repugnant to the doctrine of the Church of England and certainly illegal, should be promptly made to cease” by the bishops and the courts, and “the existing law relating to the conduct of Divine Service and to the ornaments and fitting of churches” should be amended to give “greater elasticity … and wider scope for the exercise of a regulative authority.”49 The advice of the report, endorsed by influential Evangelicals including Commission member Francis Jeune, turned more moderate Protestants away from political anti-Ritualism. The pan-Protestant anti-Ritualist alliance received another shattering blow later that year when the Liberal government’s Education Bill of 1906 caused many Anglican and Nonconformist Protestants to part ways. Although the report had in theory called for compromise between Anglo-Catholic and Protestant concerns, by failing to grant the courts any new powers to address ecclesiastical law-breaking, allowing for “greater elasticity” in church services, and – along with the Education Bill of 1906 – fracturing the broad anti-Ritualist political alliance, the report had in reality granted victory to Anglo-Catholicism within the Church of England.

According to historian Jonathan Parry, “The agitation against ritualism and its supposedly Catholicising influence on the Church was at its height in the early 1870s.”50 While the 1870s certainly were a time of intense anti-Ritualist agitation, Parry’s conclusion ignores the equally, if not more, intense period from roughly 1898 until 1906. It is natural for historians to see their period of specialization as especially unique, but

Parry’s oversight more likely derives from the tacit assumption among historians that the late-Victorian and early-Edwardian period constituted something of a “dead-zone” in British religious history. This dissertation will demonstrate that assumption is far from the truth.

- **Thesis**

This dissertation makes two main arguments. First, I argue that religious belief and practice were much more important in the late-Victorian and Edwardian British public sphere than has been appreciated. Religion remained a vital aspect of British life and culture. Indeed, whereas many historians have argued that religious concerns in this period were actually bearers of political, social, or cultural concerns, I argue that religion itself was of fundamental importance and that politics and culture could actually be driven by and function as bearers of religious concerns.\(^{51}\) Despite increased acknowledgement that religious concerns remained fundamental around the turn of the century, historians have failed to recognize that this period witnessed a high point in Protestant-Catholic antagonism that could often shape of politics and culture.

Indeed, Britons’ concern for what are now seen as arcane theological disputes reflected deeply-rooted and fundamentally religious worldviews. These worldviews attached cosmic significance to both seemingly secular phenomena like the Boer War or the rise of socialism and to ecclesiastical controversies. Britain, as the most powerful nation in the world, was seen as the site of an eschatological and largely invisible battle between Protestantism and Catholicism. Britons conceived of the nation’s past and destiny as intimately bound up with Protestantism (or Catholicism, in the minority opinion) and therefore believed that the spiritual battle between God/Protestantism and

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\(^{51}\) Professor Susan Pedersen at Columbia University suggested this phrasing.
Satan/Catholicism (or vice-versa for some) affected all areas of life, from high politics to culture. The battle lines became visible in innovations such as the use of Eucharistic vestments or lit altar candles, which both proponents and detractors likened to battle flags representing their respective allegiances in the battle for the nation’s soul. In this context, the debates that made up the Church Crisis took on the utmost importance, because the Crisis itself was seen as the visible manifestation of an immense war affecting every other facet of British life and national destiny.

The Great Church Crisis led to a temporary political revival of Erastianism as Protestants sought to stamp out Catholicism within the established church through new Parliamentary legislation. Not surprisingly, Anglo-Catholics, who valued ecclesiastical autonomy, opposed this attempt. In fact, the intense anti-Catholicism unleashed by the Church Crisis triggered an important political debate about Erastianism and the nature of the British church-state relationship. This debate served to make church policy politically salient around the turn of the century. My second argument is that the Church Crisis represents a crucial period in the history of church-state relations because the eventual Anglo-Catholic victory ended Parliamentary attempts to control the church’s theology and practice and, therefore, sounded the death knell of political Erastianism.52

In short, tensions between Protestant and Catholics reached a high water mark during the years of the Great Church Crisis (1898-1906). These tensions catalyzed both a temporary revival of Erastianism and its ultimate descent into irrelevance.

52 Parliament’s rejection of the Revised Prayer book in 1927-8 occurred as a result of the debates of this period, the new Prayer Book itself having been produced by the Church following the request of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline’s report, which had been issued in 1906. Parliament’s rejection of the revision served to re-confirm the conclusions reached by most following the Church Crisis: that the Church needed a substantial degree of self-government apart from Parliament. See conclusion for more on this topic. See Owen Chadwick, “The Link Between Church and State,” *The Church and State*, Donald Reeves, ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984), 39-40; and Hylson-Smith, *Evangelicals in the Church of England, 1734-1984*, 124-125, 227-240.
Historiography

Historians writing between the 1950s and 1970s generally focused on religion’s declining influence in Britain under the rubric of secularization. However, the secularization thesis has lately come under assault from numerous scholars, and today this argument has essentially been replaced in British historiography by what can be called a “privatization thesis,” which argues that although religion did not disappear, it did retreat into the private sphere. Beginning in the mid-1970s and continuing through the 1990s historians cast doubt on the secularization thesis through a series of local case studies. 1982 proved to be a watershed moment when Jeffrey Cox challenged the thesis on empirical grounds, arguing that the thesis itself was ahistorical. Throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s, historians influenced by the linguistic turn have used discourse analysis to challenge the secularization thesis.

In spite of these historiographical shifts, an implicit assumption that Britons increasingly privatized religion after 1870, and thereby removed it from the larger political concerns of the nation, has led historians of Britain to marginalize religion when

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considering the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods. For example, in the *Penguin Social History of Britain* (1995), José Harris emphasized the “increasing vagueness of private conviction and a growing reticence about all reference to religion in public and professional life.” Similarly, ten years later in the *New Oxford History of England* (2004), G. R. Searle argued that Christianity “was becoming privatized – turned into a kind of Sunday hobby, drained of public or political significance.” Accordingly, Searle’s discussion of nationalism, imperialism, social upheaval, and gender confusion accords little if any role to religion. In fact, Searle’s index lists only nineteen pages out of 823 under the heading of “religion,” and only eleven pages under the entry “Church of England.” This percentage is similar to that of Norman McCord’s earlier contribution to Oxford’s “Short History of the World” series, which devotes only fourteen of over five hundred pages to religion. Because Searle, Harris, and others assume that religion had become politically and socially irrelevant by the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods, they have left the religious dimension of national affairs unexplored.

Recently, philosopher Charles Taylor has helpfully defined “secularity” in three senses. First, secularity is the emptying of public spaces of reference to God. Second, secularity is a falling off of religious belief and practice. Third, secularity is the transition “from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the

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Many revisionist historians have argued that late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain cannot rightly be seen as a society marked by secularism in the second sense. Most Britons continued to consider themselves Christian or religious in some sense even if their religious practice was becoming almost entirely privatized. I hope, however, to disprove the assumption that fin-de-siècle British Christianity was rapidly retreating from the public sphere. Religion, especially as illustrated in the Protestant versus Catholic tension that marked the Great Church Crisis, remained very much a public – and often times political – concern during this time.

In the past several years, many historians have begun to examine how culture and religion affected political decisions in Victorian Britain. Those affected by what historiographers have termed the “new” political history have studied political systems as an expression of culture and ideas. Because new political historians see politics as an outgrowth of ideas as opposed to the inevitable result of certain class structures, religion and religious beliefs potentially have an important role to play in political history.

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62 Ib. 3. Taylor is interested in exploring the history of this third sense of secularity. José Casanova also defines secularization (as opposed to “secularity”) in three senses. First, secularization is “the decline of religious beliefs and practices in modern societies.” Second, secularization is “the privatization of religion.” Third, secularization is “the differentiation of the secular spheres.” Casanova’s first definition corresponds with Taylor’s second definition, and Casanova’s second definition roughly corresponds with Taylor’s first definition. See José Casanova, “Rethinking Secularization: A Global Comparative Perspective,” The Hedgehog Review 8, no. 1-2 (Spring/Summer 2006): 7. Italics in the original.

63 See the works of Hugh McLeod and Callum Brown, for example. See also Graeme Smith, A Short History of Secularism (London: I. B. Tauris, 2008), 160-182.


66 Other political and social historians, such as Jon Lawrence, have recently argued that politicians create constituencies as opposed to constituencies creating political parties. This approach lends itself to highlighting the beliefs and values of the politicians who sought to mold their own political bases. See also
Therefore, many historians of Victorian politics, such as Colin Matthew, David Bebbington, Jonathan Parry, and J. P. Ellens have stressed the political significance of religious convictions.⁶⁷ As Arthur Burns has noted, “…religion has re-emerged as central to accounts of both high and popular politics, the evolution of society theory and policy, and the construction of national, collective, and individual identity.”⁶⁸ But, significantly, each of the above-mentioned historians focus on William Gladstone, a figure whose effusive religiosity was outside of the political norm even in Victorian times, or the Liberal Party with its strongly Nonconformist base. There remains a need for studies that relate religious belief and controversy to later-Victorian and Edwardian politics and culture and move beyond the well-studied Nonconformist “base” of the Liberal Party.

Throughout its long history, the British church-state relationship has been marked by debate regarding the confessional nature of the English state and the autonomy of the Church of England relative to the state. Important moments in the history of that relationship include the unraveling of J. C. D. Clark’s “confessional state” following the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828, Catholic Emancipation in 1829, and the

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constitutional changes that followed the Reform Bill of 1832 and further disentangled the Church of England from non-religious functions.  The late 1860s witnessed the triumph of Nonconformist agitation against compulsory church rates and the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, which Arthur Burns has called “the most striking manifestation of the loss of Anglican authority through association with the State.” These cases, and the Oxbridge debates of the 1870s, challenged the identification of the state as exclusively Anglican and opened the possibility of Anglicanism functioning independently of the state.

While the confessional, and even Protestant, nature of the English state was being debated during the nineteenth century, developments within the Church of England itself encouraged ecclesiastical independence. Although the Church of England gradually lost its authority and power vis-à-vis its relationship with the state during the nineteenth century, authority within the church itself was being reconstituted as a result of what Arthur Burns has termed the “diocesan revival.” Parliamentary legislation passed during the 1830s served to empower the bishops and revived the clerical offices of rural dean and suffragan bishop. Moreover, for the small but vocal number of lay adherents

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69 Arthur Burns, “The Authority of the Church,” Liberty and Authority in Victorian Britain, Peter Mandler, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 193. For example, the new local agencies created during the 1830s to manage highways, sanitation, and other utilities without reference to the parish left the parish as merely an ecclesiastical structure. See Rodes, Law and Modernization in the Church of England, 113.

70 See Ellens, Religious Routes to Gladstonian Liberalism, 263.


72 The 1870s also witnessed the slow process of opening the ancient universities to non-Anglicans. The 1871 Universities Tests Act theoretically opened faculty positions at Oxbridge to Nonconformists, but since college fellowships remained limited to Anglican clergymen, it was not until the Oxford and Cambridge Act of 1877 that Nonconformists were in reality able to take faculty positions. See Rodes, Law and Modernization in the Church of England, 123, 132-3.


74 Burns, “The Authority of the Church,” 182-3. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners Act of 1840, for example, gave the local bishop all the patronage attached to individual canonries. See Rodes, Law and Modernization in the Church of England, 183.
to the Catholic principles of the Oxford Movement, the importance of church authority increased dramatically.\textsuperscript{75} Anglo-Catholics were eager to put themselves under the authority of the church and disliked the fact that as an established church, the Church of England was itself under the authority of Parliament, a traditionally Protestant body. Within this context, institutions of self-government within the Church of England began to develop.\textsuperscript{76}

However, increased criticism of the established church-state relationship also catalyzed the late-Victorian revival of Protestant Erastianism. 1903, the year that the two Convocations merged to form the Representative Church Council, was also the year Parliament came closest to passing a Church Discipline Bill. While some moved forward with plans for Anglican self-government, others sought to tie the church more firmly to the state. The Church Crisis played an important part in the history of the church-state relationship as it resulted in the defeat of the Erastians who had fought against the development of church self-government and sought to keep the Church of England firmly under the control of Parliament.

Few, if any, historians have seen the turn-of-the-century as a major moment in the history of church-state relations. Most accounts chronicle the fortunes of the Victorian church, and then pick up again following the upheaval of World War I. Among the older school of high-political historians, Edward Norman, in his \textit{Church and Society in} 

\textsuperscript{75} Burns, “The Authority of the Church,” 181, 188, 192.
\textsuperscript{76} The ecclesiastical governing bodies of the two provinces of the Church of England revived during the mid-nineteenth century. In 1852 the Canterbury Convocation revived itself by beginning to appoint committees to examine various matters and write reports. The York Convocation followed suit, reviving in 1861. See Rodes, \textit{Law and Modernization in the Church of England}, 336. See also Burns, “The Authority of the Church.” Burns does not mention the revival of Erastianism as a corollary of the emergence of Anglo-Catholicism and ends his analysis with the 1870s. For an examination of the Bangorian Controversy, which had led Parliament to suppress the Convocation of the Clergy in 1721, see Andrew Starkie, \textit{The Church of England and the Bangorian Controversy, 1716-1721} (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007).
England (1976), devotes a chapter to the Victorian relationship between church and state and then skips to a largely thematic chapter addressing the “Christian Social Ideal” between the years 1900 and 1920. Similarly, Stewart Brown’s Providence and Empire: Religion, Politics and Society in Britain and Ireland, 1815-1914 (2009) sees the mid-century as the key moment in the waning of the church-state connection and Ritualist controversy and the period between 1875 and 1914 as defined by the development of a new Christian social conscience and religious diversity.

As a result of such chronologies, the church-state relationship around the turn of the twentieth century is barely discussed. According to eminent church historian Adrian Hastings, MPs became increasingly less interested in church issues during the early-Edwardian years. “There had been 217 church-related bills presented to parliament between 1880 and 1913. Of these 33 were passed, 1 rejected and 183 dropped. Of the latter, 162 were never discussed at all.” Hastings takes this as evidence of Parliamentary apathy towards the church, but actually a better reading is that Parliamentarians were increasingly affected by “Catholic” arguments about church independence and were simply opposed to legislating on church matters. This was a sea-change from the heyday of Protestant Whig Erastianism during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century, when Parliament had busied itself with the minutiae of church governance.

The consequence of the silence of historians like Norman and the conclusions of historians like Hastings has been that more recent historians like J. P. Parry and Stephen

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77 Norman, Church and Society in England.
Taylor are able to write that “… there were few successful parliamentary attempts between 1880 and 1914 to challenge the Church’s major privileges. … And, after the failure of the Public Worship Regulation Act [1874] became apparent, governments tried to ignore occasionally intense sectional pressure to discipline ritualists further.”\textsuperscript{80}

Actually, as we shall see, the period between 1898 and 1906 witnessed many attempts to challenge the church’s autonomy, and, although the government did try to ignore the efforts of Harcourt and others, the actions of the leader of the Liberal Party can hardly be called “sectional.” Despite this, the fact that historians generally see the turn of the twentieth century as a dead period in the history of church-state relations is illustrated by the fact that J. P. Parry and Stephen Taylor’s recent edited collection entitled \textit{Parliament and the Church, 1529-1960} (2000) does not includes any chapters addressing the period between 1880 and 1914.

A handful of historians, however, have chronicled the years between 1880 and 1914. Robert Rodes in particular has noted that “the last serious effort to coerce imposition of a uniform liturgy ran its course during the opening years of this [the twentieth] century. While Kensit and his colleagues were at work in the back pews, Sir William Harcourt and his colleagues were at work in Parliament, introducing various draconian measures, some of which came uncomfortably close to being enacted.”\textsuperscript{81}

However, Rodes does not note the significance of this fact, namely that the failure of Harcourt and his colleagues to pass anti-Ritualist legislation in the context of the Church Crisis marked the end of Parliamentary attempts to govern internal church affairs.


\textsuperscript{81} Rodes, \textit{Law and Modernization in the Church of England}, 315. Rodes also sees High Church – Erastian tension as a continual theme in the Church–State relationship from medieval to modern times. See page 364.
Although full self-government for the Church of England was not achieved until the mid-twentieth century, the writing was already on the wall as early as 1906.

G. I. T. Machin has also extensively addressed the relationship between the Church of England and the state in his work *Politics and the Church in Great Britain, 1869-1921* (1987). Machin chronicled the decline of ecclesiastical concerns in politics between the years 1869 and 1921, attributing the church’s increasing lack of political relevance, in part, to declining membership. Although Machin discusses the Church Crisis in detail, he focuses on the failure of the Church Discipline Bills as evidence of the dwindling political power of Protestantism and Nonconformity in particular in the face of an ascendant ecumenicalism and religious apathy. Significantly, Machin seems to see the Church Crisis in Parliament as a conflict between religious anti-Ritualists and secular politicians who were uninterested in the whole matter. My dissertation, in contrast, argues that the Church Crisis was not a defeat of “religion,” but rather a victory for one type of religion and conception of the church-state relationship over another type.

J. P. Parry and Stephen Taylor have noted that “the histories of the Church of England and of parliament are inextricably linked.” The “legislative legacy of the Reformation was very ambiguous,” leaving room for many different interpretations of the church-state relationship. Unfortunately, later interpretations have tended to marginalize the crucial late-Victorian and early-Edwardian years and, as a result, ignore the impact of the Church Crisis upon both the church and Parliamentary politics. This dissertation will argue that the years of the Church Crisis between 1898 and 1906 ought

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82 Machin, *Politics and the Church of Great Britain, 1869-1921*, vii, 324.
83 Ibid., 325. Machin also argues that the advance of democracy meant an influx of working-class voters who were more concerned with class than ecclesiastical politics.
85 Ibid., 1.
to be accorded the study and significance attached to earlier periods such as 1828-1832 and 1868-9.

- **Methodology**

  Methodologically, whereas most histories of fin-de-siècle British religion consist of case studies of a single diocese or region and examine primarily ecclesiastical sources,\(^8^6\) I analyze the role of religion in British society through an examination of several topics and the use of non-ecclesiastical sources such as Parliamentary debates, secular periodicals, novels, and letters. Although some of my sources, such as the Harcourt and Balfour Papers, are not unstudied, I will be reading them differently by focusing on their religious language and articulation of a political response to the Great Church Crisis. The neglect of the role of religion in fin-de-siècle British politics and society has resulted from historians focusing too exclusively on ecclesiastical sources like diocesan records. It is not surprising that worried parishioners would bemoan the declining influence of religion. When secular sources are examined, however, the active role of religious controversies and values becomes apparent, as the Church Crisis demonstrates. Additionally, although there is a great deal of quantitative data available in church records, I will be focusing primarily on qualitative sources. As Graeme Smith has recently argued in *A Short History of Secularism* (2008) statistics can be problematic when used to study or pin down something as ephemeral as religious belief and practice.\(^8^7\)

- **Chapter Outline**

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\(^8^6\) See, for example, Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline* (1996); and Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark* (1999).

This dissertation is organized into two main parts. In the first part, Chapters 1-5 establish the resonance of religious issues surrounding the Great Church Crisis at the turn of the century in order to show that religion remained the driving factor behind many aspects of turn-of-the-century culture, social views, and political ideologies. “Religion” did not so often function as a bearer of repressed social or cultural concerns as social or cultural concerns functioned as bearers of more fundamental religious concerns.

Chapter 1, “An Old Religion for a New Britain,” explores the growing appeal of Anglo and Roman Catholicism. It was the shocking growth of Anglo-Catholicism within the established church and Roman Catholicism outside of it that triggered the Church Crisis in the first place. By the end of the nineteenth century an increasing number of Britons turned to non-Protestant forms of religion – primarily Catholicism – as the best way to make sense of the tumultuous “modern” world. Embracing Catholicism, in a sense, allowed Britons to “have their cake and eat it too,” since Catholicism could be construed as both essentially modern and as providing a firm sense of authority and order.

Chapter 2, “Never Trust a Clergyman in Black: British Anti-Catholicism during the Great Church Crisis,” considers the reaction to the Catholic revival in the nature and appeal of anti-Catholic Protestantism. Since most Britons traditionally linked Protestantism and the nation, the seeming expansion of Catholicism appeared increasingly threatening to both soul and state. Anglo-Catholic Ritualists especially became an enemy within, accused of ruining the nation by destroying its religious and moral foundation. Although convert Catholics often saw themselves as both modern and progressive, Protestants retorted that Catholicism remained a retrogressive religion. Only Protestantism could ensure the continued progress of the British Empire; Catholicism
would lead to national degeneration. The almost paranoid fear of Catholicism on the part of many fin-de-siècle Britons, from respected Liberal politician Sir William Harcourt to anti-Ritualist campaigner John Kensit, indicates the continued importance of Protestantism as a component of British national identity.

Chapter 3, “Protestant Paranoia and Catholic Conspiracies: Protestant and Catholic Perspectives on the Second Anglo-Boer War,” examines the way the Boer War was seen by Britons through the lens of the Church Crisis. While all Britons surely saw the war as a major event, many Protestants and Catholics saw the war as especially significant. For them it was not merely a secular conflict; it was spiritual warfare breaking out into human history. Britons saw the Boer War, like other major fin-de-siècle occurrences, from a religious perspective and interpreted it in light of the Great Church Crisis. The Boer War, then, was interpreted through a confessional lens and contributed to the further politicization of religious questions.

Religious concerns touched not only imperial issues, but also domestic ideologies and politics. Chapter 4, “The Mass and the Masses’: Christian Socialism, The Labour Movement, and the Church Crisis,” examines the how the Church Crisis and religious worldviews altered the perception of some Britons toward socialism. Despite the fact that British Christian Socialists came from all backgrounds, from Nonconformist to Roman Catholic, the movement became especially associated with Anglo-Catholic Ritualism. In order to explore the perception that Christian Socialism was a Ritualist movement, and the fact that many prominent Anglo-Catholics were in fact at least sympathetic to socialism, this chapter examines the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century rise and eventual fall of the first socialist organization in Great Britain, Stewart D.
Headlam’s Guild of St. Matthew. The chapter also briefly examines the impact of Christian Socialism on the Labour Movement and the hostility of some of the Independent Labour Party’s founders, including Keir Hardie and J. Bruce Glasier to both Ritualism and Roman Catholicism, which they associated with the upper-class. I conclude that denominational identification and the hostility between Protestantism and Catholicism, as seen in the Church Crisis, was one factor that affected Britons’ attitudes towards socialism.

Turning from politics to literature and popular culture, an examination of publication figures and bestseller lists demonstrates that most Britons were less interested in the secularism exhibited in works by authors such as Samuel Butler than later scholars have been. In fact, religion and religious controversies like the Church Crisis played a key role in many of the period’s bestsellers. Chapter 5, “Conniving Jesuits and Captive Nuns: Fin-de-siècle Popular Protestant and Catholic Literature,” explores the role of popular literature as a bearer of religious concerns by examining the works of bestselling authors Emily Sarah Holt, Joseph Hocking, and Guy Thorne.88 It argues that the popular works of both Protestant and Catholic authors demonstrated the existence of widespread anxiety among ordinary people over the Great Church Crisis and related questions of religious and national identity. Thus, the conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism did not take place only in abstruse theological journals poured over by intellectuals and divines. It also occurred between the covers of spine-tingling potboilers read insatiably throughout the nation.

The second part of this dissertation turns to high Parliamentary politics with special attention to the admittedly well-studied figures of Sir William Harcourt and

88 “Guy Thorne” was a pseudonym used by Cyril Arthur Edward Ranger Gull.
Arthur Balfour. Chapters 6 and 7 position the years of the Church Crisis as a significant period in the history of the church-state relationship in Britain. **Chapter 6, “William Harcourt’s Protestant Erastianism: Church and State, 1898-1900,”** looks at the continuing importance of religion in Parliamentary politics through now largely-forgotten events associated with the Church Crisis between the years 1898 and the General Election of 1900. **Chapter 7, “Arthur Balfour and the Triumph of Ecclesiastical Independence, 1900-1906,”** continues the story begun in Chapter 6 by examining the aftermath of the General Election until the release of the Royal Commission of Ecclesiastical Discipline’s Report and another General Election in 1906. Both chapters emphasize how the consideration of religion, and especially the events of the Church Crisis, alters the received images of William Harcourt and Arthur Balfour.

The conclusion argues that by moving religion from the margins of analysis we are able to alter the commonly received image of the turn of the twentieth century as a time of increasingly secular concerns and privatized religion. In reality, religious concerns, especially as related to the fin-de-siècle revival of Catholicism and Protestant reaction, informed public debate on topics such as Parliamentary politics, imperialism and foreign policy, socialism and the labor movement, and literature. The anti-Erastians who succeeded in keeping the church free from Parliamentary legislation during these years sought not the removal of the church from the public sphere, but rather its separation from the state so that it could function independently within its own sphere. The Church Crisis should also be seen in the context of the continental religious conflicts surrounding the nation-building projects of the 1870s. I argue that Britain was not an exception to late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century religio-political conflict. The
Church Crisis of 1898-1906 offers an alternative version of fin-de-siècle Britain, putting it back into the larger context of European nation-states built upon religious conflicts. In her essay “What is Religious History Now?”, Olwen Hufton writes that

As we look forward further into the twenty-first century the political history of our pluralist societies looks to be much concerned with the religious. Moreover, historians who are usually children of their times in the questions they set themselves, will doubtless continue to process of dissolving the old boundaries of historical enquiry so as to integrate religion as a category of analysis.89

I hope that by examining the way religious beliefs held during the years of the Great Church Crisis influenced the thoughts and actions of Britons of all types, this dissertation will be a small step in the direction indicated by Hufton.

CHAPTER 1
An Old Religion for a New Britain

The Downside school magazine, The Raven celebrated Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897 by crowing that

Those who heard the hearty cheers that welcomed her from all sides on Jubilee Day will realise how grateful her subjects are for the many benefits they have received during her long and glorious reign…. There is indeed no one in Her Majesty’s mighty Empire – upon which the sun never sets – who, honestly thinking over those sixty years of reign, does not feel his heart glow with thankful admiration.¹

The Downside writer wrote as an insider to Britishness and as a happy subject of a great imperial nation. Yet something here is incongruous. Downside was (and is) a Roman Catholic Benedictine public school. Throughout most of the history of Great Britain as a nation, the Roman Catholic has represented the quintessential outsider, against whom Britons defined their nationality.² Yet in 1897 at least some Roman Catholics were able to see themselves as insiders without any apparent sense of contradiction. What had happened by the turn-of-the-century that allowed some to see Roman Catholicism as a religion acceptable, or even desirable, for Britons?

During the mid-Victorian period most Britons saw Roman Catholicism as the enemy of progress, the implacable opponent of modernity, and by the early-twentieth century their opinion had not changed. Rev. J. Broadhurst Nichols spoke for many fin-de-siècle Britons when he wrote that

…a return of Roman Catholic ascendancy [in Great Britain] would mean the loss of the liberties which are our glory, the suppression of the forces

¹ The Raven, 22 October 1897, p. 85.
which make and maintain greatness, and the decay of the nation as a leader in the councils and progress of the world.\(^3\)

Yet, something evidently had changed by the turn of the twentieth century because Nichols was concerned with the resurgence of both Anglo and Roman Catholicism in Britain. In fact, the late-Victorian period saw a wave of British conversions to Catholicism. Shockingly, for Protestants like Nichols, many of these converts saw Catholicism, not Protestantism, as the religion best suited for a modern Britain.

Despite the belief of Protestants that Catholicism was a benighted religion and growing unease among the Roman Catholic hierarchy about the relationship between the Church and modernity, an increasing number of Britons saw Catholicism as both preeminently compatible with and a mitigation of the worst aspects of modernity. They argued that higher criticism and science demonstrated the truth of Catholicism. Whereas Biblical criticism seemed to have undermined the *sola scriptura* foundation of Protestantism, Catholicism’s external sources of authority – tradition and the magisterium – remained unscathed. Catholic apologists argued that the theory of biological evolution supported the doctrine of the historical development of dogma. Moreover, political progressives argued that Catholic incarnational theology supported liberal causes, while the international nature of Catholicism encouraged cosmopolitanism and tolerance. Meanwhile, authors and writers associated with the *avant-garde* aesthetic movement found themselves disproportionately attracted to the beauty of Catholic ritual. Finally, the organic and communal nature of Catholicism seemed to counter the most destructive

aspects of modern individualism while the Church’s centralized authority and uniform practice provided a bulwark against individualistic anarchy.

To many Britons, Catholicism retained the best aspects of modernity including scientific and social progress, while blunting the destructive tendencies of radical individualism. This chapter describes the fin-de-siècle resurgence of Catholicism by examining the ideological connections between Catholicism and science, progressive culture, and authority. I argue that during the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods it was often the seeming modernity of Catholicism that attracted numerous Britons. In light of this, a more nuanced view of the relationship between Catholicism and modernity in fin-de-siècle Britain is necessary. Importantly, the drastic growth of both Roman and Anglo-Catholicism during the late-nineteenth century precipitated a Protestant reaction. Although a vocal and influential minority came to embrace Catholicism, most Britons remained staunchly Protestant. Contemporaries referred to the consequent clash between Anglo-Catholics and their Roman Catholic allies and Protestants as the Great Church Crisis.

- **The Growth of Catholicism**

The feeling of Protestants that the number of Catholics in England was increasing was not mistaken. The number of adherents to both Roman and Anglo-Catholicism rapidly increased around the turn of the twentieth century. While there were only around 900,000 Roman Catholics in England in 1851, there were around 1,357,000 by 1891, 1,793,000 by 1913, and 2,813,244 by 1931.4 The number of Roman Catholic priests in

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England also rose from 392 in 1771, to 826 in 1851, 1,551 in 1871, 1,979 in 1881, 2,604 in 1891, and to 3,298 in 1901. The number of Roman Catholic churches rose from 597 in 1851 to 947 in 1871, 1,175 in 1881, 1,387 in 1891, 1,536 in 1901, and 1,845 in 1913. In fact, the Roman Catholic Church had a higher rate of growth than any other Christian denomination during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Since Anglo-Catholicism comprised a rather nebulous party within the institutional Church of England, it is more difficult to ascertain the number of its adherents. Nevertheless, it is clear that the number of Ritualists – who began to be called Anglo-Catholics after the turn-of-the-century – started to grow dramatically from the 1870s. One way to measure the number of devoted Anglo-Catholics is through the membership of the English Church Union (ECU), which admitted both lay and clerical members. The ECU rapidly became the most important Ritualist organization within the

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Church of England, and sociologist W. S. F. Pickering has noted that “the membership of the English Church Union is one of the best indicators of the strength of Anglo-Catholicism.”

Founded in 1860 to protect high-church interests within Anglicanism, the membership of the ECU went from 203 at the beginning of 1861, to around 2,300 in 1865, around 7,900 in 1870, around 13,900 in 1876, around 30,000 in 1890, around 39,000 in 1901, and around 40,000 in 1905.

![ECU Membership by Year](image)

Obviously, not all or even most self-described Anglo-Catholics were members of the ECU, but, nevertheless, the explosive growth of the Church Union gives an indication of the growing number of Anglo-Catholics.

It is also possible to measure the growing number of Ritualist churches through the various guidebooks published by organizations such as the ECU and the Protestant

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Church Association. The ECU’s popular *Tourist’s Church Guide* listed only 2,581 Anglican churches as “Catholic” (Catholicity being measured by adherence to the six points) in 1882. By 1901 that number had risen to 8,689. The Church Association’s *Ritualist Clergy List*, which gave names of bishops who wore mitres, members of the major Anglo-Catholic societies (ECU, Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament [CBS], Society of the Holy Cross [SSC], Guild of All Souls, and Associates of the Society of St. John the Evangelist), clergymen who practiced the six points, and clergymen who had converted to “Romanism,” offers a detailed look at turn-of-the-century churchmanship, although it was biased against Catholicism. In 1900, for example, there were around 4,000 clerical members of the ECU, around 1,800 clerical members of the CBS, around 400 clerical members of the SSC, and around 900 clerical members of the Guild of All Souls.

By the early-twentieth century, the Church Association argued that the number of Ritualist priests was shockingly high. In the 1902 edition of the *List* the Church Association counted 9,600 “high” priests in 1901, but only 8,852 of these were active, and only 4,015 were members of any of the major Anglo-Catholic societies. Out of the

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4,015, only 2,945 were parish priests in England and only 1,992 were incumbents. The total number of Anglican priests in 1901 came to 19,458, including 12,881 incumbants and 6,577 curates. Therefore, according to the List, 3 in 10 priests were “high.” Yet, the Church Association still listed 8,689 or about 6 out of every 10 parish churches as “high.” According to historian G. I. T. Machin, the number of Ritualist churches in England went from probably fewer than 200 in 1875 to over 2,000 by 1904. Regardless of how one measures, the number of both Roman and Anglo-Catholics in twentieth-century England was rising.

While the nineteenth and twentieth century increase in the Catholic population of Great Britain can be mostly explained by Irish migration, it was the middle and upper-class Protestant conversions that caused staunch Protestants a great deal of concern around the turn of the twentieth century. Although only about one thousand Anglicans formally converted to Roman Catholicism between 1833 and 1933, they were a vocal and influential minority. Numerous factors drew Britons to both Anglo and Roman varieties of Catholicism, although monetary or social gain was rarely one of them. In fact,

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14 Ibid., 388.
16 Probably the most thorough examination of the practices of Ritualist churches was conducted between 1904 and 1906 by the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline (RCED). The Commission’s report offers a detailed look at worship life in early twentieth-century Anglo-Catholic parishes. The final report of the RECD examined 687 services in 559 churches. Out of these 559 churches, 142 used the Confiteor, 143 read the Last Gospel (John 1:1-14), 439 used a mixed chalice, 279 used wafers, 249 used a lavabo, 438 employed a priest who hid the manual acts, 298 employed a priest who made the sign of the cross, 212 used sacring bells, 99 used ceremonial incense, 79 used portable lights, 308 kept two lights on the altar, 172 used more than two lights, 19 had holy water stoups, 138 had stations of the cross, 114 held non-communicating celebrations of the Eucharist, and 336 employed a priest who genuflected. The data collected by the commissioners shows widespread and increasingly advanced Ritualism, especially in urban areas such as London. See *Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline*. vol. 17 (1906), Lambeth Palace Library. See also *Daily News*, 3 July 1906, encl. in *Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline*. vol. 24 (1906), Lambeth Palace Library.
conversion often resulted in the loss of social status (especially if the conversion was to Roman Catholicism) and the loss of monetary security if the convert was an Anglican priest. Converts also faced censure from friends and family. Roman Catholic convert and honorary secretary of the Catholic Truth Society James Britten recalled that after his conversion Protestants broke into his desk, stole his private letters, began intercepting his mail, attempted to prevent him from attending Mass, and defaced a picture of the crucifixion. Louise Dunbar wrote that shortly after her conversion she was walking with a Protestant friend named Mrs. Marsden and

Mrs. Marsden asked, “But you are not a Roman Catholic?” “Indeed I am,” I replied. “I have been one for six months.” She edged a little away from me and said, with suppressed agitation: “Oh! I am sorry.” (I might at least have joined some such society as the Black Hand or the Suicide Club!) …I was conscious that poor Mrs. Marsden was suffering from a sort of internal collapse at my announcement, and I was glad when I could relieve her of my presence, poor dear! Given such complications, what was the appeal of Anglo, or even Roman, Catholicism?

- **The Appeal of Catholicism: Biblical Higher Criticism and Science**

Reasons given by converts for their conversion to Roman Catholicism often dealt with the discoveries of modern textual criticism and science. Converts saw the nineteenth century as a materialistic age dominated by scientists who scorned religion. To many, it seemed that modern scientific advances had torn down the foundation of Protestantism, but left Roman Catholicism unscathed. Moreover, Catholics argued that the *sola Scriptura* foundation of Protestant churches had been eroded by higher Biblical

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criticism, whereas Rome had emerged unaffected since it had other sources of authority, such as tradition and the magisterium, through which to interpret Scriptures.  

According to J. M. Lagrange, a member of Pope Leo XIII’s Biblical Commission, Catholic doctrines were in “agreement with sound historical method,” while “modern criticism, so far from disturbing the Church’s authority, has rather set forth in a much clearer light the closeness of the bond that united Holy Scripture and the Church.” In one article, prominent writer W. H. Mallock argued that higher Biblical criticism had destroyed the doctrinal foundations of every church except the Roman Catholic Church. Rome remained standing because, unlike the Protestant churches, its doctrine was founded on the principle “of its own corporate, living, and continuous infallibility.” While the doctrinal foundation of the Reformed churches – the literal meaning of the Bible – was destroyed by scholarship, the Roman Church’s sources of authority remained unaffected. For Mallock, if a person was going to have a religion, the only logical choice in the modern world was Roman Catholicism.

Anglo-Catholics were also quick to embrace many of the results of modern Biblical criticism. Unlike Protestant Evangelicals, who accepted the Bible alone as their sole doctrinal norm, Anglo-Catholics accepted the Bible as interpreted by the Church and occasionally also a separate body of ecclesiastical oral tradition as their doctrinal foundations. From an Anglo-Catholic perspective, the doctrine of Biblical infallibility

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22 Higher criticism or higher biblical criticism developed in Germany during the early-nineteenth century. Its proponents applied the same literary and historical criticism used when studying secular works to the Bible.
was a peculiarly Protestant doctrine. Since higher criticism seemed to undermine Biblical infallibility, Anglo-Catholics embraced it as endorsing their own theological position. Protestants were quick to notice this acceptance of higher criticism, especially regarding the Old Testament. To anti-Ritualists, the alliance between Anglo-Catholics and modern Biblical scholars strengthened their belief that Catholicism was a satanic force in alliance with atheism to destroy the Church. Why else would self-declared Catholic priests deny the veracity of the Biblical account of Jonah and the giant fish? “High Churchism” and “Higher Criticism” seemed to be equally pernicious parasites, draining the life out of the evangelical Protestant Church. Of course, the manner in which many evangelical Protestants vehemently rejected higher criticism further encouraged Anglo Catholics to embrace it, which only served to further encourage Protestants to reject it.

While literary critics poured over the Scriptures, new scientific discoveries began to turn the world of Newtonian mechanics upside down. Newly discovered phenomena such as radio waves (1888), X-rays (1895), and radioactivity (1896) did not fit the Newtonian scientific paradigm. As a result of the turn away from Newtonian mechanism, spiritualism and occultism enjoyed a vogue as both religious expressions and as areas of serious scientific inquiry. After all, if such seemingly “occult” forces as X-

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rays existed, why not psychic phenomena or astrotravel?\textsuperscript{30} The Society for Psychical Research flourished during this period, with future Prime Minister Arthur Balfour even serving as its president in 1894.\textsuperscript{31}

Roman Catholic apologists argued that advances in science such as rediscovery of the atomic theory, the molecular hypothesis, and the “vortex-ring or nebular hypothesis” did not in any way contradict the faith.\textsuperscript{32} But many apologists went beyond simply defending the faith, and also argued that late-Victorian scientific discoveries actually validated Catholicism.\textsuperscript{33} For example, W. E. Orchard, an early-twentieth century Nonconformist minister and convert to Roman Catholicism, argued that

\begin{quote}
...is it not remarkable that what previously appeared so unthinkable, although remaining still a quite unique operation of the Divine power, should, in the light of modern theories of matter, make transubstantiation far less inconceivable than a generation ago?... A further convergence between Catholic doctrine and modern physics may be seen in the deduction which one of our greatest physicist astronomers draws from the second law of thermo-dynamics....
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{30} Rose, \textit{The Edwardian Temperament}, 6; and Alex Owen, \textit{The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).


\textsuperscript{33} Even during the mid-Victorian period, many Catholics were willing to embrace science since they were sure it would substantiate their religion’s teachings. In 1857 the convert Very Rev. Isaac Thomas Hecker wrote that “Catholicity, therefore, has the highest appreciation of Reason, stimulates its activity, and welcomes with joy its discoveries.... Consequently, the geologist may dig deep into the bowels of the earth, till he reaches the intesnest heats; the naturalist may decompose matter, examine with the microscope what escapes our unaided observation, and unveil to our astonished gaze the secrets of nature; the astronomer may multiply his lenses till his ken reaches the empyrean heights of heaven; the historian may consult the annals of the nations, and unriddle the hieroglyphics of the monuments of bygone ages; the moralist may explore the most delicate folds of the human heart, and probe it to its very core; the philosopher may, with his crucial faculty, observe and define the laws which govern man’s sovereign reason; and Catholicity is not alarmed! Catholicity invokes, encourages, solicits your boldest efforts; for at the end of all your earnest researches you will find that the fruits of your labors confirm her teaching, and that your genuine discoveries add new gems to the crown of truth which encircles her heaven –inspired brow.” See I. T. Hecker, “Reason,” \textit{Conquests of Our Holy Faith: or, Testimonies of Distinguished Converts}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed. (Ratisbon and New York: Fr. Pustet & Co., 1907), 270, 271.
Orchard concluded that “there should be no scientific objection to accepting Catholic doctrine.”

Regarding the “new physics,” historian Michael Saler has noted that as science moved away from materialism and determinism at the end of the century and towards more probabilistic and counterintuitive explanations of the physical world, the wonders described by occultists were rivaled by those proposed by ‘mature science’ itself. Rather than disenchanting the world, modern science [had] become a central locus of modern enchantment.

The newly blurred boundary between science and the seemingly occult led to some rather bizarre theories. For example, following Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen’s discovery of X-rays, physicist Oliver Heaviside began theorizing that saints’ halos could be the product of high-frequency waves.

Moreover, converts and apologists argued that not only recent discoveries in physics, but also older developments such as evolutionary biology, pointed to the truth of Catholicism. Elizabeth Anstice Baker wrote that knowledge of Darwin’s theories helped her along the path toward Catholicism. Darwinism had exploded what she described as the “ultra-Protestant” view that saw God as a divine mechanic who had designed creation and then left the scene. Noting that “St. Augustine was familiar with the theory of evolution and used it in explaining the Mosaic account of creation,” she wrote that Darwinism had taught her that God was intimately and constantly involved in creation.

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36 Rose, The Edwardian Temperament, 7.


38 Ibid., 99.

39 Ibid., 100-2.
Baker is a largely unknown convert to Roman Catholicism, but even the most famous nineteenth-century convert, Cardinal Newman, agreed with her, arguing that “Mr Darwin’s theory need not be atheistical.”\(^{40}\) Anglo-Catholics also generally embraced Darwinian evolution, citing Archbishop Frederick Temple’s statement during the 1884 Bampton Lectures that there was nothing in evolutionary theory that contradicted divine revelation.\(^{41}\) Five years later the Anglo-Catholic authors of the modernist *Lux Mundi* essays also endorsed a theistic conception of Darwinism evolution.\(^{42}\)

Given the pervasive influence of Darwinism during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is not surprising that Mallock and others were inclined to see the Roman Catholic Church as a developing “organism.” For Mallock, the Church of England was “a mere aggregation of units; the Church of Rome is an organism, endowed with a single brain.”\(^{43}\) Although Mallock never actually converted to Roman Catholicism himself, his writings about the scientific and organic nature of Catholicism helped others along the road to Rome.\(^{44}\) Many who did convert made note of the modern and scientific nature of Roman Catholicism. Frances Virginia Frisbie, for example, wrote that the doctrine of purgatory made sense in light of the “modern” doctrine of the evolution of man; man would evolve from earth, to purgatory, to heaven.\(^{45}\) Louise Dunbar claimed

\(^{40}\) Qtd. in David Newsome, *The Victorian World Picture: Perceptions and Introspections in an Age of Change* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 203.
\(^{43}\) W. H. Mallock, “Does the Church of England Teach Anything?” *Nineteenth Century* 44 (July-December 1898), 938.
\(^{44}\) Robert Hugh Benson, for example, was influenced by Mallock’s *Doctrine and Doctrinal Disruption*.
that her study of science led her to see evidence of God in creation. Floyd Keeler admired the organic and therefore “unbroken tradition of Catholic belief and practice.” Wilfrid Ward, the son of famous Catholic convert William George Ward, argued that while Catholic belief did not slavishly follow scientific discovery, nonetheless, theology “advances with growing coherence” as the explication of doctrine evolved. Ward was confident that the Church would remain credible to man at every stage of scientific development because the faith was a developing “living being,” not a “dead fossil.” This description of the evolution of theology by a Church which identified itself as a “living being” and not a “fossil” indicates one of the ways Anglo-Catholics were more inclined than their Protestant brethren to see the Church as an organic, and therefore evolving, being.

- **The Appeal of Catholicism: Progressive, Cosmopolitan, and Tolerant**

Since Protestantism was inseparable from the dominant Victorian culture, Catholicism became associated with rebellion against Victorianism. Thus, many Anglo and Roman Catholics argued that they were more progressive and in harmony with the modern age than Protestants. To Protestants, who complained that Ritualists were breaking sixteenth-century ecclesiastical law by altering Anglican worship, the innovators replied that a new set of rules were necessary for modern times. Bishop of Lincoln Edward King, who was prosecuted by the Protestant Church Association for

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49 Ibid., 648. Ward’s article is actually a rebuttal of an earlier article by the modernist Catholic St. George Mivart. Mivart saw Galileo as a martyr for science and took exception to Ward’s defense of the Church’s actions in the Galileo case. That Ward was willing to embrace Darwinian assumptions regarding the development of doctrine demonstrates that acceptance of at least parts of evolutionary theory was not limited to self-proclaimed “modernist” Catholic thinkers.
Ritualist offenses beginning in 1888, wrote to the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline that changes to both worship practice and the rubrics were needed to keep the Church of England relevant and to continue effectively spreading the Gospel throughout the Empire. King concluded that if the Church of England desired to maintain her influence, “she must consider the need of greater Elasticity and Adaptation.” Cardinal Newman had similarly argued that Catholicism was true not because it was conservative, but because it was innovative.

Catholicism was also associated with such “modern” ideologies as socialism (as will be discussed in chapter 5), aestheticism, the Arts and Crafts movement, and even the women’s suffrage movement. The Anglo-Catholic suffragist A. Maude Royden, for example, became the major moving force behind the Church League for Women’s Suffrage. With the encouragement of her Anglo-Catholic friends Percy and Nan Dearmer, Royden also began campaigning for the recognition of women as priests within the Church of England and even began preaching at the Nonconformist City Temple and later began Fellowship Services at the Kensington Town Hall under Dearmer’s direction. Margaret Nevinson, another prominent member of the Church League for Women’s Suffrage, was also drawn to Anglo-Catholicism. The devout Roman Catholic

51 Ibid.
poet Alice Meynell was another supporter of women’s suffrage, even extrapolating women’s rights from Marian theology.55

Louise Creighton, the wife of the moderately Anglo-Catholic Bishop of London and one of the most visible women in the turn-of-the-century established church, also campaigned for more active roles for women in the church, arguing that the modern female church worker should not be a subordinate to men, but rather a fellow-worker.56

While Royden worked outside the Church of England to achieve gains for women, Creighton, as befitted the wife of a bishop, continued to work from within the church itself, serving as a vice-chairman of the Central Conference of Women’s Church Work in London, as a member of the Church Assembly, and as a member of the SPG Standing Committee.57 For Louise Creighton at least, High Churchmanship and progressive views on the role of women were eminently compatible.

Concern for women’s rights, however, did not usually factor highly on the list of reasons for conversion given by new Catholics. Instead, converts often associated their religion with the rejection of individualism and embrace of communitarianism. Related to seeing Catholicism as essential to an English identity distinct from Protestant Britishness, many saw their rejection of Protestantism as part of their rejection of British

57 Ibid., 92-93.
capitalism and materialism. Chesterton biographer Michael Ffinch has argued that Chesterton’s conversion to Roman Catholicism stemmed from “his need for a decisive stand against the ‘plutocracy and neglected populace and materialism and servile morality’ of contemporary England, which he saw as ultimately deriving from the national Protestantism.” In his hymn “O God of Earth and Altar,” which was published in the predominantly Anglo-Catholic *English Hymnal* (1906), G. K. Chesterton stressed the spiritual dangers of capitalist materialism and individualism, claiming that

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Our earthly rulers falter,
Our people drift and die;
The walls of gold entomb us,
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Tie in a living tether
The prince and priest and thrall,
Bind all our lives together,
Smite us and save us all;60
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Prominent Anglo-Catholic Bishop Charles Gore wrote that Anglo-Catholicism was part of a wider movement within England, which favored “putting social in the place of individualist conceptions of the basis of society.” Not surprisingly, given their desire to break with British capitalism and individualism, many prominent Roman and Anglo-Catholics supported socialist reforms.

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Conversion to Catholicism frequently entailed more than a break with conventional politics and economics, however. Anglo and Roman Catholics often saw themselves as breaking with “Protestant” bourgeois respectability and morals altogether. In his description of the Victorian “world picture” David Newsome wrote that “the Victorians were unquestionably moralists,” and that “it seemed that a Victorian could not escape from moral teaching wherever he might turn.”

Moreover, as Newsome notes, among the Victorians the rejection of religion did not generally mean the rejection of Christian morality. Non-believers were among the most fervent defenders of bourgeois respectability. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, many young Britons found respectable Protestant morality suffocating. As the decidedly non-Christian Leonard Woolf wrote in his autobiography,

when in the grim, grey rainy January days of 1901 Queen Victoria lay dying, we already felt that we were living in an era of incipient revolt and that we ourselves were mortally involved in this revolt against a social system and code of conduct and morality which, for convenience sake, may be referred to as bourgeois Victorianism.

Although Woolf obviously chose a different path of rebellion against “bourgeois Victorianism,” many others turned to a Catholic ethic based on incarnational theology.

To many Anglo-Catholics, such as prominent Christian Socialist Rev. Stewart Headlam, a Catholic theology centered on the Incarnation and Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist provided the basis for an appreciation of human beauty and joy. Headlam held “…it as an eternal truth that the Incarnation and the Real Presence of Jesus Christ

63 Ibid., 194ff.
sanctifies all human things, not excluding human passion, mirth, and beauty.”65 As a result of his theology, Headlam controversially championed theater, the music hall, and ballet as wholesome forms of entertainment. Not surprisingly, Headlam met with considerable opposition causing him to complain about “the same Calvinists who condemned ritualism and socialism – the people’s worship and politics – were seeking to destroy the music hall – the people’s theater.”66 Nevertheless, Headlam continued to champion the music hall and ballet as fine examples of human beauty. He even claimed that “I should make it my duty to send every ‘young women whose name was Dull’ to see these young women [ballerinas], who are so full of life and mirth.”67 To those who complained about the ballerinas’ short skirts and hose, Headlam replied that all beauty came from God. In addition to championing ballet and serving as the honorary secretary of the Church and Stage Guild, Headlam shocked respectable society by befriending atheist Charles Bradlaugh and bailing Oscar Wilde out of prison after his arrest.

Oscar Wilde found more sympathy from Anglo and Roman Catholics following his arrest than he did from Evangelicals. The seeming tolerance of many Catholics toward men like Wilde led some Britons to acknowledge Catholicism’s capacity for toleration. Meanwhile, the Evangelicals in the Church of England who called out for toleration of Protestantism appeared to be ironically intolerant of the Ritualists.68 This situation allowed Catholics to argue that it was Protestantism that was narrow, nationalistic, and intolerant. Although toleration was commonly seen as a Protestant

65 Stewart Headlam, Church Reformer 4, no. 10 (15 October 1885): 236.
67 Qtd in ibid., 29.
68 “Toleration,” Church Times, 10 August 1900, p. 142-143.
virtue, Anglo-Catholics argued that this was not the case. Men like Sir William Harcourt were enlivened by “the old Puritan leaven which would seek by narrow persecuting views to bring [England] back to the Erastianism of Cromwell.” Rather than likewise persecuting Anglican Protestants, Anglo-Catholics like Rev. S. B. James called for comprehension within the established church, although not at the cost of compromising Catholic principles. In addition to working for comprehension and peace within the Church of England, Rev. B. N. Switzer argued that Anglo-Catholics should work for peace and understanding between the various branches of the Catholic Church throughout the world. In this way, Anglo-Catholics would further international reconciliation and peaceful interaction among nations.

Some Catholic believed the present state of enmity among the nations could be traced back to the Reformation. By promoting individualism, Protestantism had shattered the unity of Christendom during the Reformation. The individualism and constant fragmentation of Protestantism made it narrow-minded and nationalistic. Jesuit Vincent Hornyold, for example, argued that the narrowness of the Church of England made it merely national, and not truly universal like the Roman Catholic Church. Earl Nelson, an Anglo-Catholic, invited his readers to

Imagine, if you can, the essence of narrow-mindedness. A man whose Christianity dates from the fifteenth century – when, as he believes, the Bible was for the first time rightly understood and made known to the people. His ideas are essentially insular! Time was when the other

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73 J. Keating, Catholicism and Peace (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1912), 9. Of course, this view ignores the schism between Eastern and Western Christianity in 1054.
nations of Europe were considered to be fellow Christians with himself; now are they strangers and aliens, and distinctly antagonistic. For the Bible has revealed to him that the Church of the first fifteen centuries has become anti-Christian, that the Eastern Church is essentially corrupt, and that the whole of Western Christendom acknowledging the Pope as their Patriarch is ruled over by Antichrist…. 

According to Catholics, whereas Protestantism was narrow, nationalistic, and intolerant, Catholicism was broad or comprehensive, cosmopolitan, and tolerant. Protestant divided peoples and led to conflict. Catholicism unified and promoted peace.

- The Appeal of Catholicism: Mysticism and Aestheticism

During most of the Victorian age a naturalist worldview had increasingly dominated elite intellectual culture. By the late-nineteenth century, however, many late-Victorians and Edwardians began searching for an alternative to Victorian materialism, mechanism, and determinism. Progressive Edwardians in particular embraced mysticism, free will, and the philosophy of vitalism. By the early-twentieth century, modern philosophers like Henri Bergson were breaking with materialists such as Comte and Spencer, in arguing for the importance and reality of invisible interior experience. Bergson attempted to abolish the dichotomy between mind and matter by seeing body and spirit as part of a unified whole. British intellectuals such as T. E. Hulme, A. R. Orage, and A. J. Balfour quickly endorsed Bergson’s philosophy, which in turn fed into what contemporary cultural critic Holbrook Jackson called a “revival of

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78 Rose, The Edwardian Temperament.
79 Ibid., 91.
80 Owen, The Place of Enchantment, 136.
81 Ibid.
mysticism” during the 1890s. According to Jackson, by 1914 mysticism was a “mark of the times.”

Catholicism, especially its mystical tradition, benefited from what Alex Owen has called the “modern” resurgence of mysticism and occultism. In The Place of Enchantment, Owen has claimed that “The ‘new’ occultism in particular co-opted the language of science and staked a strong claim to rationality while at the same time undermining scientific naturalism as a worldview and rejecting the rationalist assumption upon which it depended.” The same could be said of Catholicism during this period. Many late-Victorian and Edwardian intellectuals desired an escape from Victorian materialism and determinism and therefore embraced spirituality and free-will. A significant number found Catholicism appealing for this reason. Protestantism, especially of the dour Calvinist variety, appeared to have allied itself with the Victorian spirit of mechanism and determinism in a way that removed mystery from religion. Although some Britons turned to Theosophy or occultism, many more increasingly saw Catholicism as one of the only two choices left for modern individuals. They felt that in a modern age a person could no longer find an intellectually honest compromise between materialist rationalism and faith: A person had to pick either one or the other. As

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83 Ibid.; and Owen, The Place of Enchantment, 17.
84 Ibid., 13. Gerard Figal has made an argument similar to Owen’s, although he studies Meiji Japan. According to Figal, the “fantastic” was an essential part of Japanese modernity. See Civilization and Monsters: Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1999). See also Saler, “Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review.”
85 For example, see N. Green Armytage, “The Possessed Swine,” The Anglo Catholic 2, no. 3 (March 1900): 117. This position would not have been endorsed by the Holy See, which held that both fideism and rationalism were heresies.
Leonard Woolf put it, during the 1890s for “intellectuals contra mundum” it was “the Church or suicide.”

The popular mysticism of the 1890s dovetailed with the increasing popularity of romanticism and aestheticism, especially as associated with the blossoming Ritualist movement. In 1850, as Ritualism was beginning to grow out of Tractarianism, Bishop of London Charles James Blomfield had described an average Anglican service as “blank, dismal, oppressive and dreary…. Matins and litany with a sermon lasting the best part of an hour in a cold gloomy church, was not the kind of worship to appeal to a man or woman with no education or little imagination.”

One convert to Anglo and later Roman Catholicism wrote that “being of an imaginative, poetic, and intensely impressionable disposition, his whole soul revolted against the base, cold, unadorned ritual of the Evangelical school.”

Ritualists set out to change the “cold, unadorned ritual” of the average Anglican service. The transcendental, beautiful, and mysterious were experienced in Catholic worship through various ceremonies, art, music, incense, and colorful vestments and paraments. In short, a Catholic service was designed to be more visually stimulating than a Protestant service, which was primarily focused on the spoken word in the sermon. Art historian Tom Zaniello sums up the style of favorite Anglo-Catholic architect William Butterfield as “polychromatic designs and eye candy.”

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86 Woolf, Sowing: An Autobiography of the Years 1880-1904, 94.
Many writers argued that the growing interest in aestheticism led to a greater appreciation of ritual. One anonymous author wrote that

…many devout members of the English Church have, during the last fifty years, developed, and asserted their claim to gratify, a craving for aesthetics, which may be said to have transfigured our religious services from dowdiness to glory…. Now what does all this mean, unless it means that an aesthetic wave has swept onwards with irresistible force over the entire surface of the church-going community, manifesting a determination on the part of Christian worshippers in England to make their religious services beautiful and attractive?[^90]

The desire to make “religious services beautiful and attractive” described above was one manifestation of the late-Victorian resurgence of Romanticism. Principle of Mansfield College, Oxford A. M. Fairbairn cited this “spirit of Romanticism in religion” as a major factor in the Anglo-Catholic revival, while later historian Nigel Yates concluded that “Ritualism and Anglo-Catholicism provided challenge and excitement, as well as escapism, for many Anglicans in the years before the First World War and even, to some extent, thereafter.” Thus, for many, Catholicism proved to be an escape from an age seemingly dominated by cold materialism.

In their attempt to escape from Victorian materialism, some fin-de-siècle Anglo and Roman Catholics mingled with a shocking group: the cutting-edge Decadents, who embodied the rejection of respectability and a turn toward mystical aestheticism. Given Catholicism’s association with rebellion against the conventions of Victorianism, it is perhaps not surprising that it also came to be linked with the quintessentially rebellious artistic movement of aestheticism. Although late-Victorian and Edwardian moralists commonly saw the Decadents as simple hedonists, they were in fact a group in rebellion against Victorian materialism and found in Catholicism an anti-naturalist and frankly supernatural worldview. Likewise, Catholics found themselves attracted to Decadent literature’s rejection of deterministic mechanism and its embrace of free will. Thus,

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93 Yates, Anglican Ritualism, 374.
94 I am using Decadence and aestheticism synonymously. British Decadence was an anti-Victorian romantic movement in literature and the arts.
many of the fin-de-siècle Decadents ended their lives in at least apparent agreement with such seemingly saintly converts as Newman and Henry Manning.96

According to reviewers, Frenchman J. K. Huysmans’s novel À Rebours (1884), which influenced English Decadents such as Oscar Wilde, gave readers a choice, “to guzzle like the beasts of the field or to look upon the face of God.”97 Reviewer and Romantic author Jules Barbey d’Aurevilly agreed with this assessment, writing that “‘After Les Fleurs du mal,’ I told [Charles] Baudelaire, ‘it only remains for you to choose between the muzzle of a pistol and the foot of the Cross.’ Baudelaire chose the foot of the Cross. But will the author of À Rebours make the same choice?”98 Years after Barbey published his review of À Rebours, Huysmans wrote, “Strange! But that man was the only one who saw things clearly in my case…He wrote an article which contained these last prophetic words: ‘There only remains for you to commit suicide or become a Catholic.’”99 In fact, Huysmans did indeed convert to Roman Catholicism and ended his life as a Benedictine oblate.

À Rebours proved to be a significant work for Oscar Wilde, and upon learning of Huysmans’s decision to enter a monastery, he approved and even considered entering a monastery himself. Like Huysmans, Wilde eventually converted to Roman Catholicism, although not until he was on his deathbed. Other English Decadents, such as Aubrey Beardsley, Robert Baldwin Ross, André Raffalovich, Frederick Rolfe (known as Baron Corvo), Montague Summers, Lionel Johnson, Katherine Bradley, Edith Cooper, Ernest

96 See Ellis Hanson, Decadence and Catholicism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).
98 Qtd. in ibid.
Dowson, and John Gray, who may have been the inspiration for Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and who later became a priest, also converted to the Church of Rome. Regarding conversion to Roman Catholicism, literary scholar Ellis Hanson has claimed that “no other literary movement can claim so many famous converts to Rome,” while historian Michael Wheeler argues that the disproportionate number of Catholic converts actually became one of the defining features of English Decadence.¹⁰⁰

Decadent illustrator Aubrey Beardsley found himself drawn to the Roman Catholic Church and died at age twenty six as a professed believer.¹⁰¹ In his last letter to his editor Leonard Smithers, Beardsley wrote,

> Jesus is our Lord and Judge
> I implore you to destroy all copies of Lysistrata and bad drawings…
> By all that is holy all obscene drawings¹⁰²

In his tribute to Beardsley following his death in 1898, poet and critic Arthur Symons argued that Beardsley was deeply spiritual and eventually drew close to God as a result of having been so close to the devil.¹⁰³ Louise Imogen Guiney, an American poet and devout Roman Catholic who was also a member of the trans-Atlantic Decadent scene, also wrote a tribute to Beardsley following his death. Guiney’s article, which was published in *Catholic World*, attempted to reconstruct Beardsley as a Catholic artist. Quoting the assessment of Henry Harland, the founder of *The Yellow Book* and another convert to Roman Catholicism, Guiney argued that Beardsley’s “temperament was essentially the religious temperament. … And just at the threshold of that last sad year, he

acknowledged that it was so: he became a Catholic,” having come “to the ancient Faith gradually and steadily.” Guiney also took the rather unusual step of holding a memorial mass for Beardsley in Boston, Massachusetts. Later, after Lionel Johnson, another Decadent convert, died, Guiney wrote a tribute similar to Beardsley’s in *Atlantic Monthly*.106

But not only did decadent artists convert to Anglo or Roman Catholicism, prominent Anglo and Roman Catholic clergymen were also drawn to the Decadent community. Percy Dearmer, the Anglo-Catholic author of the best-selling *Parson’s Handbook* (1899), which promoted pre-Reformation English ritual, was part of a circle of Decadent or otherwise radical intellectuals and artists. Anglo-Catholic scholar Peter Anson visited Dearmer’s parish in his youth and recalled that younger members of St Mary’s, Primrose Hill were often socialists and possibly vegetarians.107 Dearmer and his first wife Mabel were a part of the Arts and Crafts movement that sought an alternative to late-Victorian industrial mass production, and Dearmer insisted upon wearing hand-made vestments.108

Anson described the Dearmer vicarage as resembling “…the Pre-Raphaelite tradition, although with a faint whiff of Aubrey Beardsley’s guttering black candles, and the distant rumblings of the revolt of women.”109 In fact, Donald Gray described Mabel’s

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105 MacDonald-Bischof, “‘Against an Epoch:’ Boston Moderns, 1880-1905,” 205.
106 Ibid., 207n54.
107 Gray, *Percy Dearmer*, 72. Dearmer’s contemporaries would have recognized both socialism and vegetarianism as signs of rebellion against Victorianism.
109 Qtd in Gray, *Percy Dearmer*, 73.
friends as part of *The Yellow Book* set who shared socialist and feminist sympathies. According to Anson, churches like Dearmer’s attracted authors, artists, reformers, and “men [who] defied Sunday convention by wearing baggy suits of home-spun tweed, shirts with soft collars and, quite probably, sandals instead of shoes or boots. Their women-folk tended to look like models painted by Rossetti or Burne Jones and revolted against fashion by discarding corsets.”110 “New Women” who “adopted a masculine costume, with a practical though still long, serge skirt, starched blouse and high collar” could also be seen at St. Mary’s, Primrose Hill.111

Not surprisingly, when Dearmer finished the *Parson’s Handbook*, he remained within his circle of aesthetic friends and published with Grant Richards, a progressive thinker who published a journal called *Savoy*, which was similar in content to *The Yellow Book*. Bernard Shaw, Havelock Ellis, W. B. Yeats, and Aubrey Beardsley, among others, had promised to contribute to Richards’s journal.112 Richards also published some of Shaw’s plays, the poems of A. E. Housman, and Robert Tressell’s *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. Although it may seem odd in retrospect, in 1899 Dearmer’s handbook of High-Church Ritualism was right at home amongst Richards’ stock of Decadent and socialist titles.

Perhaps the most shocking conversion to Roman Catholicism in the early-twentieth century involved Robert Hugh Benson, who was a son of Edward Benson, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Shortly after his conversion in 1903 Hugh Benson became a best-selling author but maintained his ties with Decadent or aesthetic circles. While at Cambridge Benson had become a great admirer of French Decadent author and convert J.

110 Ibid.
111 Qtd in ibid.
112 Ibid., 37.
K. Huysmans. He was especially drawn to Huysmans’ aestheticism and medievalism, and went on to form a close – if temporary – friendship with the Decadent Catholic author Frederick Rolfe.\textsuperscript{113} Although critics almost unanimously panned Rolfe’s self-indulgent novel \textit{Hadrian the Seventh}, Benson nevertheless admired it and began a correspondence with Rolfe. Although Rolfe had a checkered past, including having once been kicked out of a seminary, Benson nevertheless befriended him. Later Benson even claimed that after he had become a bishop he would ordain Rolfe as a priest. The main character of \textit{The Sentimentalists}, a psychological novel about “an aesthete with a seamy past,” was modeled partially after Rolfe. While Benson was in the midst of his friendship with Rolfe, a minor scandal broke out over his having decorated his room at the Cambridge Rectory in too much of an aesthetic or even Decadent style. In 1908, however, Benson and Rolfe’s friendship fell apart after a failed effort to collaborate on a book about St. Thomas Becket. In addition to Rolfe, Benson had ties to other decadent authors and figures such as Lord Alfred Bruce Douglas, whom he received into the Roman Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{114}

Catholicism provided a sense of supernaturalism with a hint of rebellion that many perceived as missing from the Protestant churches of the day. Decadent artists were therefore drawn to Catholicism for a variety of reasons, including its anti-naturalist, elaborate ceremonial, sensuality, emphasis upon the pain and humiliation entailed in the Passion history, emphasis upon sin and the need for purity, and the still-shocking nature

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 82, 80, 84-5, 89, 117. See also Robert Hugh Benson, “A Chronicle of Hare Street House Near Buntingford” (1914) in Grayson, \textit{Robert Hugh Benson}, 215.
of Catholicism in respectable society.\textsuperscript{115} The beauty of the Catholic Mass attracted many aesthetics and Decadents, such as Oscar Wilde, Aubrey Beardsley, John Gray, and Ernest Dowson. Even the agnostic Walter Pater and Jewish Simeon Solomon were attracted to and appreciated Catholic ritual.\textsuperscript{116} According to Dowson, Catholicism was the only beautiful “ism” remaining in the world.\textsuperscript{117} Nevertheless, Decadents did not shy away from the ugly and grotesque; in fact, they embraced it. “Against naturalism,” Catholic Decadents argued that “grotesque descriptions did not entail nihilistic explanations; they might be symptoms of mystical causes.”\textsuperscript{118} It was in this context that Huysmans admired Matthias Grünewald’s shockingly grotesque \textit{Crucifixion} altarpiece: the image was at the same time realistic and idealistic since it illuminated God’s grace in human history.\textsuperscript{119} Catholicism, then, offered Decadents the ability to fuse the seemingly natural with supernatural meaning. While some scholars, such as Jonathan Rose, have seen Decadence as a break with religion due to “unbridled skepticism,” in fact, Decadent artists drew close to Catholic dogma.\textsuperscript{120} The skepticism of the Decadents directed itself primarily towards late-Victorian naturalism, not supernatural revealed religion as such.

- \textbf{The Appeal of Catholicism: Mitigation of Individualism and Anarchy through Community and Authority}

By the 1870s the socio-economic and political foundations of the mid-Victorian period had begun to change. Before the 1870s, rule by an entrenched landed elite, seeming class harmony, patriarchy, and British economic and military preeminence characterized the Victorian period. Political, military, and ecclesiastical power were

\textsuperscript{115} See Wheeler, \textit{The Old Enemies}, 273, 278, 287, 295.
\textsuperscript{116} Lambourne, \textit{The Aesthetic Movement}, 14.
\textsuperscript{117} Hanson, \textit{Decadence and Catholicism}, 245.
\textsuperscript{118} Schloesser, \textit{Jazz Age Catholicism}, 45.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 41-2. See J. K. Huysmans, \textit{Là-bas} (1891).
\textsuperscript{120} Rose, \textit{The Edwardian Temperament}, 2.
disproportionately concentrated in the hands of a small group of landed men at the top of the social hierarchy who served as electors, justices of the peace, and members of Parliament.\textsuperscript{121} The forces of political and socio-economic change, however, were already challenging the apparent stability of mid-Victorian Britain by the 1870s.\textsuperscript{122} The expansion of democracy challenged the supremacy of the landed elite,\textsuperscript{123} while the United States and Germany in particular increasingly challenged Britain’s economic and military dominance. Due to Britain’s loss of economic hegemony, some politicians and intellectuals increasingly began to question the wisdom of Britain’s keystone free-trade policy.\textsuperscript{124} England’s relationships with both Ireland and Europe also became increasingly problematic by the late-Victorian period.\textsuperscript{125} The emergence of feminism from the late 1860s atmosphere of democratization led to national anxiety as suffragists began to demand the vote.\textsuperscript{126} Additionally, the 1895 Oscar Wilde trial and subsequent emergence of a distinctive homosexual identity led to increased apprehension


\textsuperscript{122} Historians José Harris, Thomas Heyck, and Richard Price, among others, see the decade as a crucial watershed in British history. See Harris, \textit{Private Live, Public Spirit}, 252; Heyck, \textit{The Peoples of the British Isles: a New History}, vol 2; and Price, \textit{British Society, 1680-1880}. Price sees the 1870s as the end of an historical period that began around 1688.

\textsuperscript{123} Even more worrisome for the elites, during this period non-landed wealth exceeded landed wealth for the first time. See W. D. Rubinstein, “New Men of Wealth and the Purchase of Land in Nineteenth-Century Britain,” \textit{Past and Present} 92 (August 1981): 125-147.

\textsuperscript{124} See John Davis, \textit{A History of Britain, 1885-1939} (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 72ff.


\textsuperscript{126} See, for example, Anthony Trollope’s novel \textit{Can You Forgive Her?} and the novels of George Gissing for mid to late nineteenth-century portrayals of the supporters of women’s suffrage.
surrounding sexuality.\textsuperscript{127} The century ended with the Anglo-Boer War, which damaged
Britain’s international reputation and morale.\textsuperscript{128}

Sexologist and former Anglican curate Edward Carpenter described the years after 1881 as marking
\begin{quote}
…the oncoming of a great new tide of human life over the Western World…. It was a fascinating and enthusiastic period – preparatory, as we now see, to even greater developments in the twentieth century. The Socialist and Anarchist propaganda, the Feminist and Suffragist upheaval, the huge Trade –union growth, the Theosophic movement, the new currents in the Theatrical, Musical and Artistic world, the torrent even of change in the Religious world – all constituted so many streams and headwaters converging, as it were, to a great river.\textsuperscript{129}
\end{quote}

While Carpenter saw opportunity, most \textit{Fin-de-siècle} Britons worried over the causes of these unfortunate changes, wondered what would happen to British identity as a result of them, and how they would restore Britain’s traditional position of international preeminence in all spheres of activity.\textsuperscript{130} In short, the late nineteenth century’s rapid political, social, and economic changes left many Britons in a state of anxiety and uncertainty about their nation’s current situation and future. This uncertainty would be reflected in their renewed interest in alternative religions, such as Catholicism, which offered spiritual certainty.


\textsuperscript{130} British periodicals reflected these concerns. For example, A single edition of \textit{Review of Reviews} in 1898 (vol. 15) included articles such as “Why are we being beaten in the world’s market?,” “German ambitions overseas,” “The director of foreign policy,” “The new Russian war minister,” “The Future of South Africa,” and “The Threatened St. Bartholomew.”
Moreover, by the late-Victorian period many prominent social thinkers and philosophers, such as L. T. Hobhouse and T. H. Green, were moving away from an individualist approach to society and toward a corporatist model.\textsuperscript{131} This shift in thinking can be seen in the emergence of the “New Liberalism” during the late-nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{132} These newer currents in social theory dovetailed with Catholic theology’s emphasis upon the corporate unity of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. Catholics argued that Protestantism, by contrast, was too preoccupied with individual salvation.\textsuperscript{133} Moreover, the structure and centralized authority of the institutional Roman Catholic Church appealed to late-Victorian Protestants seeking an “organic unity” as opposed to more “atomized” congregational polity associated with Protestantism. Although the Church of England also utilized an episcopal structure, Roman converts argued that its theological diversity belied any claims to dogmatic unity under the Archbishops.

For those escaping from the dominant elite mid-Victorian worldview, Catholicism – both Anglo and Roman – offered an alternative center of authority, which, in turn, provided a dogma that gave life a new order and unity. The sense of order and unity found in Catholicism led many converts to feel that their new religion provided certainty and spiritual peace. Regarding authority, Catholics argued that whereas the chaos of Protestantism caused anarchy, the strong sense of authority within Catholicism preserved


\textsuperscript{133} José Harris, \textit{Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870-1914} (New York, Penguin Books, 1993), 224. Harris also notes that “From the mid-nineteenth-century … many counter-currents of social thought were attempting to re-interpret both individual and collective human behavior in more structural and organic terms” (224).
doctrinal and liturgical order.\textsuperscript{134} Anglo-Catholics found authority in the traditions of the pre-Reformation Catholic Church. Roman Catholics, on the other hand, also found authority in the Papacy and magisterium. One Roman Catholic convert noted that he had converted due to the “voice of Infallible Authority,” within the Roman Catholic Church that was “never once ‘I,’ but always ‘the Church teaches.'”\textsuperscript{135} When Edmund Hill converted he was drawn to the authority of the Catholic Church as represented in Apostolic Succession. He believed that Catholic Church had priests who spoke with the authority of Christ.\textsuperscript{136} As the Roman Catholic priest M. O’Riordan put it, the “craving amongst men for certainty,” guidance, and consolation could only be found in the Roman Church.\textsuperscript{137} Robert Hugh Benson also claimed to have converted on the basis of the issue of authority. “The real question is,” he wrote, “Where is the Authority of our Blessed Lord to be found now?”\textsuperscript{138} The answer, for Benson, was Rome.

During the late-nineteenth century the most effective Catholic apologists focused their energies on the issue of authority in the Church. Luke Rivington’s book Authority: \textit{Or, a Plain Reason for Joining the Church of Rome}, proved to be so popular and influential that it was in its seventh edition by 1897. Anglo-Catholic apologist R. F. Littledale called it a “little torpedo” for destroying Anglican arguments, and Anglican Bishop Charles Gore responded to it by publishing a new edition of his \textit{Roman Catholic}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{134} See, for example, Britten, \textit{Why I Left the Church of England}, 17. Britten’s lecture was first delivered in March, 1893 at St. George’s School, Southwark in reply to a lecture recently given by the Protestant Alliance.
\textsuperscript{137} M. O’Riordan, Draper’s ‘Conflict between Religion and Science’: A Lecture Delivered in Limerick and Cork in 1897 (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1898), 46-47.
\end{footnotesize}
Claims. Congregationalist scholar A. M. Fairbairn considered the theoretical foundation of contemporary Catholic apologetics to be the thesis that authority was the basis of religion. Later scholars of Catholicism have agreed with Fairbairn in seeing authority as a major attraction of late-Victorian and Edwardian Catholicism. For example, historian Patrick Allitt has argued that converts believed a dogmatic church would protect them spiritually and politically in a chaotic world.

Catholicism’s external authority – be it the councils and Fathers of the Anglo-Catholics or the tradition and Pope of the Romanists – gave its dogma an air of objectivity that some contemporaries felt was lacking in Protestantism. Converts often felt that Catholicism’s single seat of authority guaranteed a single and uncomplicated source of doctrine. The apparent objectivity of Catholicism therefore appealed to many converts, such as Anglo-Catholic Welsh nationalist J. Arthur Price. Price disliked the lack of certainty and objectivity he saw in Protestant nondenominationalism, complaining that a Welshman who was educated at an “undogmatic” Nonconformist university would wind up believing in nothing. Moreover, the tangible elements of Catholic sacramentalism further enhanced its image of providing something objectively real. The material emphasis of Catholic worship – the water of baptism, the incense, the bread and

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139 Luke Rivington, Authority: or a Plain Reason for Joining the Church of Rome, 7th edition (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1897), v, vi. Rivington converted from Anglicanism in 1888 and wrote Authority in Rome only a few weeks after his conversion.
141 Allitt, Catholic Converts, 162-3. Keith Robbins has argued that “There was a strong disposition amongst intellectuals to see Roman Catholicism as the only available rampart in a dissolving world.” See Robbins, Great Britain, 257. See also Adam Schwartz, The Third Spring: G. K. Chesterton, Graham Greene, Christopher Dawson, and David Jones (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2005); and MacDonald-Bischof, “‘Against an Epoch:’ Boston Moderns, 1880-1905,” 181.
wine used in the Eucharist – served to give Catholicism a concreteness lacking in Protestantism. “No wonder,” according to one early writer, “enthusiasts, who yearn for something definite, some objective act which shall transmute Christian sentiment into reality” rejoiced in the development of Ritualism.\textsuperscript{143}

Converts believed the dogmatic authority of the Catholic Church provided a bulwark against materialism and Protestant intellectual chaos by imposing spiritual order. Whereas Protestantism had broken down into thousands of conflicting denominations, Catholicism seemed to remain a unified force of order in the world, providing an alternative source of order to that of materialism. In fact, many convents argued that a person had only two choices: to live in a state of chaotic atheistic anarchy, or to join the peaceful and ordered Catholic Church. John Henry Newman himself had argued that

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\ldots\text{Turn away from the Catholic Church, and to whom will you go? it is your only chance of peace and assurance in this turbulent, changing world. There is nothing between it and skepticism, when men exert their reason freely.}\textsuperscript{144}
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According to scholar Joseph Pearce, “Newman’s message to his contemporaries…is clear: relearn Catholicism, i.e. convert, or perish.”\textsuperscript{145} The appeal of Newman’s message – Rome or Chaos – remained throughout the exceptionally violent and chaotic first half of the twentieth century. In fact, if there was one concern that led Britons to convert to Catholicism, it was the need to break with naturalism and yet still maintain order and unity in an otherwise chaotic world. Turn-of-the-century converts again and again stressed the difference between the “scandalous divisions and subdivisions” of

\textsuperscript{143} H. J., “Concerning the Theory and Truth of Ritualism.” \textit{Contemporary Review} 3 (September-December 1866): 547.


\textsuperscript{145} Pearce, “Tradition and Conversion in English Literature,” 187.
Protestantism, and the authority and unity of the Catholic Church, upheld by apostolic succession and papal supremacy. Logically, Catholic apologists argued, Protestantism could not be true since it was divided against itself. Bernard Vaughan, S.J. informed his readers that

…as you cast about in search of the most consistent form of Christianity, I ask you to choose the principle laid down by that very intelligent statesman, Sir George Cornwall Lewis. ‘As a rule, the professors of any science are trustworthy in proportion as the points of agreement among them are numerous and important, and the points of difference few and unimportant.’ Apply this general principle to the science of religion. Take your mental balance, and place in one scale of it the 71 millions of Protestants, along with their 183 different sects, and ascertain, if you can, in what points of doctrine they agree with one another, and in what points they mutually differ. Next take the other scale, and place in it the 250 millions of Catholics alive at every moment on earth. Find out in what points of doctrine they agree with one another, and in what points they, too, differ…. [You will conclude that] …the points of agreement among the Protestants are few, and the points of difference are numerous and important, whereas the points of agreement among Catholics are numerous and important, and the points of difference among them are few and unimportant, we have no alternative but to turn our backs now and for ever upon the so-called National Religion and embrace once for ever the grand old Tradition of the world-wide Church – the Catholic Faith.

For converts, only Catholicism could provide unity and order.

Converts to Roman Catholicism particularly stressed that true authority and the order that flowed from it could not be found in either the institutional Church of England or in the concept of Anglo-Catholicism. Rev. Reginald Percy John Camm converted from Anglo to Roman Catholicism in 1890 and later became a Benedictine monk. Camm – who changed his name to Bede after his conversion – later explained that he had converted because the Church of England could not speak with a unified voice due to its conflicting Protestant and Catholic parties. Roman Catholic convert H. C. Corrance

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highlighted the “elasticity” of Anglicanism in his 1898 *Contemporary Review* article.\(^{148}\) Given the multiplicity of opinions within the Church of England, Anglicans constantly contradicted one another, leaving parishioners unsure of what to believe. As an example, Corrance cited the March 17, 1898 issue of *Church Review*, which both disavowed and affirmed the doctrine of transubstantiation.\(^{149}\) Moreover, Corrance described the liturgical scene within the Church of England as being a state of complete anarchy when compared to the order of Rome.\(^{150}\)

Many other converts agreed with Camm’s and Corrance’s negative assessments of the Church of England and praise for the certainty found in Roman Catholicism. They often contrasted the apparent order of Roman and Anglo-Catholic doctrine and liturgy with the chaotic situation within Protestantism. In contrast to the chaos of Anglicanism, Corrance extolled the order and certainty to be found in Roman Catholicism.\(^{151}\) In short, “Ritualism gives people in an age of doubt who are thirsting to believe what they want: they are weary of doubt and Ritualism gives them Catholicism to believe in. People need this belief in the new cold disenchanted world were “the anarchy is getting fierce, almost brutal.”\(^{152}\) While Camm saw Anglicanism as rent asunder by heresy, Rome, by contrast, appeared “firm,” “serene,” and “uncompromising with heretics, so sure of her own rights.”\(^{153}\) Floyd Keeler, who was at one time a member of the Association for the

\(^{148}\) Corrance, “The Development of Ritualism,” 98.
\(^{149}\) Ibid.
\(^{150}\) Ibid., 100. For a typical Anglo-Catholic response to these claims, see H. H. Bond, *The Earnest Churchman: Being England’s Reply to the Pretensions of Rome and Dissent* (London: Samuel Basster and Sons, Limited, 1910). See especially section XI on “The Church of Rome or the Italian Mission in England.”
Promotion of Unity of Christendom, was drawn to Rome’s “infallible teaching,” which guaranteed protection from the “chaos and uncertainty” that harassed Protestants. To Camm and Keeler, Anglicanism was based upon the shifting sands of individual judgment, whereas the Roman Catholic Church had real authority based upon the solid rock of Christ and the Apostles.

Former Anglican priest F. B. Lord claimed he was drawn to Rome’s “supernatural unity and spotless purity of doctrine.” Catholics like Lord commonly used terms like “unity” and “purity” when describing their conversions; and the use of these discourses indicate some of their underlying anxieties. The seeming lack of a single authority and dogma within Protestantism gave Protestant Christianity porous boundaries, whereas the boundaries of Anglo-Catholicism and especially Roman Catholicism seemed to be more firmly drawn. For Roman converts especially, the boundaries of Anglicanism appeared to be constantly breached by both evangelical and modernist Protestants, this is, heretics. These Protestants were out of place within the Catholic Church. Hence, in Mary Douglas’s terminology, they dirtied the otherwise spotless Catholic Church. Rome, on the other hand, appeared “clean” and “pure” by comparison, since the Church was kept free of heretics by the more secure boundaries of authority and dogma. Nevertheless, in order for the Church of maintain its purity its boundaries had to be constantly patrolled.

The desire to maintain a doctrinally “pure” Roman Catholic Church led to an especially virulent reactionary movement during the early twentieth-century Modernist

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156 Frederick Bayley Lord, *Footprints in my Life*, reprinted from *The Month* (August and September, 1905), 29.
Crisis, when it became clear that the Roman Church was not perfectly free of heretics, and therefore not pure after all. Although converts sang paeans to the scientific nature of pure Catholic doctrine, Catholics who actually worked in the sciences themselves, such as St. George Mivart, were not always so convinced of the easy compatibility between dogma and science. Already in 1893 Pope Leo XIII’s Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* had effectively limited the use of Biblical criticism, and by the early-twentieth century the Roman Catholic Church experienced a full-blown “Modernist Crisis” when officials, especially Pope Pius X, attempted to silence Catholics with modernist sympathies. The crisis came to a head following the publication of the syllabus *Lamentabili Sane* by the office of the Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition and the publication of Pius X’s Encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* only a few months later in 1907.158

*Pascendi* created the heresy of “modernism” and led to the persecution of modernist Catholics by integrationist Catholics – integrationists being those “who insisted on the ‘integration’ of all facets of life into an indivisible organic unity, hierarchically ordered beneath the Roman Pope.”159 In 1908 the Vatican excommunicated the modernists George Tyrell, S.J. and Alfred Loisy for heresy and in 1910 began requiring all priests to sign an “Oath Against Modernism.”160 Thus, the Church’s efforts to maintain its doctrinal purity against heretical pollutants led it to

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160 Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism*, 56.
clarify its boundaries by defining the heresy of modernism, categorizing it as dangerous, and making efforts to either control or eliminate it from the Mystical Body of Christ.\textsuperscript{161} Following the Holy See’s condemnation of modernism the relationship among higher Biblical criticism, evolutionary biology, and Catholicism, for example, became more tenuous. Nevertheless, although Catholic authority and dogma made certain scientific hypotheses unacceptable for orthodox Catholic scientists, converts and apologists could still argue that Catholic dogma itself was essentially modern and scientific by focusing on the scientific nature of dogma as opposed to science itself.

In any case, the full outbreak of the Modernist Crisis did not occur until after 1906. Thus, during the Church Crisis Rome seemed to offer the “absolute peace, confidence, certainty and faith” that was unavailable in the Church of England.\textsuperscript{162} For men like Lord, the purity of Roman Catholicism brought certainty, which, in turn, created peace of mind and spirit. Rather than being torn in multiple directions by the sects of Protestantism, Rome offered one a self unified under Catholic authority and dogma. John Godfrey Raupert, author of \textit{Ten Years in Anglican Orders}, noted “the chaotic state of Christendom outside the Catholic pale.”\textsuperscript{163} “Where is unity?”, he asked, “Where is peace? Where is certainty?”\textsuperscript{164} For Raupert, a Roman Catholic convert, these were not rhetorical questions. Unity, peace, and certainty could all be found under the Roman Pontiff.

- Conclusion

\textsuperscript{161} See Mary Douglas, \textit{Purity and Danger}.
\textsuperscript{162} Lord, \textit{Footprints in my Life}, 29.
\textsuperscript{163} “Viator” [John Godfrey Raupert], \textit{Ten Years in Anglican Orders} (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co. Ltd, 1898), 259.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid.
Many Britons gravitated toward Catholicism around the turn of the twentieth century because it seemed more “modern” than Protestantism. This is, on the surface, a strange claim. Most Protestants at the time automatically associated Catholicism with the Dark Ages. To them, Protestantism was the religion of modernity, whereas Catholicism was trapped in the Middle Ages. Yet a small but vocal and influential group of converts argued Catholicism could be seen as modern in its relationship with science, the association of incarnational theology and progressive causes, and the association of Catholic supernaturalism with romanticism and aestheticism. This group of converts saw Catholicism as amenable to the appealing aspects of modernity while, as Owen writes, “rejecting the rationalist assumptions” of materialism or naturalism. In additional, Catholicism’s emphasis on communalism seemed to blunt modern individualism. The fin-de-siècle relationship between Catholicism and modernity was complex, but many Britons who were dissatisfied with Protestantism, realized that they could retain their identity as both religious and progressive Britons by embracing Catholicism. This newfound appeal of both Anglo and Roman Catholicism, however, soon called forth an anti-Ritualist movement determined to preserve the Protestant character of the English Church and state.
CHAPTER 2

Never Trust a Clergyman in Black:
British Anti-Catholicism during the Great Church Crisis

On June 22, 1897, Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee with a service outside St. Paul’s Cathedral and a progress through South London accompanied by 50,000 troops from around the world and eleven colonial prime ministers.¹ The royal procession was met by an enthusiastic populace everywhere. Victoria wrote in her journal: “No one ever, I believe, has met with such an ovation as was given to me, passing through those 6 miles of streets . . . The cheering was quite deafening & every face seemed to be filled with real joy. I was much moved and gratified.”²

Not everyone, however, was swept up in the pomp of the Jubilee celebrations. Rev. Charles Stirling, for example, warned his readers that the celebrations masked the reality that Britain was poised to collapse and descend into a new dark age. Why? Because God would surely punish Britain for the state’s growing leniency towards Roman Catholicism and the growth of Anglo-Catholicism within the Church of England. “Taught by experience,” he warned, “our fathers [in 1688] determined that Popery, the inveterate foe of Religious and Civil Freedom, the remorseless shedder of Protestant Blood, should be effectually curbed, and that they and their Posterity should be protected from Popish Aggression.”³ Yet, “The [Protestant] Principles of the British Constitution are now studiously ignored,” and as a result, “National Independence is well-nigh gone.”⁴

² Qted. in “A History of Jubilees.”
³ Charles Stirling, The Decline of England: or, the Other Side of the ‘Diamond Jubilee’ Shield: An Appeal to the Protestants of the Empire (London: Chas. J. Thynne, 1897), 6. Stirling was the President of the
As we have seen, Stirling was not alone in these concerns, but was merely one among the cacophony of voices comprising the Church Crisis. This chapter challenges the notion that religion became less publicly significant as the nineteenth century ended by examining the continued hold of religion on the British imagination through a study of anti-Catholicism between roughly 1898 and 1906. Anti-Catholicism remained a fixture of many forms of British Protestantism throughout the entire nineteenth and well into the twentieth century. Evangelicals worried that the increasing presence of Anglo and Roman Catholics threatened both soul and state. Protestants saw Anglo-Catholic Ritualists as especially dangerous since they were an enemy within who undermined the nation’s religious, political, and moral foundations. In order for Britain to remain a prosperous modern nation, Protestants argued, Catholicism – the religion of the Dark Ages – had to be kept at bay. Protestants argued that, far from being progressive, the Catholic revival would trigger national regression.

- **The Protestant Anti-Ritualists and Anti-Catholic Activists**

Prominent anti-Ritualists and anti-Catholic activists came from all types of backgrounds. Some were powerful elites. Sir William Vernon Harcourt, who will be discussed in detail later, and Lady Wimborne both came from old and well-respected families with traditions of public service. Lady Wimborne began life as Cornelia Henrietta Maria Spencer Churchill. As the daughter of John Winston Spencer Churchill, the sister of Randolph Churchill, and the aunt of Winston Churchill, she was a well-connected and potentially influential political figure. In fact, Cornelia Churchill

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Calvinistic Protestant Union and formerly the vicar of New Malden and Coombe, Surrey. He later became a member of the Council of the Imperial Protestant Federation.

4 Ibid., 6, 15.


Although most of the leaders of the Protestants societies came from middle-class families, many equally prominent anti-Ritualists came from considerably humbler origins. Walter Walsh was the son of a hotel porter, although he eventually rose to a position of comfortable respectability through his work as a Protestant writer and speaker.\footnote{See I. T. Foster, “Walsh, Walter,” \textit{Oxford Dictionary of National Biography} [hereafter cited as \textit{ODNB}] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).} John Kensit worked as a draper’s assistant before opening the City Protestant Book Depot on Paternoster Row in 1885.\footnote{See Martin Wellings, “Kensit, John,” \textit{ODNB}.} George Wise was probably the most prominent Protestant leader in Liverpool around the turn of the twentieth century. He was the son of an illiterate tanner, but eventually found fame and popularity as a controversial preacher. As the Church Crisis began to ferment, Wise founded the British Protestant Union to campaign against the unholy trinity of Romanism, Ritualism, and infidelity. By 1900 Wise’s popularity was such that when he ran for a seat on the Liverpool school board he received twice as many votes (107,063) as anyone else. In 1903 Wise became a city councilor and founded the Protestant Reformers’ Memorial Church, which soon became Liverpool’s largest church.\footnote{See Martin Wellings, “Wise, George,” \textit{ODNB}.} For many gifted orators like Wise, anti-Catholic Protestantism provided a niche that allowed them to leave their humble origins far behind.
As the cases of Lady Wimborne and George Wise indicate, anti-Ritualism was a cross-class phenomenon embraced by large swaths of the population by the late-nineteenth century. Perhaps the best way to measure the growth of anti-Catholic or anti-Ritualist feeling as a result of the events of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century is through the membership of the various Protestant organizations. As a result of the widespread perception of a Church Crisis caused by Ritualism and the growth of Roman Catholicism, Protestants began to form both pro-Protestant and anti-Ritualist organizations and join already existing societies in greater numbers.\(^{11}\)

The Church Association (CA) quickly became one of the most influential anti-Ritualist organizations as a result of its legal activities. Its growth can be seen in its steadily increasing annual income, which averaged around £15,000 in the opening years of the twentieth century.\(^{12}\)

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\(^{12}\) *The Record*, 4 January 1901, p. 11. See graph below. See chapter 4 for a more detailed discussion of the Church Association’s size and potential influence.
The Church Association, however, was merely one of dozens of Protestant organizations during the second half of the nineteenth century. In addition to writing, Walter Walsh aimed to unify these disparate societies by founding the Imperial Protestant Federation (IPF) in 1896. Any Protestant organization that agreed with the goals of the IPF could be admitted into the Federation, which aimed to reaffirm the empire’s Protestant identity by reenergizing and unifying Protestants throughout the British Empire. Members were to make every effort to induce Protestant churches to join the IPF, “so as to increase and cement the unity of the Protestant party.”13 The IPF quickly sought close relations with the Church Association. Although the Association never officially joined the IPF, other prominent organizations did, including the Calvinistic Protestant Union, the Grand Lodge

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13 "Imperial Protestant Federation," encl. in Walsh, *History of the Romeward Movement in the Church of England*, 48
of the Loyal Orange Institution of England, the National Club, and the Protestant
Reformation Society.

Saving the British Empire from papal bondage proved to be no small task, but
luckily the IPF provided its member organizations with several resources. These
included a plethora of publications and tracts, such as the IPF’s official magazine, the
Protestant Observer. The IPF claimed to produce an almost unbelievable literary output,
amounting to over two million publications—including over one million tracts—in 1896
alone.\textsuperscript{14} This output obviously included Walsh’s works; in 1901 the IPF gave away
twenty thousand copies of the Secret History.\textsuperscript{15} IPF members could also send for
federation lectures on a variety of topics such as “How Ritualism Helps the Pope,” “The
English Church Union a Romanizing Confederacy,” “The Seditious History and
Traitorous Designs of the Jesuit Order,” and “Why We Do Not Need the Church of
Rome.”\textsuperscript{16}

While Walsh was trying to federate the various Protestant societies, Lady
Wimborne was busily reaching out to Protestant women. In 1899 she founded the
impressive sounding Ladies’ League for the Defense of the Reformed Faith of the Church
of England, which later became the Church of England League. By May 1, 1900 the
League claimed 2,003 members. The number of both member and League branches
steadily increased thereafter.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 48, 56. The IPF most likely reached the figure of two million by including all the tracts published
by federated organizations in addition to tracts published directly under IPF auspices.
\textsuperscript{15} Illustrated Protestant Guide with Portraits of Leading Men & Women in the Imperial Protestant
Federation and Other Illustrations (London, c. 1902), 46; and The Record, 15 March 1901, p. 290.
\textsuperscript{16} “Imperial Protestant Federation,” 10.
\textsuperscript{17} The Church of England League Gazette 5, no. (May 1904), 117; and The Rock, 12 May 1904. Previous
two paragraphs published in Bethany Tanis, “Diverging Paths: Fin-de-Siècle Britishness and the Oxford
Movement,” Anglican and Episcopal History 77, no. 3 (September, 2008): 287-317.
The League also produced a newspaper called, initially, the *Ladies’ League Gazette*. By June of 1900 the *Gazette* already had a circulation of around 7,500. Wimborne’s Ladies’ League, however, was not the only anti-Ritualist Protestant women’s organization in existence. It had to compete with the Women’s Protestant Union, which published *The Protestant Woman* and eventually spawned the Girls’ and Boys’ Protestant Union. Due to the efforts of groups like the Ladies’ League and the Women’s Protestant Union, Chancellor J. J. Lias observed that discussion of the Church Crisis had even “filled the columns of the secular newspapers for three years past with accusations, recriminations, retorts, angry and even passionate discussions….”

Indeed, due to the untiring efforts of the anti-Ritualists, by the mid 1890s the connection between Romanism and Ritualism was unquestioned by Protestants. Protestant author Nehemiah Curnock reminded Britons that “We ought never to forget that the root principles which kindled the fires of Smithfield [where the Protestant martyrs were burned in the sixteenth century] are the root principles not only of Romanism, but also and equally of the form of High Anglicanism which we call Ritualism.” J. C. Ryle, the influential evangelical Bishop of Liverpool from 1880 to 1900, argued that “when they [the Ritualists] call themselves Catholics, they mean Romanists… Ritualism then is in its faith and forms Romanism….” Henry Wace, the

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18 *Ladies’ League Gazette* 1, no. 3 (June 1900): 49.
19 J. J. Lias, “The Outlook for the Church of England,” *Contemporary Review* 79 (January-June, 1901): 413. Rev. John James Lias was the Evangelical Anglican rector of East Bergholt and the Chancellor of Llandaff Cathedral after 1895. He had formerly been employed as a professor of modern literature at St. David’s College in Lameter and was the author of several books.
evangelical Dean of Canterbury from 1903 to 1924, simply referred to Anglo-Catholicism as "Anglo-Romanism." Perhaps the most curious anti-Ritualist active during the Church Crisis was a Protestant parrot. A parrot living in a country vicarage near Doncaster learned to say "No Popery!," "Remember the Fifth of November!," and "Three cheers for Mr. Kensit!" The parrot apparently taught the village children to repeat his lessons.

Although anti-Catholicism is commonly associated with mid-Victorian England, the widespread response to Anglo-Catholicism within the Church of England around the turn of the century indicates its continued viability. Anti-Catholicism in any period however, was seldom merely a knee-jerk reaction to perceived Romanism. It was an ideology with positive religious and national content.

In The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1829-1860, John Wolffe has correctly argued that anti-Catholicism was primarily about a search for a collective identity and played a key role in shaping the ideals of Britishness. Wolffe’s assessment also applies to fin-de-siècle Britian. Due to the close association between Protestantism and Britishness, Protestants opposed Catholicism for both theological and nationalist reasons. In fact, the theological and nationalist anti-Catholic arguments often bled imperceptibly into one another.

- **Theological Anti-Catholicism**

According to historian Martin Wellings, Victorian and Edwardian Protestants were hostile toward Anglo-Catholicism as a result of their theological convictions and the

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influence of Ritualism on evangelical piety.26 At the root of theological disagreements between evangelical Protestants and Anglo-Catholics were differing views of the relationship among authority in the church, the Bible, and tradition.27 Anglo-Catholics either believed that the Scriptures were the sole rule and norm of faith, but needed to be understood within the hermeneutical context of the Church, or that the Bible was one of two rules of the faith, the other being ecclesiastical tradition. Roman Catholics accepted the view laid down by the Council of Trent that the Bible and tradition both held equal authority within the church, although theologians such as Cardinal Newman were developing a new theory that placed the authority of the Papacy and magisterium (practically speaking) above either the Bible or tradition. Evangelical Protestants, on the other hand, tended to see the Bible as the sole rule and norm of faith and denied the need for it to be interpreted within the community of faith according to the *regula fidei*.28

The Protestant rejection of tradition led to the rejection of many Catholic doctrines as un-Biblical. “Romanism” offended the theological sensibilities of Protestants by promoting alien doctrines of justification, the role of the priesthood, the nature of the sacraments, and ecclesiology. Perhaps the most problematic aspect of Catholicism was its seeming tendency to set up priests as mediators between God and the human soul. Since Protestants valued unimpeded access to God, the idea of a human

27 Ibid., 15ff.
28 See Keith A. Mathison, *The Shape of Sola Scriptura* (Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 2001) for a discussion of different views of the relationship among the church, the Bible, and tradition. Using Mathison’s terminology, which was first devised by Heiki Oberman, Anglo-Catholics held either Tradition 1 or Tradition 2, Roman Catholics held either Tradition 2 or the developing Tradition 3, and Evangelical Protestants held Tradition 0.
mediator seemed heretical. Evangelical Protestant Dean of Canterbury, novelist, and philologist F. W. Farrar argued that sacerdotalism (the Catholic theory of a sacrificial priesthood) brought “back the deadliest virus of Romish error, and [thrust] a class and a caste between the soul and its free unimpeded access to God.” The idea of priestly mediation grated against Protestant individualism.

Additionally, the concept of the priest as mediator related to the unpopular Catholic doctrines of apostolic succession, the sacrifice of the Mass, and auricular confession, since each involved the concept of mediation. Samuel Smith, the Liberal MP for Flintshire, warned that “It is quite impossible to build up a system in which the sacrificing priest plays the leading part without pulling down the fabric of evangelical belief.” Equally disturbing to Protestants was the Catholic doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ’s body and blood in or in place of the Eucharistic elements. Evangelical Protestants regarded the adoration of the elements, which they saw as merely bread and wine, as gross idolatry.

Frequently, Protestants saw the adoration of the Eucharistic elements as evidence that Catholicism was in fact a pagan religion. Proponents of Evangelicalism were fond of noting that while Protestantism was a purely spiritual religion, Catholicism was a fleshly, carnal religion similar to the primitive religions discovered among heathen peoples in the colonies. Rev. R. C. Fillingham, for example, told an audience in Tottenhoe that the “ritual of the Buddha in China was like the ritual of Roman Catholicism: incense, bells

31 Samuel Smith, My Life Work (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902), 322.
32 See Farrar, “Undoing the Work of the Reformation,” 60-73 for the standard form of this argument.
and richly-vested priests.”33 Samuel Smith agreed. During a lecture on Ritualism and education he observed that Dr. Pusey had worn a hair shirt for twenty-eight years. Smith, who had a special interest in Indian affairs and had visited the subcontinent twice, had seen the Fakirs in India indulge in similar practices. For example, the Fakirs would insert hooks through the skin of their backs and then swing their bodies from poles. According to Smith, the similarity was that all false religions believed physical pain or deprivation could be used to please God.34 Thus, the Catholic practice of self mortification was indicative of paganism.

Some Protestants even seemed to believe that Catholics worshipped pagan gods or at least had directly absorbed some of their worship practices. Catholic symbolism, for example, was a source of endless speculation and anxiety for Protestants. For example, many Anglo and Roman Catholic churches used communion linens and wafers with I.H.S. marked on them. This is an abbreviation of the first three Greek letters in the name Jesus. At least one Protestant, however, believed I.H.S. actually stood for “the Egyptian pagan triad” of Isis, Horus, and Serapis.35 Other symbols that Protestants claimed originated in paganism included the lily, the wheel, and the image of the Virgin Mary and Christ as Mother and Child.36 While Roman Catholicism could be seen as a revival of paganism,

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34 Samuel Smith, What Ritualists Teach the Young: An Address Delivered at Buckley, 4th July, 1898 on Ritualism and Elementary Education (London: Chas. J. Thynne, 1898), 42.
36 See “Caius,” “The Lily,” The Protestant Observer 12 (March 1900): 39; and “Caius,” “The Mystic Wheel: The Wheels were Full of Eyes,” The Protestant Observer 12 (April 1900): 61-62. For a late-
many Protestants also believed it was more dangerous because it was a secret or
dishonest form of heathenism.37

Figure 1: A comparison showing the derivation of the mother and child image from pagan sources.

- **Patriotic Anti-Catholicism**

Besides being threatening to the Church of England, Catholicism was also seen as potentially dangerous to the nation. One of the most common and persistent anti-
Catholic assertions claimed that Catholicism was inherently “un-English.”38 Since the
Elizabethan era, the nation had defined itself as a providentially-protected Protestant

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nation in contradistinction to its Catholic enemies, France and Spain. According to historians Linda Colley and Raymond Tumbelson, Protestantism became a major component in the shaping of British national identity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. David Bebbington notes that the Protestant-Catholic divide was so significant in nineteenth-century Britain that it made the Celtic-English divide seem insignificant in comparison. Since Britain was essentially a Protestant nation, conversion to or even sympathy with Catholicism was seen as a treasonous activity. Not surprisingly then, the greater levels of Roman Catholic activity and “aggression” in England following the restoration of the hierarchy in 1850 had caused Britons to see Pope Pius IX and Cardinal Wiseman as greater threats “to national integrity than anyone since Napoleon.” While Protestants saw Roman Catholicism as a foreign threat to national sovereignty, they also accused Anglo-Catholics of being a “fifth column” for Romanism within the Church of England.

For many, modern Britishness only made sense in a Protestant context. The Church Association took the occasion of the Queen’s Jubilee in 1897 to remind her of that fact. According to the Association’s Loyal Address, “the marvelous progress” made in all areas on human knowledge during the years of Victoria’s long reign found its basis in the “liberty of conscience safeguarded by the Protestant Faith.” Protestantism, as expressed in the established Church of England, would guarantee the future progress of


43 Church Association, Council Minutes, 1 April 1897, C. S. 11, Lambeth Palace Library.
Britain. Indeed, the established Church and state were so intimately related that Bishop of London Mandell Creighton could claim that the “Church and state are the nation looked at from different points of view. The nation looked at from the secular side is the state, looked at from the religious side it is the Church, and separation between the two is impossible.” As a result of such views, Creighton also argued that “It is quite impossible that any considerable number of Englishmen should be Roman Catholics” because joining the Roman Catholic Church had the effect of cutting oneself “off from your part in striving to do your duty for the religious future of your country.” Roman Catholicism was “The Church of decadent peoples: it lives only on its past, and has no future,” whereas the established Church contained modern Britons, poised to move into the future.

Since Britons equated Roman and Anglo-Catholicism, they regarded Ritualism as a particularly “un-English” form of religion. Rev. Thomas Hadfield, for example, exhorted his listeners to

Keep the Church thoroughly Protestant, for I believe that the laymen are intensely Protestant. When strange priests come amongst you and begin to cross themselves at the Sacrament, resist them. The Church is your heritage, and the heritage of your children. We are not ashamed of our Protestantism. We know that it has given us an open Bible, civil and

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45 Qtd. in Louise Creighton, *The Life of Mandell Creighton* (London: Longmans, Green, 1913), 349.
religious liberties, spiritual freedom, intellectual progress, and material prosperity.\textsuperscript{47}

In another typical exchange, James Fleming, a popular preacher and royal chaplain to Queen Victoria and Edward VII, chastised the Anglo-Catholic Dean of Windsor by referring to him as “un-English.”\textsuperscript{48} In an undated pamphlet, Rev. J. G. H. Barry lamented the fact that “Sometimes people have called me a ‘Romanizer’…To call a priest a ‘Romanizer is, of course, to call him a cad and a traitor.’”\textsuperscript{49} Thus, by the turn of the twentieth century, Britons increasingly judged religion less by the veracity of its doctrines and more by its cultural implications for themselves and British identity.\textsuperscript{50}

Since the “new imperialism” of the late-nineteenth century strengthened British nationalism, it also had the effect of strengthening anti-Catholicism by making Ritualists in particular seem doubly treasonous. Anglican Headmaster of Harrow (and later Bishop of Calcutta) James E. C. Welldon thought that “where there was a country that was stationary and retrogressive it was Catholic, where there was a people that was progressive and Imperial it was Protestant.”\textsuperscript{51} Samuel Smith even quoted to the House of Commons Welldon’s assessment that “no decadent or dying nation in the world was Protestant. The future of the world belonged to the non-Roman Catholic nations and pre-

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eminently to Great Britain.” 52 While Anglican Evangelicals had a history of supporting British imperialism, it was only in the 1880s that Nonconformist Evangelicals began to actively support the Empire. 53 Hugh Price Hughes, a Wesleyan Methodist leader and president of the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches, became both a prominent supporter of both imperialism and anti-Ritualism. He argued that Britain had the God-given task of spreading Christianity and civilization through the means of her Empire and saw Ritualism as a threat to the national Church. 54 By the late-nineteenth century, Protestantism and imperialism had merged to such a degree that the Empire gained a new “spiritual legitimacy” in the eyes of many Britons. 55 In fact, Protestant Britishness itself became “undergirded by the sense of mission and opportunity provided by Empire.” 56

The importance invested in Britain’s Protestant identity combined with the resurgence of Roman and Anglo-Catholicism to create a sense of paranoia among many Protestants. This paranoia lent itself especially well to conspiracy theories and the belief that Anglo and Roman Catholics were attempting to subvert the British church and state. In this atmosphere, Protestants were unlikely to distinguish between Roman Catholics and Anglo-Catholics who still professed loyalty to the Church of England. According to James Fleming, the work of the Ritualists was an “organized, systematic” attempt to Romanize the Church of England. Fleming declared, “Let the Public know all, hear all,

52 Parliamentary Debates, 8 February 1899, 66: 250. The original context of Welldon’s words was a speech to the Bradford Church Congress.
55 See Wolfe, God and Greater Britain, 224.
56 Ibid., 260-1.
see all that is being done in the Church of England to undo the work of the Reformation, and then let the laity say ‘No,’ with a voice of thunder….”

As the turn of the century drew closer, Protestant paranoia grew more intense. Samuel Smith contended that “the fact is, we are in the presence of a gigantic conspiracy to Romanise England. There was a time when I did not believe this myself, but the study of late years had led me to believe and to see how deep, how widespread, how crafty is this conspiracy, and the great centre and seat of it is the National Church of this country.” William Harcourt agreed and said as much in Parliament. By 1899 Robert F. Horton, a Congregationalist who was at one time a fellow of New College, Oxford and later became the president of the National Free Church Council, wrote that

You are all aware that at the present time a resolute and persistent attempt is being made to bring out country back into the fold of the Papacy….It is not too much to say that the whole Catholic world is centreing its thought upon your country, that it will spare no money and no other means which in its opinion are legitimate to effect the conversion of England.

Horton’s aptly named book, *England’s Danger*, proved to be enormously popular and went through seven editions between May 1898 and March 1899.

But despite Horton’s careful explanation of the dangers of Rome, many Protestants believed Anglo-Catholics were actually worse than Roman Catholics, since they were traitors within the national church. Thomas Arnold had famously declared that

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59 Robert F. Horton, *England’s Danger*, 7th ed. (London: James Clarke & Co., 1899), 1-3. In 1903 Horton became chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and in 1905 he was elected president of the National Free Church Council. Elaine Kaye writes that, “At a time when nonconformists were at the height of their influence on political and religious life, he was regarded as an outstanding representative not only of Congregationalism but of nonconformity as a whole.” See Elaine Kaye, “Horton, Robert Forman,” *ODNB*. 
the difference between the Tractarians and Roman Catholics was like the difference between a declared enemy and a spy, “The one is the Frenchman in his own uniform…the other is the Frenchman disguised in a red coat…. I should honour the first, and hang the second.”60 Arnold’s view remained standard in fin-de-siècle Britain. While addressing the 1925 World’s Evangelical Alliance, popular author Joseph Hocking was still reminding his audience that Anglo-Catholicism was worse than Roman Catholicism because at least Romanists were honest to their vows, whereas the Ritualists perjured themselves while working as Romanists in disguise.61

As a result of seeing Ritualists as a fifth column within the Church of England, many Protestants became especially fixated on the apparent secrecy of Anglo-Catholic societies, such as the English Church Union (ECU), the Society of the Holy Cross (Societas Sanctae Crucis, SSC), the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, and the Order of Corporate Reunion, each of which they suspected of Romanizing intentions. Protestants such as Samuel Smith and Walter Walsh accused the Ritualists of forming secret societies with the intention of undermining society and the British state. On June 16, 1898, Samuel Smith announced in the House of Commons that Walsh’s The Secret History of the Oxford Movement had alerted the nation to the existence of a diabolical conspiracy to “Romanise” the Church of England. 62 Walsh’s bestselling Secret History argued that Tractarianism had spawned numerous traitorous “secret societies” whose goal was to subjugate the Church of England, and the British people, to the Church of Rome through corporate reunion. Walsh’s bestseller even described the “secret greetings” used

by members of the “secret” Society of the Holy Cross.\(^63\) SSC members wore special crosses so that they could visually recognize each other. Upon contact, one member would great another suspected member with the words “\textit{Pax tibi}.” If the person being greeted was in fact a member of the SSC he would reply “\textit{Per crucem}.”\(^64\)

In addition to fearing nefarious conspiracies, Protestants argued that Catholics could not be trusted as citizens since their loyalty was divided between the Roman Church and the state. If there was a conflict of interests, most Protestants had no doubt that Catholics would support the Pope before the Parliament. William Gladstone’s 1874 response to the proclamation of papal infallibility remained influential into the twentieth century. The new dogma had persuaded Gladstone that Catholics could not be trusted in their political allegiance, since the Pope could decree that Catholics must obey him rather than the state. Gladstone’s pamphlet on \textit{The Vatican Decrees in their bearing on Civil Allegiance} sold an astonishing 145,000 copies.\(^65\) In his writings on Ritualism, Gladstone reiterated his influential position that no one could convert to Roman Catholicism without renouncing his moral and intellectual freedom, thereby “placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of another…”\(^66\) In the eyes of Gladstone and later writers such as Robert Horton and Joseph Hocking, Catholicism prevented complete loyalty to the state.\(^67\)

\(^{63}\) Walsh discovered the secret greeting in the Society’s \textit{Statuta} in section VI, chapter 24.


To make matters worse, Catholic belief in priests as mediators between God and man and the supremacy of the Pope seemed to threaten English liberty. Most Protestants believed that conversion to Rome meant the end of intellectual liberty. Hocking and Horton reminded readers that should Rome re-conquer England, all mental liberty would be irrevocably lost. Within the context of such concern about the relationship between Catholicism and intellectual freedom, the Ritualist controversy became entangled with Arthur Balfour’s plans to found and endow an Irish Roman Catholic University. Walter Long, then the Conservative President of the Board of Agriculture, wrote to Balfour to suggest that he postpone discussion of the University question since “at this precise moment this feeling which has aroused about Ritualism would, I am afraid, assume serious proportions when it became known that we were going to establish” a Roman Catholic University without being “prepared to do anything to check Ritualism.” Moreover, many Britons, such as a writer calling him or herself “Voces Catholicæ” declared that no Catholic university was even possible “because no sort of liberty and not even a decent attempt at science could be found in any institution under the yoke of

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68 Even secular scholars of religion argued that Catholicism stifled intellectual liberty. For example, Emile Durkheim wrote, Roman Catholicism “is not restricted to mechanical ceremonies, but seeks to control the consciousness. So it appeals to conscience, and even when demanding blind submission of reason, does so by employing the language of reason. Nonetheless, the Catholic accepts his faith ready made, without scrutiny.” Emile Durkheim, Selected Writings, Anthony Giddens, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 242. See also Edward Burnt Tylor, Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom (New York: Gordon Press, [1871] 1974), 407.

69 Horton and Hocking, Shall Rome Reconquer England?, ch. 5.


71 Walter Long to A. J. Balfour, 27 November 1898, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49776, f. 12.
Rome…” After all, if Romanism was synonymous with unreason itself, how could Catholics possibly be expected to manage a thriving university?

While the debate about Catholic intellectual freedom raged in the closing years of the nineteenth century, the myth of the “freeborn Englishman” who resisted priestly and monarchial tyranny remained a crucial element of national identity. As a result, Protestant claims that Ritualism and Romanism would “entangle a free Protestant nation in the yoke of a priestly bondage” fed anti-Catholicism. In fact, any kind of civil liberty would have to be forfeited to the Roman Pontiff. Britain as a whole would be reduced to a demeaning state of physical and mental slavery to a foreign priest. Late-nineteenth century Protestant hymns sometimes played on the myth of English resistance to tyranny.

One such song, entitled “Papal Rome Rejected,” declared that

No, Papal Rome, no more to thee,  
Shall Englishmen submit,  
Though, on thy throne in Babylon,  
Thou, Sorceress, dost sit.

We utterly reject thy mass,-  
Pretended sacrifice,-  
Thy feignèd penance, mocking fast,  
Thy purgatorian lies.

Another not-so-subtly named hymn entitled “Of Priest Confessors, Beware” declared

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73 See James Gairdner, The English Reformation: What it was and what it has Done (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1899), 7.
77 B. M. N., Protestant Songs for Troubles Times (London: John Kensit, 1891), 19. The circulation of this song collection is difficult to determine. It was probably popular in anti-Ritualist circles.
Protestants saw Catholics as intellectually and spiritually enslaved to a tyrannical absolutist religion. Not surprisingly, the rise of Ritualism appeared to many to be an attempt to enslave freeborn Englishmen by exchanging their Protestant liberty for the “smells and bells” of idolatrous worship.

Protestants also accused Catholics of torturing both themselves and others. Corporeal mortification, as practiced by monks and nuns, among others, especially fascinated and terrified Protestants. John Kensit’s display of Roman and Anglo-Catholic cilices, hair shirts, and rope and steel disciplines in his bookstore shop window created a

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78 B. M. N., Protestant Songs for Troubles Times, 26-7. This hymn seems to play off the well-known lyrics to “Rule Britannia.”
minor scandal, but almost certainly drew customers. Protestant magazines for boys especially liked to provide detailed descriptions and illustrations of instruments of self-mortification, most likely because the subject matter appealed to their young audience.79

Most anti-convventual literature included the requisite chapter on corporeal discipline. Protestants contended that mortification was intended to merit salvation and claimed that the practice derived from pagan sources.80 But even worse than the thought of Catholics disciplining themselves in the privacy of their own homes was the though that Catholics also had a penchant for torturing those with whom they disagreed. Protestants delighted in rehearsing the tragic history of the Spanish Inquisition and quoting from Foxe’s Book of Martyrs, but perhaps their favorite Catholic horror story involved the Iron Virgin of Nuremberg.

According to such Protestant heavy-weights as historian J. A. Wylie and evangelist H. Grattan Guinness, the Roman Inquisition had introduced a sarcophagus-like torture device throughout Bavaria during the Counter-Reformation.81 Those accused to heresy would be forced within a large container shaped to look like the Virgin Mary. The interior of the “Iron Virgin” contained spikes, which would slowly impale the victim to death. Interest in the Iron Virgin peaked when a collection of torture devices from the Royal Castle of Nuremberg were displayed in London in 1891. The fact that in reality no Roman Inquisition existed in Bavaria, that Nuremberg was a free city controlled by Lutherans, that the sarcophagus was shaped like a German maid, not the Virgin Mary,

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79 See, for example, “Instruments of Torture now in use in the Church of Rome and Among the Ritualists,” Uncle Ben’s Budget (July 1899): 161-163. Uncle Ben described and illustrated steel and cord disciplines, pectoral crosses and hearts with sharp steel points, steel anklets and wristlets, steel cinctures for arms and thighs, and horse-hair shirts and waistbands for the pleasure of his readers.
80 H. K. [Nehemiah Curock], Dr. Pusey’s Hair Shirt; or, Paganism and Ritualism, 1.
that the apparatus was used for secular crimes, and that the device shown in London may
have been a replica did not dissuade Protestants from using the Iron Virgin as a prime
element of Catholic cruelty.\textsuperscript{82} Evangelicals feared that should the Papacy regain control
of England the nation would witness a reintroduction of not only the Iron Virgin, but also
of the racks and gallows and martyrdoms that had marked the years before the
Reformation.\textsuperscript{83}

Most Protestants believed that the result of Romish intellectual, spiritual, and
physical slavery was national stagnation. Therefore, one of the most persistent arguments
used by both continental and British anti-Catholic agitators was that Catholicism retarded
national progress by enslaving minds and wills to medieval superstition.\textsuperscript{84} Rev. J.
Broadhurst Nichols provided a typical summary of this argument while illustrating the
dangers of Catholicism:

\begin{quote}
\ldots a return of Roman Catholic ascendancy would mean the loss of the
liberties which are our glory, the suppression of the forces which make
and maintain greatness, and the decay of the nation as a leader in the
councils and progress of the world.\textsuperscript{85}
\end{quote}

As examples of the decay and destitution wrought by the Catholic religion, Englishmen
generally pointed to Ireland or the Mediterranean nations. Robert Horton warned that the
conversion of England was possible and that \textquotedblleft it is quite within the range of possibility

\textsuperscript{82} Herbert Lucas, S. J., \textit{The 'Iron Virgin' of Nuremberg: An Alleged Instrument of the Roman Inquisition}

\textsuperscript{83} The Iron Virgin horror story was a favorite of Protestant youth magazines. See \textquotedblleft Uncle Jack,\textquotedblright \textit{The
describing the horrors of the Iron Virgin, Uncle Jack warned his young readers that \textquotedblleft if Rome could get the
power and the Ritualists, who are largely Jesuits in disguise, are trying to give it to her, these same Jesuits
would delight to use their hellish tortures on you and me and every follow of Christ as they did in years
gone by. Their master the Devil changes not, and his followers change not. History repeats itself.\textquotedblright See
also \textquotedblleft Progress of Ritualism and the Designs of Popery,\textquotedblright 5.

\textsuperscript{84} Anglophile Max Weber\textquotesingle s \textit{The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism} can be seen in this context.

\textsuperscript{85} Nichols, \textit{The Advance of Romanism in England}, 11. Nichols was also the author of \textit{Evangelical Belief: The
Prize Essay on the Present Conflict between Evangelicalism and Sacerdotalism} (London: Religious
Tract Society, 1899).
that another generation will see the country that you love brought to the condition of Italy
or Spain.”\textsuperscript{86} According to F. W. Farrar, the comparison of Mexico to Britain, Ireland to
Scotland, and Connaught County to Ulster effectively made the case that Roman
Catholicism retarded national development.\textsuperscript{87}

- **Moral Anti-Catholicism**

  Protestants also feared that Romanists disguised as Ritualists were crippling the
nation by destroying its morals. For Protestants, perhaps the most morally destructive
Ritualist innovation was auricular confession. By the 1850s advanced Anglo-Catholics
were joining Romanists in urging the faithful to make sacramental oral confession to a
priest in order to receive absolution from sins. Not only did many Anglo-Catholics
encourage frequent confession, but some also began making auricular confession a
prerequisite for admission to the Eucharist and confirmation. While anti-Catholic
polemics against the practice of confession within the Roman Catholic Church were
common throughout the nineteenth century, the reemergence of auricular confession
within the Church of England gave Protestants a new sense of urgency.\textsuperscript{88}

  There were several celebrated turn-of-the-century affairs involving the
confessional, but one of the most notorious was the Cavalier scandal. On March 17, 1899,
A. R. Cavalier, a prominent evangelical Anglican clergyman, published a letter he had
sent to Mandall Creighton, the Bishop of London, regarding the sad story of his son

\textsuperscript{86} Robert F. Horton, *England’s Danger*, 3. See also “Presbyter” [A. W. E.], *The Need of the Times: A
\textsuperscript{87} Farrar, “Undoing the Work of the Reformation,” 71.
\textsuperscript{88} See, for example, James Mortimer Sangar, *The Protestant Crisis* (London: W. Wileman, 1899); and
Robert Henry Goodacre, *The Ritualist Crisis and Protestant Craze, A Letter, etc.* (W. H. Eaton: Leek,
1899).
Arthur. 89  Arthur had begun attending Ritualist church services and going to
confession.90  When his father forbade this activity and planned to take Arthur to
Australia to get a clean start on life, Arthur ran away from home and found shelter with
Ritualist priests. Creighton eventually located Arthur for his father, but not before
chastising several Anglo-Catholic priests for inappropriate behavior and igniting public
fears about the under-handed activities engaged in by Catholics, which apparently
included kidnapping.  A. R. Cavalier complained that due to the Ritualist confessional

Our family, which has hitherto been exceptionally happy and united is
divided. Long continued deceit and disobedience have now culminated in
[Arthur’s] throwing over his parents and brothers in the most heartless
way. This is the fruit of the Ritualistic teaching he has been thus secretly
imbibing. His prospects are destroyed, his moral tone is lowered, and his
sense of right and wrong is impaired.91

The ensuing scandal, which played out over the editorial pages of the Times, pitted
patriarchal against clerical authority and again questioned the morality of the
confessional. The “Cavalier Case” occurred at nearly the same time as a confessional
scandal at Wellingborough, in which a Nonconformist minister accused the local Anglo-
Catholic priests of inappropriate questioning.92  Although Protestants such as A. R.
Cavalier opposed confession for theological reasons (it made the priest a mediator
between God and man), they contested it primarily for moral reasons. In particular, they

89 A. R. Cavalier was the clerical secretary to the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission. His letter appeared in
the Times, 17 March 1899, p. 12, col. B. The Cavalier Case is addressed in the Creighton papers, Fulham
papers, vol. 11, ff. 286-339, Lambeth Palace Library. See especially A. R. Cavalier to Mandell Creighton,
5 February 1899, The Cavalier Case is addressed in the Creighton papers, Fulham papers, vol. 11, ff. 286-
288, Lambeth Palace Library. Excerpts from A. R. Cavalier’s letter to Creighton were also reprinted in
Protestant Woman [the organ of the Women’s Protestant Union], May 1900, p. 111.
90 See Wellings, “Anglo-Catholicism, the ‘Crisis in the Church’ and the Cavalier Case of 1899,” 239-258.
14, col. C; H. Omer Cavalier, Times, 27 March 1899, p. 9, col. D; and A. R. Cavalier, Times, 5 July 1899,
p. 4, col. C.
91 A. R. Cavalier to Mandell Creighton, 5 February 1899, Creighton papers, Fulham papers, vol. 11, ff. 286-
8. A. R. Cavalier later published this letter to Creighton in the 17 March 1899 Times.
92 Wellings, “Anglo-Catholicism, the ‘Crisis in the Church’ and the Cavalier Case of 1899,” 250.
worried that the confessional would undermine sexual morality, patriarchal authority within the family, and gender roles.

Such was the national uproar over auricular confession that a Parliamentary Return on the number of dioceses containing confessional boxes in the Church of England was issued with the Parliamentary papers in July of 1899. The Earl of Northbrook had moved for the return in the Lords in order to ascertain how widespread the practice of auricular confession was in the Church of England. According to the return, there were confessional boxes in only five dioceses: London, Chichester, Exeter, Oxford, and Southwell. The investigation, however, was obviously flawed, since many of the most advanced Ritualists provided auricular confession from a stool, not a box, and the Home Secretary was limited to asking about boxes. Therefore, the fact that thirty dioceses did not contain confessional boxes failed to tell Parliament anything useful.

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93 “The Use of Confessional Boxes,” The Evening Argus (Brighton), 6 July 1899, p. 2.
94 “Politics and People,” The Evening Argus (Brighton), 7 July 1899, p. 4.
Figure 2: Auricular confession from a stool. From H. W. Clarke, “The Confessional” in the Church of England (Beckenham: H. W. Clarke, 1898), plate opposite vi. Clarke believed that “inquisitive priests and loquacious women at the confessional are dangerous for family peace” (iii). While the penitent gazes demurely downward the priest’s eyes are fixed on the body of his female parishioner.

The Parliamentary Return failed to allay anxieties. Many Britons especially feared that priests would ask penitents prying questions of a sexual nature. The celibate young priest was seen as a voyeur, coaxing titillating stories out of naïve victims. Reflecting these fears, Nonconformist R. W. Perks, MP told his fellow Wesleyans in Boston that he was glad the Methodist Church would never have to deal with auricular
confession in “some dark corner where some silly girl might creep in and confess her sins to some young blackguard of a priest.” 95    Worse than mere questioning, anti-Catholic agitators often claimed that priests sometimes made inappropriate advances to young women within the confines of the confessional. 96  The poem “Jon Duan in the Aisles of Rome,” published in Weldon’s 1874 Christmas Book, colorfully illustrates Protestant fears about the immorality of the confessional that continued into the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods:

His lips bent forward near her ear,
‘Come, cast away your foolish fear;
Confess the sins that on you press-
Confess to me, sweet girl, confess!’
Save heavier sighs, no answer came.
The vicar’s breath came quicklier then;
‘Dear Alice!’ – for he knew her name-
Burst forth that villain among men-
‘I quite forget my own distress
In telling you I love you well;
So well, that all the pains of Hell
I’d bear for one long close caress
I claim you, who shall dare say nay,
Or tear you from my arms away?
Come darling, we are all alone;
One hour will all past pain atone;
Come, let no longer aught divide-
Come, darling, be the Church’s bride!’ 97

95 Boston Guardian, 7 April, 1900, p. 5.  See also Paul Nicholls, Khaki and the Confessional, 17.  It is worth noting that Roman Catholic priests received thorough training in hearing confessions and were very sternly warned not to question penitents in such a way that “taught sin.”  Many Protestants felt that it was actually safer to confess to a Roman priest than to an Anglo-Catholic for this reason.
Even secular Britons often saw confession as inherently immoral because they feared it would destroy the family due to the priest’s usurpation of the husband/father role. Some men argued that the insertion of the priest into intimate relationships destroyed patriarchal authority. For example, a wife might tell her priest secrets that she would refuse to tell her husband, or children might share things with priests that they

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would not tell their parents. In each case the priest had usurped the position of the familial authority figure. Unless the father took action,

This wily, crafty Ritualist,
With cope and incense strong,
This unctuous and bearded priest
With cope and vestments long…

would enthrall the weaker vessels of his family, as one Victorian poet observed:

Your wives and daughters soon will learn
On him their hopes to rest,
And every feeling overturn
Unless by him expressed.\(^99\)

Rev. Frederick Meyrick agreed, arguing that the priest constituted an alien presence within the family household. He wrote, “What is it that makes home home to the English man and the English woman? It is the absence of the director. When the director is present there is an alien power in the household, standing between the husband and wife, the father and daughter.”\(^100\) F. W. Farrar argued that a young priest fresh from Oxford

In his self-sufficiency and blindness, may hopelessly poison the peace of families; may ‘Divert and crack, rend and deracinate / The unity and wedded calm’ of households; may subtly alienate the love of wives from their husbands; may sow discord between the daughter and her mother; may, in sheer incompetence, and without consciously wicked intentions, reduce the whole religious state of the silly and the impressionable to a chaos of hysterical falsities by teaching for doctrines the deceits of men.\(^101\)

If possible, the dangers of the confessional to family relations left Francis Peek even more disturbed than Farrar. According to Peek

\(^99\) Qtd. in Best, “Popular Protestantism,” 135. Best found this poem cited from an unknown source by Esmé Cecil Wingfield-Stratford in *The Victorian Tragedy* (London: Routledge, 1930), 178.
\(^100\) Frederick Meyrick, “The Confessional,” *Church and Faith, Being Essays on the Teaching of the Church of England*, John Percival, ed. (London: Blackwood, 1899), 243-4. Meyrick was the Anglican rector of Blickling with Erpingham and a canon of Lincoln Cathedral after 1869. He had been a fellow of Trinity College, Oxford and was the author of numerous books.
\(^101\) Farrar, “Undoing the Work of the Reformation,” 70. In addition to writing numerous books, Farrar was an honorary fellow of King’s College, London, a fellow of the Royal Society, and had been a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. He served as a Dean of Canterbury after 1895.
it is a vital question whether the manly English people will submit to it [the confessional]. Will the young men of England be content that those to whom they are betrothed should be taught they cannot be forgiven sins of word or thought except by full confession before communion to a priest, perhaps one not long from Oxford, where the moral tone is certainly far from perfect? Will English parents allow their young daughters’ minds to be poisoned by these so-called priests, or English husbands allow these presumptuous men to come between them and their wives and to worm themselves into the secrets of family life? It may be also noted here that there is practically nothing to prevent an Anglican priest making these secrets known.…  

Although Meyrick, Farrar, and Peek’s concerns may appear exaggerated, Maria Lamonaca has argued that men were correct in their assumption that the confessional was popular with women precisely because it provided a means of side-stepping patriarchal authority. As we have seen, the Cavalier Case of 1899 became a major sensation in part because it appeared to give concrete form to Protestant worries about Ritualists corrupting the young and immature while undermining the authority of the father.

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102 Peek, “Sacerdotalism,” 95. Francis Peek was an evangelical Anglican layman. He was a member of the first London School Board and advocated for religious teaching in elementary education. He also served as the chairman of the Howard Association, a society established to ameliorate and prevent crime and poverty.

103 See Maria Lamonaca, “‘Her Director, Her Priest,…Her God’: Victorian Women Writers on Confession,” Nineteenth Century Studies 17 (2003): 73-90.
Protestant groups such as the Church Association often added a class element into concerns about the relationship between confession and patriarchal control. In one tract addressed to British working men before the 1900 General Election, the Church Association urged workers to put “Protestantism before Politics” since the growth of Catholicism would undermine their control over wives and families:

Men of Freedom’s Isle, already many of you are not heads of their own households. The Priest is. When will you awaken to your
responsibilities? IS freedom nought to you? IS the priest to be your master? IS he to mould your wife and family while you are away at business, as the potter does the clay? IS he to be the death’s head at your feast? IS he to be allowed to undermine your authority and to reduced your household to a state of superstitious slavery? Surely not!  

By conflating religious concerns with growing anxiety about the place of women in an era that was witnessing the growth of a modern women’s rights movement, the Church Association was able to strike a chord with working men.  

One famous case, made much of by the Church Association before the 1900 General Election, revolved around a Liverpool postal worker and his wife who had recently begun seeing a Ritualist priest for confession. Eventually the husband’s rough treatment of his wife caused her to seek a divorce. The husband, however, countered that he had been justified in treating his wife severely since she had been attending confession, which could only mean misconduct with the Ritualist curate. When the curate’s vicar stated that the postman was lying, the postman responded by suing the vicar for libel. The Protestant jury found in favor of the postman without even leaving the box and fined the vicar £150.  

The postman had requested and received aid from the Church Association, which later turned his case into a warning for working-class men. A tract explained that while the postman had refused to go to confession, 

His wife, however, went repeatedly to Confession, and the husband found his influence completely gone. ‘In October, 1897, the Postman was on early morning duty, and when he returned home there was no breakfast for him. He found his children had not been washed or dressed, but after the got up they were left running about the bedroom and no one to look after them. He had to wash and dress the children and cook the breakfast 

104 “Protestant Electors of Great Britain!” Protestantism before Politics Leaflet No. 11 (London: Church Association, c. 1900), 3.
106 Church Association, Council Minutes, 15 February 1900, C. S. 11, Lambeth Palace Library; and John Wakeford, “The Orangemen’s Church Discipline Bill 1903,” encl. in English Church Union, Minute Book of General Meetings, C.U.Dep.5, f. 185, Lambeth Palace Library.
because his wife was attending early Mass. ... At the close of the evidence, the Jury refused to hear Counsel further, and awarded the Postman £150 damages. None the less is the Working Man’s happy home broken up and priestly domination established. WORKING MEN, will you not help to stamp out this great social evil, by insisting on the purification of the Established Church from the Mass and the Confessional?  

Figure 5: The left side shows the ”priest at work,” and the right side shows the disastrous results. Notice the confessional stool as opposed to a box. “Protestantism before Politics,” Leaflet no. 6 (London: Church Association, c. 1900). From Lambeth Palace Library.

Having seen the horrific results of confession, such as having to cook one’s own breakfast, Rev. John Brown was arguing a decade later that

If asked what in that system I consider the most degrading, the most debasing, the most disgusting, the most deadly, the most damnable, element: as being subversive and destructive of morality, of true religion, or social and family relationships, or all that tends to godliness, and nobility of character, in short, everything that is good, and true, and holy, I

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107 “The Effect of Ritualism in a Working Man’s Household” Protestantism before Politics Leaflet No. 6 (London: Church Association, c. 1900), 2. Emphasis in the original.
would without out moment’s hesitation answer: “THE CONFESSIONAL.” In this institutions – more like the production of a Council of Archdemons in Pandemonium, than of a professed Holy Catholic Church – Romanism possesses a power as near almighty as any thing in this world can be.\(^{108}\)

Unfortunately for Protestants, confession was not the only evil associated with Ritualism and Catholicism. Protestant fathers also often feared that Ritualist priests were using the power of the confessional and church schools to lure their daughters (and fortunes) into prison-like convents. Samuel Smith noted that

Several cases came to my knowledge of scions of leading and noble families captured by means which I can only call fraudulent, such as tutors introduced as Protestants while Jesuits in disguise. Some great fortunes and hereditary titles have thereby passed from the Anglican to the Roman communion. Girls’ schools were specially used for this kind of propagandism, and it is beyond doubt that in many of them habitual confession to a priest was insisted on by Anglican sisterhoods. In not a few cases these girls in after life found their way into Romish convents.\(^{109}\)

Nineteenth and twentieth-century Protestants continued to question the ethics of Catholic priests, and above all else, they suspected the sexual morals of the supposedly celibate priesthood. “Of course priests would sleep with the housekeepers! Of course nunneries were always liable to become priests’ brothels!”\(^{110}\) Because Protestants saw celibacy as an unnatural state, they assumed it would inevitably result in hidden sexual deviance.

Britain not only produced massive amounts of anti-convontual literature, but also imported even more from America.\(^{111}\) The American bestseller *The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk* (1836) became one of the first transatlantic anti-convontual blockbusters and set the pattern for future imports. During the 1890s and early 1900s one extremely

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\(^{109}\) Smith, *My Life Work*, 322.

\(^{110}\) Best, “Popular Protestantism,” 126. See also Ingram, “Protestant Patriarchy and the Catholic Priesthood in Nineteenth Century England,” 784-787.

\(^{111}\) Best, “Popular Protestantism,” 132.
popular exposé of convent life, *Convent Life Unveiled* by the former American nun Edith O’Gorman, was also a trans-Atlantic import. Originally published in 1871, *Convent Life Unveiled* was already in its 32nd edition by 1913. O’Gorman noted that although the first edition “retailed at $1.50 (six shillings), and had an immense circulation throughout the United States and British America,” she nonetheless published a cheaper one-shilling edition “so that it might more freely circulate among all classes of the British public.”

O’Gorman, who escaped from her New Jersey convent in 1868 and later married a French priest, toured England giving lectures from 1881 until 1885. She returned to England in 1888 and boasted that

> My lectures, and the circulation of my books, have been the means in God’s hands of arousing the British public to the necessity of immediate action in demanding Parliament to enact a law for the public inspection of all convents and monasteries, which are the only public institutions in the British Empire that are daily defying the law and remain free from public inspection.\(^{113}\)

Books and lectures by ex-monks such as the former Franciscan Joseph McCabe were also popular, although they lacked the romance of harrowing female escapes.\(^{114}\)

The flood of anti-conventual sentiment led to multiple attempts to pass Parliamentary legislation that would regulate convents and monasteries. The House of Commons appointed a committee to examine convents and monasteries, but found no evidence that the institutions were either dungeons or brothels. Nevertheless, bills designed to protect women from convents had been introduced into the House of Commons in both 1851 (“Bill to prevent Forcible Detention of Females in Religious Houses”) and 1871 (“Bill for appointing Coms. to inquire respecting Monastic and

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\(^{113}\) Ibid., ix-x.

\(^{114}\) See Joseph McCabe, *Twelve Years in a Monastery*, 2nd ed. (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1903).
By the turn of the century, the controversy had not abated. Samuel Smith was still raising the issue before the House of Commons in 1899, even repeating to Parliament the sad story of Sister Agnes. Protestants – such as a group of Free Churchmen in Cardiff who called for inspections of Catholic institutions in 1909 – continued to champion the cause into the twentieth century.

Ironically, Protestants conceived of Anglo-Catholic confessors and monks both as sexual predators who threatened to usurp masculine authority and as emasculated eunuchs with feminine or even homosexual tendencies. After the Reformation, most Protestants asserted the rationality of their religion. Since men often associated reason with masculinity, Protestant thinkers came to associate Protestantism with the masculine form of Christianity. Catholicism, in contrast, came to be seen as irrational and therefore effeminate. Consequently and not surprisingly, most Britons saw Protestant Britain as uniquely masculine. Britons feared that the infiltration of effeminate Romanism—men in dresses (albs and cassocks)—would emasculate England. Charles Kingsley, the most


116 Samuel Smith, Lawlessness in the Church of England (London: Chas. J. Thynne, 1899), 14. Smith made this speech on February 8, 1899. See also “A Clergyman’s Widow; Author of ‘The Orphan’s Friend, etc.,’ Sister Agnes; or the Captive Nun: A Picture of Conventual Life (London: Seeleys, 1854).


119 Rev. J. B. Mayor argued that Protestant hymn such as “O God, Our Help in Ages Past” had a more “masculine rhythm,” than the Anglo-Catholic hymns found in Hymns Ancient and Modern. See J. B. Mayor, “Ethics of Ritualism: Part 2,” Contemporary Review 22 (June-November, 1873): 483.
famous proponent of “muscular Christianity,” described Roman Catholic priests as effete, Roman Catholic saints as “prayer-mongering eunuch[s],” and Anglo-Catholics as “radically un-English,” since their ideal of celibacy insulted marriage. Kingsley’s depiction of Catholicism remained a cliché among Protestants long into the twentieth century. Protestantism supposedly brought with it freedom and independence, thereby establishing the dignity of men. Catholicism, on the other hand, threatened cherished British freedoms. For most Protestants, Britain’s masculine, rational character and glorious future depended upon a Protestant foundation.

Also, as a result of the Protestant conflation of Britishness and masculinity, Catholics were seen as both un-English and unmanly. During the mid-nineteenth century, the magazine Punch was especially fond of illustrating the feminine nature of Ritualists, noting that clergymen with “extreme Hugh Church proclivities are very fond of dressing like ladies. They are much addicted to wearing vestments diversified with smart and gay colours, and variously trimmed and embroidered.” On a different occasion, Punch helpfully suggested that “perhaps the effeminate parsons whose heads are turned with the love of dress, will ultimately take to wearing ‘Le Follet’ (the Crinoline) under their ecclesiastical petticoats.” Since Britons judged interest in the latest fashions and one’s


121 Reed, Glorious Battle, 220. See Tanis, “Diverging Paths: Fin-de-Siècle Britishness and the Oxford Movement.”

122 “Parsons in Petticoats,” Punch 48 (10 June, 1865): 239.

appearance to be a feminine trait, they saw any priest who was overly concerned with whether to wear a biretta or a zucchetto as decidedly unmanly.124

Figure 6: Ritualists try on and model their Eucharistic vestments. An Ardent Ritualist says “Oh, Athanasius, it’s charmingly becoming!” “Height of Fashion,” *Punch* (1866), reprinted in Ellis Hanson, *Decadence and Catholicism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), fig. 7, p. 254.

By the late-nineteenth century, however, Protestant mockery of the supposedly feminine traits of Ritualists and Romanists had subtly shifted. Many suspected Anglo-Catholics of being not only effeminate, but also of being homosexual.125 The Ritualist controversy grew especially heated at the same time as a homosexual identity was coalescing in the wake of the Oscar Wilde trial. David Hilliard has famously argued that “one facet of the [emerging] homosexual subculture was the Anglo-Catholic religion.”126

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As effeminacy became accepted as a marker of homosexual identity, Protestants went from seeing celibate Anglo-Catholic priests as feminine to potentially homosexual.

When John Kensit announced to his listeners that

(dear friends, we want ministers of the Gospel to be manly men).

(Cheers.) [referring an Anglo-Catholic service] A gentleman in petticoats (laughter) went up to the sham altar (for it is all sham), and took off the communion table a stick…. Men? Well they looked like men (laughter); but I must say, they were very poor specimens of men. (Laughter.) If there were any of them here to-night, and I looked at them, I could point them out. They seemed a peculiar sort of people, very peculiar indeed, the crowd knew exactly what made the gentlemen “peculiar.” Kensit’s listeners had been prepared to make this connection due in part to a culture that increasingly connected effeminacy or dandyism with Anglo-Catholicism in works such as Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) and Robert Hichens’s *The Green Carnation* (1894). Radical Protestants, such as Kensit himself, on the other hand, were often described by other Protestants as “manly.”

David Hilliard and others have argued that there was, in fact, a considerable homosexual subculture within Anglo-Catholicism, although the term is somewhat anachronistic. Nevertheless, Anglo-Catholicism was attractive to young men who rejected or sought to escape from the dominant Victorian conception of masculinity.

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130 The Church Association, for example, described Kensit’s actions at St. Ethelburga’s as “manly and independent.” See Church Association, Council Minutes, 17 February 1898, C. S. 11, Lambeth Palace Library.
Contemporaries also recognized this fact. In his *Life and Labour of the People of London*, Charles Booth argued that “The men who find satisfaction for their religious nature in the High Church are of a quite peculiar type. I cannot think it a strong type…” Many of the homosexual authors of the 1890s and 1900s eventually converted to either Anglo or Roman Catholicism and many of the “Uranian” poets of the 1890s were Anglo-Catholic priests. Scholars have suggested that Catholic aesthetics, liberal incarnational theology, practice of auricular confession, and rebellious, anti-establishment ethos may have contributed to the relatively high proportion of adherents who chose to live outside the norms of manliness. Within the context of increasing concern about sexual and moral degeneracy around the turn of the century, the both real and imagined presence of homosexuals within Anglo-Catholicism gave Protestants further reason to fear Ritualism was corrupting the nation.

While fearing supposed sexual deviance, Protestants suspected Catholics of other moral deficiencies. First, Protestants believed Catholics were inherently untrustworthy due to the Tractarian and Ritualist concept of “reserve,” which emphasized the practice of only revealing as much truth as was necessary to accomplish one’s objectives in a given situation. Since most Britons assumed manhood was marked by open honesty and “straightforwardness of conduct,” the practice of reserve seemed to indicate underhanded

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Lady Wimborne believed the most important characteristic of English men and women was their love of truth and honor. How then could the Church of England tolerate Ritualist priests who claimed that lying was not only permissible, but also occasionally one’s duty? One Protestant fumed that “there is no doubt that the doctrine of the economy of truth or reserve allowed by this party [the Ritualists] is destructive to all trust….Mr. Ward, one of this party, puts it much more plainly. ‘Make yourself clear,’ he writes, ‘that you are justified in the deception, and then lie like a trooper.’” Additionally, since Protestants believed (incorrectly) that the Pope could give dispensations that allowed Catholics to break the law or an oath without sinning, they concluded that Catholics could not be trusted.

Perhaps most disturbing to Protestants was the Catholic doctrine of probabilism. Probabilism, a theory which allowed adherents to choose the least probable (and possibly illegal) among several possible options according to their personal preference, seemed to permit Catholics to commit evil deeds without facing the moral consequences of their actions. Papal dispensations and probabilism, according to Protestants, caused gross immorality within Catholic countries. Regarding the dangerous immorality existing

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136 Peek, “Sacerdotalism,” 94. Peek also wrote that “It is impossible to deny that the whole ritualistic conspiracy…was hatched in strictest secrecy, and concealed as long as possible by falsehood and deception under this Jesuitical doctrine of economy and reserve” (94).
137 Best, “Popular Protestantism,” 123.
138 The liberal Anglo-Catholic Richard F. Littledale argued that the Pope had “upset the moral law” by accepting Alphonso Liguori’s theory of probabilism. See H. I. D. Ryder, “Ritualism, Roman Catholicism, and Converts: Some Strictures on Dr. Littledale’s Article ‘Why Ritualists Do Not Become Roman Catholics,’” *Contemporary Review* 34 (December-March, 1879), 477.
within Catholic nations Robert Horton argued the doctrine of probabilism alone explained the gross immorality present in contemporary Roman Catholic countries.\footnote{Horton, \textit{England's Danger}, 61.} But it was not only Roman Catholics living in Catholic countries who displayed criminal behavior. A. Le Lievre, the secretary of the Protestant Press Agency, argued that Roman Catholics as a whole were disproportionately criminal.\footnote{A. Le Lievre, letter to the editor, \textit{The Protestant Observer}, (November, 1900), 167.} So prevalent was belief in Catholic criminality even by the mid-twentieth century, that Anglo-Catholic priest S. J. Forrest satirized Protestant fear in his poem “A Clergyman in Black”:

I never, never like to see
A clergyman in black.
It speaks of dark disloyalty,
And clandestine attack;
Of sabotage, conspiracy,
And stabbings in the back.

This black fanaticism bears
The label of the Beast;
An aping of the Romanists,
A masquerade at least,
That makes a clergyman appear

It is worth noting that anti-Catholic authors frequently claimed that Catholic assassins stabbed their victims in the back. In the popular mind Catholics lacked the manliness to directly confront their enemies with a sword or pistol, hence the assumption that the stiletto was the Catholic weapon of choice. To many Protestants, then, the seemingly rampant criminality of many European nations was a direct result of their Catholicism. But most damning of all in the eyes of British Protestants was Ritualist lawlessness. Advanced Ritualists continually broke ecclesiastical (and state) law during
the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries by introducing Roman rituals and practices that not even a creative interpretation of the rubrics of the Book Common Prayer (BCP) could justify. Since conducting worship services with elements not sanctioned by the BCP was illegal, Protestants charged that Anglo-Catholic Ritualists were lawless, although the Ritualists countered that they were obeying a higher law. These justifications failed to impress most, who argued that Ritualists had introduced a situation of anarchy and absolute lawlessness into the established church. Even moderate Anglicans such as Alfred Barry were worried by such blatant disregard for the law. He wrote,

But there are thousands of attached members of the Church of England who, while they not only condemn in the strongest terms all violent and disorderly proceedings [Barry is referring to Kensit’s recent actions at St. Ethelburga’s], but have not sympathy whatever with the narrow and intolerant spirit which manifests itself in them, are yet seriously uneasy as to the obvious disposition in many of our Churches to set aside Church Law in public worship, even where it is plain and unmistakable, and where the refusal to obey it may well have important significance.

The legality of ritual innovations sparked debate and lengthy articles in both religious and legal journals and remained a contentious topic until the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline published its report in 1906.

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142 A. J. Carlyle, Causes and Remedies of the Present Disorder in the Church of England (London: James Parker and Co., 1899), 3. Carlyle was a fellow and later a chaplain and lecturer of University College, Oxford University.

143 Alfred Barry, “Breach of Church Law: Its Danger and its Remedy,” Nineteenth Century 43 (Jan-June 1898): 943. An early anonymous writer summarized the thoughts of many Protestants when he complained that Ritualist lawlessness “…is really opposed to the very condition on which alone an organized body can exist in a civilized state. When we consider the principles thus subversive of all law and order are urged by [Ritualists], their aim appears to us not only to be impossible as regards the Church, but fraught with great peril to the Commonwealth as a pernicious example of absolute lawlessness.” See X, “What is Ritualism?” Fortnightly Review 51 (1889), 650.

To Protestants, however, the worst crime of Anglo-Catholics was their apparent hypocrisy in taking ordination vows to abide by the ecclesiastical law of the Church of England, and then breaking that law through Ritualism while still accepting a paycheck from the Established Church. Moreover, because obedience to the law of Parliament and pride in the Common Law were major components of English identity, the perceived lawlessness of Ritualist priests made them appear to be not only un-English, but also anti-English because they were undermining the constitutional order that provided the foundation of the British nation. As a result of the connection between Britishness and the law, even a High-Church supporter like Arthur Balfour could write that Ritualist lawlessness was “of a kind which, under the special circumstances, is more repulsive than


any other to English instincts." Such apparent dishonesty and even perjury was unacceptable to most Protestants.

- **Ethnic, Class, Gender, and Generational Catalysts of Anti-Catholicism**

Racial and ethnic tensions further compounded the antagonism between Protestants and Catholics in fin-de-siècle Britain. The Home Rule crisis of the 1880s had led to increased tension between the Protestant English and the Catholic Irish. Naturally, this situation in turn increased the tension between Protestantism and Catholicism in both its Anglo and Roman forms. British xenophobia also had the effect of increasing hostility towards Catholicism, since the European continent remained predominantly Catholic. Catholicism seemed like a “foreign” religion to many Britons. Pope Leo XIII’s 1896 encyclical *Apostolicae Curae* on the nullity of the Anglican orders and Pope Pius X’s 1907 denunciation of modernity in *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* and his reaffirmation of the prohibition of mixed-religion marriages unless the children were raised Catholic built an even higher wall between Anglicanism and Roman Catholicism. In the anti-Ritualist novel *Catholic Usages So-Called* (1901) by “John Myrc,” a poem included in the appendix reads

> Now bear your Catholic Customs hence;  
> Take heed to our request;  
> We mean to have true English ways,  
> We like them far the best.

To most Englishmen, Catholicism was the product of a foreign culture.

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150 Qtd. in Munson, “The Oxford Movement by the End of the Nineteenth Century,” 387.
Additionally, the efforts of the recently unified and secular governments of Italy and Germany to battle Catholicism energized British Protestants. Continental secular and Protestant politicians argued that Catholicism stood in the way of national unification and progress. British support for the Risorgimento and Kulturkampf sparked debate between nationalist Protestants and Catholics who were either eager to prove their loyalty to the state or flaunt their cosmopolitan identities. By the 1890s the Dreyfus Affair had highlighted French anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism. British Protestants saw the condemnation of Alfred Dreyfus as evidence of the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church.\(^{151}\)

Class enmity and misogyny also served to fuel anti-Ritualism. Anecdotally at least, Anglo-Catholicism and Roman Catholicism tended to attract members of the nobility and upper-middle class. For working and middle-class Protestants, this phenomenon gave anti-Ritualism a class dimension.\(^{152}\) Moreover, Protestants believed women were disproportionately attracted to Catholicism since they were lured in by the sensuous worship and lacked the male rationality needed to appreciate Protestant services. Samuel Smith complained that Ritualism was responsible for driving men out of English churches. Only women and their children would be able to tolerate emotional and colorful Catholic worship.\(^{153}\) The belief among working and middle-class Protestant men that Ritualist churches were filled with silly women and useless aristocratic fops furthered their hatred of Catholicism. Along these lines, Rev. H. W. Clarke complained that

\(^{151}\) See Protestant Woman (October 1900): 230.
\(^{153}\) Parliamentary Debates, 8 February 1899, 66: 249.
Aristocratic and wealthy church people, especially ladies, have taken an active part in financially supporting the priestly lawbreakers. In fact, they encourage them to break the laws of the Church and to introduce into the churches an ornate ritual…. Lord Halifax has boasted that it is not the clergy but the laity who are urging on the ritualistic work. But who are the laity who are urging on the Romanising work? Our aristocracy and wealthy middle class. But all below these are solid Protestants; that is, the base is solid, but the top is shaky.154

As far as H. W. Clarke and many others were concerned, it was not the productive part of society that was supporting the Ritualist virus, it was the nobility, the capitalists, and the women.

Finally, generational antagonism also fueled anti-Catholicism in Britain. As John Shelton Reed has argued at length, conversion to Anglo-Catholicism often involved a desire on the part of young people to shock their Protestant parents.155 The most advanced Anglo-Catholic priests were often young, and it was usually fashionable young men who filled the pews of Ritualist churches. Anglo-Catholic author Shelia Kaye-Smith noted that

It is a remarkable and encouraging fact that it is a religion which appeals to youth. The numbers of young men and women in an Anglo-Catholic congregation is often in excess of the middle-aged and elderly, and if one compares a gathering of Anglo-Catholics in Congress or otherwise, with a gathering of some other type of churchmanship, the average age is seen to drop at once from fifty or older to thirty or under.156

Anglo-Catholicism was attractive to the young and rebellious because it “identified with an entire ethos hostile to middle-class respectability.”157 The anti-authoritarian streak of Anglo-Catholicism only served to further antagonize the (usually older) supporters of the Protestant establishment.

154 Henry William Clarke, Romanism Without the Pope in the Church of England (Beckenham: H. W. Clarke, 1899), iii.
155 Reed, Glorious Battle.
157 Adams, Dandies and Desert Saints, 96.
Conclusion

Historians commonly remark on the religiosity of mid-Victorian Britons. However, the study of secularization in late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain has caused many of them to marginalize the continued importance of religion to both everyday life and conceptions of national identity after the turn of the twentieth century. I have argued that although some British intellectuals turned from Victorian religiosity in the waning years of the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth century, many more Britons – both intellectuals and ordinary men and women – remained deeply committed to a religious view of the world. Although some Britons began to see Anglo or Roman Catholicism as a “modern” or progressive religion, many more remained convinced that Catholicism was a reactionary force that would pull the nation back into the Dark Ages. As a result, the growth and seeming “aggression” of both forms of Catholicism during the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods led to a reaction on the part of some Protestants. The anti-Catholicism of these periods, which was strikingly similar to the anti-Catholicism of the earlier nineteenth century, illustrates the continued centrality of religion in the worldviews of most fin-de-siècle Britons. Although the 1850s or 1870s is commonly seen as the setting of the last major outbreak of nation-wide anti-Catholicism or anti-Ritualism, perhaps the most widespread, explosive, and political significant bout did not occur until the end of the nineteenth century. The fierce anti-Catholicism of

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the late-nineteen and early-twentieth century colored the way Protestants viewed their world and contemporary events, including the South African War.
CHAPTER 3

Protestant Paranoia and Catholic Conspiracies: Protestant and Catholic Perspectives on the Second Anglo-Boer War

The main news-making event within the British Empire during the Church Crisis was undoubtedly the Second Anglo-Boer War. While all Britons surely saw the conflict as a major event, Protestants and Catholics saw the war as especially significant. For many it was not merely a secular conflict; it was spiritual warfare breaking out into human history. Protestants tended to view the war on one or more of three levels: First, as a metaphor or symbol of the struggle between Protestantism and Catholicism in Great Britain, second, as having been literally orchestrated by the evil forces of the Papacy, and finally, as a manifestation of God’s wrath, resulting from Protestant Britain – the new Israel – having broken its covenant by indulging in idolatry. Protestant opinion regarding the war was not without contradiction or complications. On the one hand, the vast majority of anti-Ritualists associated their Protestantism with fervent patriotism and imperialism, and, therefore, supported the war effort as right and just. But on the other hand, there was disquiet about fighting fellow Protestants. Moreover, many saw the war itself and Britain’s lackluster performance as a result of God’s judgment against the nation, meaning that the Boers were actually God’s chosen instruments of divine retribution.

Comparatively speaking, however, the Protestant position was simple compared to the Catholic response. In order to provide evidence of their Britishness Catholics had to support the war at least as fervently as their Protestant neighbors. Yet, they could not seem too eager to take up arms against an avowedly Protestant foe. Although many
Catholics also saw the war as a visitation of divine wrath, and considered the Calvinist Boers their religious as well as national enemies, their response was generally more nuanced than that of Protestants. Even those who tried to view the war from a strictly secular perspective recognized that religion played an important role in the conflict. In short, many Britons saw the South African War, like other major fin-de-siècle occurrences, from a religious perspective and interpreted it in light of the Great Church Crisis.

- **Protestant Perspectives on the South African War**

  As we have already seen, most Britons associated Protestantism with the nation and therefore with patriotism. Deviance from Protestantism was seen as a betrayal of national identity. Indeed, many saw Protestantism as an essential component of both Britishness and patriotism in the abstract. After all, as J. Howard, a speaker at the Church Association’s 1900 Spring Conference put it, “Non-Protestants” were “incapable of satisfying the highest demands of true patriotism.”¹ An anonymous writer in the *Ladies’ League Gazette* told readers that patriotism divorced from Protestantism descended into either jingoism or vapid cosmopolitanism, since “in England the history of Patriotism has been the history of Protestantism.”² Since English patriotism could only be truly grasped and practiced by Protestants, Protestants also made the best soldiers, as Field Marshall Lord Frederick Roberts had recently demonstrated in South Africa. It is a fact, wrote a contributor to *Uncle Ben’s Budget*, “that a truly converted man makes the best Protestant,

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¹ J. Howard, *Church Intelligencer* 17, no. 4 (April 1900): 55.
and the best Protestant the best solider.” Aunt Molly, a writer for *Uncle Ben’s Budget*, then went on to trot out the well-worn example of Protestant/British “martyr” Henry Havelock.

Aunt Molly described men like Roberts and Havelock as “noble Protestants who were soldiers of Christ as well as soldiers of the Queen – men who were willing to fight the enemy in our country (Roman Catholic ascendancy) in time of peace as well as the enemies outside our country in time of war.” For Molly and many others, the war in South Africa was only one part of a larger spiritual conflict. Due to their covenantal theology, Evangelicals believed Britain was a providentially-blessed nation. Most saw the British nation as the New Testament equivalent of Israel. This meant that Britain was God’s special chosen nation, destined to do His work in the world and receive His blessings. However, God’s covenant with Britain, like His covenant with Israel, was bilateral. Thus, the British could only retain their covenantal blessings by adhering to God’s law. The Torah had especially warned the people of Israel not to sin through idolatry. After the Israelites had succumbed to just that sin, God used Israel’s enemies, the Assyrians and Babylonians, to execute His judgment by carrying His people off into exile. Most Protestants believed Catholics engaged in egregious idolatry such as “waffer-worship.” Seeing themselves as a modern-day Israel infected with the sin of Catholic idolatry – even within the Establish Church! – Protestant Britons assumed God’s wrath could not be long delayed. Not surprisingly, in this context many Protestants saw the

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3 “Aunt Molly,” “A Royal Example,” *Uncle Ben’s Budget* 3 (May 1900): 113. “Aunt Molly” wrote for *Uncle Ben’s Budget*, one of the leading children’s Protestant magazines.

4 Ibid.

South African War itself, and especially Britain’s military defeats, as divine retribution for idolatry.

Figure 1: Britannia “duped” by Catholicism and succumbing to apostasy even before the outbreak of the South African War. Thomas G. Jack, The Apostasy and Downfall of England (London: John Kensit, 1896).

This mindset enabled Britons, like Aunt Molly, to see the events and actors in South Africa as metaphors or symbols of the more fundamental religious conflict at home. In the first issue of the patriotic and anti-Ritualist Ladies’ League Gazette, Ernest A. Villiers carefully laid out the relationship between the two most momentous questions of the day, the South African War and the Church Crisis, arguing that the Boers and Ritualists were similar in that both sought to evade properly constituted authority. The Boers sought to overthrow the Queen’s Suzerainty while the Ritualists were refusing to recognize the supremacy of the Queen’s Privy Council in ecclesiastical affairs. Thus,
“Both alike proclaim their independence of constituted authority and their devotion to systems which are retrograde, unenlightened, and mischievous in their effects.” Boer and Ritualist tactics were also very similar, each involving years of silent preparation and deception. Since both the Boers and Ritualists had rebelled against the Queen’s sovereignty, Villiers concluded that “the bed-rock of the Reformation and the soil of poor violated Natal should be defended by all ‘Loyalists.’” Later, the Gazette compared Transvaal president Paul Kruger to the Pope, arguing that both had used their office for personal gain and had transformed their respective institutions into autocracies. Each had enriched himself by plundering his own followers and both had ignored the public good. “Both of them have strained every art of diplomacy to inflame the whole world, if necessary, in order that they might profit by strife.” Finally, “Both of them twist and misuse the Word of God for their own advantage, in a style that would be ridiculous if it were not so desperately wicked. Both of them trade upon a simulated piety for political and official purposes.” Thus, the Calvinist Paul Kruger became a symbol or even mirror image of the Pope himself.

Since adults were expected to make the connections between the war and Ritualism on their own, detailed comparisons appeared only occasionally. Children, however, presumably needed more help and therefore boys’ and girls’ magazines often contained detailed accounts of how to understand the South African War from a Protestant perspective. C. M. Batterby, for example, told his young audience to be proud of English soldiers in the veldt, and to imitate them by fighting the spiritual battle in

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6 Ernest Amherst Villiers, “Ritualism and the War,” The Ladies’ League Gazette 1, no. 1 (March 1900): 4-5. G. I. T. Machin incorrectly attributes this article to Lady Wimborne.
7 Ibid.
8 “Mr. Kruger Compared with the Pope,” Ladies’ League Gazette 1, no. 10 (January 1901): 187.
9 Ibid.
Britain, since “There is many a war at home as well as abroad; we have first to put our own evil passions to death, and then proceed to carry the war into the enemy’s camp, and struggle with Satan himself in every shape and form.” Therefore, boys mustn’t lose heart, but rather be brave Christians just like the men in South Africa. Like their brothers in arms, young Protestants had to be prepared for any type of enemy attack. Why was a squadron of the 17th Lancers, whose motto was ‘Death or Glory,’ decimated on the battlefield in South Africa, asked the *Young Protestants* magazine? Answer: because the Jesuitical Boer enemies had disguised themselves in British uniforms. Through this deception they were able to move closely enough to the 17th Lancers to kill nearly an entire squadron. Boys and girls should learn this lesson well, since

Protestants have too much reason to complain of a similar deception. There are thousands of clergymen, for instance, who sign the Articles and take the pay of the *Church of England* but teach the doctrines of *Rome*. That is why it is so needful, dear young friends, that you should learn to distinguish for yourselves between falsehood and truth. Then you will not fall a prey to the ‘wolves in sheep’s clothing,’ as our gentle, loving Savior described false teachers.

But, young Protestants also ought to remember the kindness and chivalry that Britons showed to their enemies as individuals. Protestants ought to fight the Papal system, but not individual Catholics, whose souls were also bought with the blood of Christ. In short, the conflict in Africa provided Protestants with a visible display of the spiritual warfare encountered at home.

Of course, Protestants did not see England as merely symbolizing God’s covenant people Israel. They believed that they were in fact and reality the new Israel and that

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12 Ibid.
14 Ibid., 18.
violations of God’s covenant would bring tangible punishment upon the nation. As God’s special people, they believed it was only natural that the forces of the anti-Christ, such as the Pope and Catholicism, should focus their attacks upon Britain. In this light, the war appeared to be part of a Catholic scheme to weaken Britain. This theory solved the problem of Anglican England fighting Calvinist Boers because the Boers were not really Protestants at all: the Reformed ministers were Jesuits in disguise, the Transvaal government was filled with Romanist wire-pullers, and Oom Paul himself was almost surely a secret Catholic.

Theories as to why exactly the Pope would support the notoriously anti-Catholic Boers varied in their details, but all essentially agreed that the Pope was eager to damage the world’s premier Protestant power in any way possible. Occasionally Protestants linked Papal intrigues in South Africa to Vatican diplomacy in the aftermath of the Pope’s loss of temporal power in Italy. “Put in plain English,” a Times correspondent explained, “the Vatican hopes the Boer war may give rise to international complications, or at least may so cripple England that she may be unable to afford further moral support to the House of Savoy, which might then, according to Clerical dreams, be overturned and replaced by that Federal Republic under Papal hegemony to which the Osservatore Romano recently made indiscreet allusions.” More often, though, Protestants were satisfied with the simple explanation that the Pope naturally wanted to destroy Britain. As proof of this, Britons cited such evidence as the threatening remarks made by the Vatican’s official newspaper, Osservatore Romano, and the recent military high-jinks of

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15 “The Vatican and the War,” Times, 10 November 1899, p. 5; col. C. This article was also reprinted in The Protestant Woman (January 1900): 14.
Count Lodovico Pecci, the Pope’s nephew. The Roman Catholic *Weekly Register* had ominously reported that Pecci was serving as a mercenary officer with the Boers.\(^\text{16}\)

The action of Count Pecci was one thing, but how could the Pope incite the Calvinist Boers themselves to open warfare? According to one theory, the Pope had planted Jesuit priests within the Dutch Reformed ministry, just as he had planted Jesuits within the Anglican ministry in order to force the Church of England into corporate reunion with Rome. While disguised as Reformed ministers, the Jesuits supposedly incited anti-British sentiment among their congregations. In an effort to enlighten his countrymen, one Briton wrote that

> It is not generally known that the hostility of the Dutch Reformed Church, and its efforts to promote disaffection and rebellion, so patent during the whole course of the South African War, is due to the fact, which I have on Dutch authority, that a very great number of its ministers are really Jesuits in disguise, who are posing secretly in that Church, as they do in England, as members of our Protestant Church, in order to disseminate their doctrines.\(^\text{17}\)

To make matters even worse, it seemed that many high-ranking Boer officials were openly Roman Catholic and therefore instinctively hostile to British rule.\(^\text{18}\) Others speculated that Paul Kruger, although publicly appearing to be a God-fearing Protestant, was in reality either a Roman Catholic or beholden to the Pope for some other inscrutable reason. Evidence abounded. Kruger had reportedly received gifts from the Vatican. Even more revealingly, he had given the Pope an exceedingly precious blue-white diamond. The nearly-flawless 971-carat Jaegerfontein diamond had been extracted from the Kimberley mines in 1894 and valued at £40,000 before Kruger had presented it to

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\(^{16}\) *The English Churchman*, 3 January 1901, p. 3.


\(^{18}\) Ibid.
Leo XIII. Did Kruger actually give the Pope at 971-caret diamond? There were precedents for such extravagant gifts. Some time before 1888 the government of Columbia had presented Leo XIII with an enormous diamond pectoral cross. But whether or not a 971-caret diamond actually changed hands, the relevant point is that Protestant Britons believed that it had and took the gift as evidence of duplicity. Another suspicious episode involved Kruger asking the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Paris to say a Mass for the souls of French soldiers killed in the Transvaal. Kruger’s relationship with a Roman Catholic archbishop caused Protestant David Fisk to ask the readers of the *English Churchman*, “Is Mr. Kruger another of the unsuccessful tools of the Papacy?”

In any case, the human duplicity of the Papacy was insignificant compared to the reality that the Pope himself was merely a puppet of “the Murderer of Life, the Father of Lies,” Satan. Of course, God always had the ability to thwart the devil’s schemes, if He so chose. Why, then, had God clearly chosen to allow the devil, through the Pope and Boers, to wreak havoc upon his chosen nation? J. H. Weldon, a reader of the *English Churchman*, asked just this question. Why were the Boers putting up such a costly fight, he wondered. Yet, it was really only a rhetorical question because the answer was obvious to both Weldon and his readers. As Weldon put it,

We hear it very often said, ‘When will this Boer War come to an end, and what can be the reason that it drags along in this way, when it must have been evident to Mr. Kruger and his generals for a very long time, that not the smallest chance of success remains to them now?’ Many shrewd replies are made, but there is no answer worth listening to when placed alongside what the Bible affords. We read in the 81st Psalm how God lays

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19 *Morning Herald*, 20 October 1899.
22 See, for example, A. N. Montgomery, letter to the editor, *The English Churchman*, 3 January 1901, p. 5.
down His law... ‘neither shalt thou worship any strange god.’ This, being interpreted, means, nowadays, any Ritualistic or wafer god.\textsuperscript{23}

So many Britons had turned to Catholicism that idolatry had become rampant throughout the country. Britain’s clear violation of God’s law had brought down divine retribution in the form of Oom Paul Kruger.

Both the cause of and the solution to the situation in South Africa were exasperatingly obvious to anti-Ritualists. The national sin of the Old Testament Jewish people had been idolatry, and this sin had caused their enemies to triumph over them militarily.\textsuperscript{24} Therefore, it was “because of the ever-increasing idolatry within our National Church that our Army in South Africa has been so long frustrated!”\textsuperscript{25} A short history lesson could tell the national leaders that “Protestantism and prosperity have always been inseparable, while giving way to Popery has always been associated with national disasters and calamities.”\textsuperscript{26} To put a finer point on matters, all Roman Catholic, and therefore idolatrous, nations wound up living in poverty and ruin like Spain. If Britain wished to avoid such a fate and remain prosperous, then its national church needed to purge itself of all idols and sources of idolatry.\textsuperscript{27} Catholic converts and Ritualist priests had chosen the path of Spain. H. Maguire could only throw up his hands and ask

\textsuperscript{23} J. H. Weldon, letter to the editor, \textit{English Churchman}, 31 October 1901, p. 700.
\textsuperscript{24} W. Groves, letter to the editor, \textit{English Churchman}, 10 January 1901, p. 21. Groves cites Malachi 2 and Jeremiah 2.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} J. C. Martin, letter to the editor, \textit{English Churchman}, 31 October 1901, p. 700. See also F. Barker Cooke, letter to the editor, \textit{English Churchman}, 18 October 1900, p. 696. Cooke asks “What patriotic Englishman who knows his country’s history and what God has done for us as a nation, would desire his country to return to Papal darkness and heathenism, to a ‘faith’ which is NOT that ‘which was once delivered unto the saints,’ and which has invariably provoked the Lord to anger against our nation when holding it?”
\textsuperscript{27} Reddish(?), letter to the editor, \textit{English Churchman}, 18 August 1898, p. 533.
To what is our Empire coming? We look around for an answer, and can only conclude that the hand of God is over it in judgment for its sins and unfaithfulness both in Church and State. We have had plague and famine in divers places, and the African War, although justifiable, has been permitted as another of God’s sore judgments on account of the nation’s departure from the true and simple faith of Christ’s Gospel, which was restored to us at the time of the Reformation….  

The 1900 Lisbon incident involving the British navy, the Mass, and a battleship salute seemed to provide an example of the tragic results of British infidelity. Charles Stirling, the president of the Calvinistic Protestant Union, complained that on December 12 during festivities in Lisbon, the British Admiral Harry Rawson and several of his officers had attended Mass at the Cathedral. At the Elevation of the Host ten British ironclads fired a salute. According to an account provided by Colonel L. M. Whale of the Royal Marines, the salute had occurred when the Patriarch had pronounced the Papal blessing. This same Papal blessing, Whale explained, had been pronounced over the ships of the Spanish Armada, which had been sent out to “subjugate” Britain. Even more galling to patriotic Britons was the fact that ever since the salute the Boers had been renewing their deadly attacks upon British soldiers financed by Papal gold.

Continuing the story, Stirling wrote that within forty-eight hours of the gun salute news arrived of a “deplorable defeat” at Nooitgedacht involving the loss of a 4.7 gun and four hundred men as prisoners. Whale added that one of the guilty ironclads was later wrecked off the coast of South Africa. To both Whale and Stirling, it was a clear case of cause and effect: “If England persist in her pro-Romish and anti-Protestant policy, in

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28 H. Maguire, letter to the editor, English Churchman, 31 October 1901, p. 701.
29 Charles Stirling, letter to the editor, English Churchman, 10 January 1901, p. 22.
30 L. M. Whale, letter to the editor, English Churchman, 7 February 1901, p. 85.
31 Ibid.
32 Charles Stirling, letter to the editor, English Churchman, 10 January 1901, p. 22.
33 L. M. Whale, letter to the editor, English Churchman, 7 February 1901, p. 85.
Church and State, she will march with increasing speed to the doom that has awaited in turn every apostate nation.”  

However, the reverse was also true. If Britons repented of their idolatry and turned to God alone, He would grant them earthly success. As an example of this, J. C. Martin rehearsed the story of Protestant hero Lord Roberts’s great victory. After distributing prayers among his troops, Roberts had captured 4,000 Boer enemies. 

Although it had its root in Calvinism, English evangelical covenantal theology was almost never deterministic. Evangelicals held to the Arminian belief that they possessed a free will and were the masters of their own destiny based on their decision either to sin or repent.

Men like Stirling and Whale attributed English defeats in South Africa to British idolatry at home. But why should a war break out in South Africa if idolatry had occurred on British soil? The answer, many argued, was that the war had come upon South Africa because the Anglican Church of South Africa was, from a Protestant perspective, perhaps the most corrupt in the Empire, as a result of being filled with Ritualist priests. 

Especially “advanced” Anglo-Catholics were often appointed to Anglican bishoprics outside the British Isles. This permitted otherwise deserving men to advance up the church hierarchy without antagonizing Protestants in English dioceses. By 1900 Southern Africa was home to several Anglican bishops who were members of the English Church Union (W. W. Jones of Cape Town South Africa, W. T. Gaul of Mashonaland, G. L. King of Madagascar, and J. E. Hine, the missionary bishop of Likoma), and several more who were members of both the ECU and the Confraternity of

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34 Charles Stirling, letter to the editor, *English Churchman*, 10 January 1901, p. 22.
the Blessed Sacrament (E. T. Churton of Nassau, W. E. Smyth of Lebombo, W. M. Carter of Zululand, and W. M. Richardson of Zanzibar). Examining the conflict from a purely material perspective, Protestants believed that the presence of Anglo-Catholic clergy within the Church of South Africa had antagonized the Boer population. Boers, after all, were a historically Protestant people and British writers liked to remind each other that many Boers were even descendents of the heroic French Huguenots. Given this background, it was “little wonder that the growth of ritual marks the increase of Anglophobia in South Africa.”

The belief that Anglo or Roman Catholic priests were upsetting the local population to such a degree that physical violence ensued was not unique to the South African War. When the Boxer Rebellion broke out in China in late 1899, shortly after warfare had begun in South Africa, Protestants were quick to attribute the rebellion to Roman Catholic influence in Asia. According to the Boys’ Protestant Union, “the real first cause of the Boxer insurrection was opposition to Roman Catholicism; and other complications have, unfortunately, arisen.” As in South Africa, Roman Catholic priests in China had upset the political status quo and caused conflict. Thus, many Protestants believed the physical presence of Catholics was enough to upset the delicate imperial balance in Asia and Africa.

37 The Church of England Almanack For the Year of our Lord 1900, compiled by Henry Miller (London: Shaw; Kensit; and Thynne, 1900), 20-21.
The anti-Ritualist combination of providential and conspiracy-based interpretations of the South African War was by no means unique. In fact, as Darrin McMahon has argued in *Enemies of the Enlightenment* (2001) belief in the existence of conspiracies is a uniquely modern phenomenon and has existed side by side with a providential view of history since at least the eighteenth century. The covenantal theology of British Protestants, however, especially lent itself to a melodramatic worldview that divided the world into Christian/Protestant and anti-Christian/Catholic/Pagan/Secular camps. One was either in the covenant or outside of it; there could be no middle ground. As can be seen by the conflation of anti-Christians, Catholics, Pagans, and Secularists, this bi-polar view of reality obscured significant differences. Thus, it made sense to Protestants that the anti-Catholic Calvinist Boers should join Roman Catholics in their effort to destroy Britain, since both were by definition enemies of the providentially-blessed British state.

Yet, the existence of a Protestant enemy and Britain’s slow progress in South Africa caused cognitive dissonance. In these circumstances, the appeal of a melodramatic worldview and conspiracy theories were especially powerful, since both grew out of a desire to make sense of rapid and seemingly uncontrollable cultural and political developments. According to Peter Brooks, Manichean melodrama gave release to anxiety through the creation of narratives featuring the apparent triumph of evil (the Boers or Catholicism) before the eventual triumph of good (Britain and Protestantism). The characters in a melodrama functioned as signs of good and evil, pointing the way toward a greater invisible spiritual reality.41 The South African War could be, and was,

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read by Protestants as a providentially-scripted melodrama writ large in human history, in which British soldiers represented the good forces of Protestantism and the enemy represented Catholicism. McMahon’s assessment of the melodramatic imagination of anti-revolutionary French Catholics also holds true for fin-de-siècle Protestants: they “saw their struggle as a cosmic war in which the winner would take all.”

Like McMahon’s anti-philosophes, British Protestants also employed conspiracy theories in conjunction with a providential view of history in order to make sense of their circumstances. The South African War, like the French Revolution, was a confusing and complex affair. Even today historians argue over why exactly it was fought. Conspiracy theories dramatically simplified matters by positing the existence of a single enemy, like the Pope or Jesuits, who controlled what appeared to be a complex series of indirectly connected events. Belief in conspiracy theories gave a bi-polar covenantal worldview greater credibility, since it contracted the number of Britain’s enemies down to one.

Of course, God’s use of the Boers to chastise Britain did not necessarily mean that the British cause was unjust. On the contrary, Protestants often mobilized religion to drum up support for the war effort, claiming that Britain’s cause was just and righteous. Most commonly Britons claimed since the Boers had mistreated the native Africans they were justified in waging war to bring British liberties to Africa. Since God had created all people, Protestants argued that the Africans deserved better government than that of

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43 Ibid., 62-63.
the Boers. At a missionary meeting in 1899 Rev. W. Hudson, a Wesleyan Methodist who had spent several years in Johannesburg, told his audience that during his years as a farm, President Kruger had been known to yoke native African women and use them in place of oxen for plowing. But thanks to the war effort, Hudson was confident that “British freedom” would soon be established throughout South Africa.45 Rev. William Greswell argued that Dutch Reformed preachers had fomented the Boer rebellion since they were unable to accept either their diminished political status under the British or the Slave Emancipation Act of 1834.46 Rev. Dr. A. Theodore Wirgman complained that Boer Calvinism was an especially harsh religion, since it accepted double predestination. Because the Boer religion was law-based, they abused even Christian Africans. British religion, on the other hand, was Gospel based and would bring freedom and liberty to South Africa following the war.47 Thus, the supposed humanitarian dimension of evangelical Protestantism caused most Protestants to support the war effort.

There were, however, some anti-Ritualists who endorsed the pro-Boer position. Pro-Boer anti-Ritualists argued that since God was punishing Britain for its idolatry, the proper response was not physical combat, but rather repentance and acceptance of God’s will. Infamous Kensit-imitator Rev. R. C. Fillingham told his audience that “the War was an absolute offence against God” and “both sides were in the wrong.” The war had come upon Britain as punishment for the “great revival of Paganism” within the Church of

45 The Primrose League Gazette 6, no. 11 (1 November 1899): 9; MS Primrose League 39, New Bodleian Library, Modern Papers, Oxford University.
England. Just as Jeremiah the prophet had counseled the idolatrous people of Jerusalem not to fight against the Babylonian invaders because they were God’s instruments of vengeance, so, too, should the British people accept Boer victories as the judgment of God. This view, however, remained in the extreme minority, leaving most anti-Ritualists with the undesirable task of ironing out the contradictions between their support for the war, for anti-Ritualism, and for Liberalism.

Reconciling support for the war with the fact that the Conservative party was both the major proponent of the war and opposed anti-Ritualism was not always easy. The difficulty can be seen most clearly in Protestant attitudes toward the Primrose League during the war years. Some evangelical Anglican anti-Ritualists were political conservatives and active in the Primrose League. Lady Wimborne, for example, was both the president of the Ladies League for the Defence and Promotion of the Reformed Faith of the Church of England and a vice-president of the Ladies’ Grand Council of the Primrose League. Of course, the Primrose League supported the Conservative government’s war effort. Prior to the 1900 General Election the Grand Council issued an appeal to Primrose members, reminding them that the major issue in the election would be the war effort. Since the threat of the Boer Republics had not yet passed, the threat to Britain’s imperial position continued and the unity and strength of the British Empire depended on the very important up-coming election. “It is not sufficient to call yourselves Imperialists,” the Council reminded its members. When voting, they were to “Defer any consideration of side issues [such as the Church Crisis], and fight the Election

for Empire and Liberty.” Not surprisingly, the Church Association and other Protestant groups were unhappy the attention of voters should be drawn away from the Church Crisis, which they saw as the most important election issue.

Following the Conservative victory in October of 1900, some Protestants began questioning their relationship to the Primrose League. “Ben. Dizzy” wrote to the *English Churchman*,

> Is it not time for Protestants to consider whether it is consistent with their Protestantism to remain members of the Primrose League? The character of the League has completely changed since its institution, and the ‘maintenance of the Constitutional Religion of the country’ has been changed, at the bidding of Cardinal Manning, into the ‘maintenance of Religion’ – query, what Religion? That question is easily answered when you consider the present constitution of the League – the Romanizing Balfour-cum-Salisbury clique, with its seven members in the Government – its Roman Catholic Vice-Chancellor, and the Duke of Norfolk and other prominent Roman Catholics as members. If report speaks true, and there is no reason to doubt it, the League was used at the late election by Romanists and their Nonconforming brethren as against the Protestant Roll [the Church Association and IPF’s attempt to increase the vote for their candidates], and it was a sad sight to see the Protestant members of the League canvassing hand in glove with their worst enemies (the men, who, through their idolatry, have brought the country to its present pass [in South Africa]) to support a Romanizing ministry.51

Several days later, another reader of the *English Churchman* wrote to corroborate Ben Dizzy’s testimony. According to “Anti-Jacobite,” a former friend of his, who was a Romanist and a supporter of the White Rose League, admitted that many members of the Primrose League were Jacobites. As a result of the Jacobite invasion of the Primrose League, Protestants found themselves “on every side confronted with evasion, duplicity, and fraud, since we – alas! have permitted the re-introduction into our Gospel-lighted

50 Primrose League, Grand Council Minute Book 13, 24 September 1900, MS Primrose League 3, New Bodleian Library, Modern Papers, Oxford University.
land of that over-shadowing darkness – Popery.”⁵² Whether or not it is true that the Primrose League was in fact laced with supporters of the reintroduction of the Catholic Stuart monarchy, and this almost certainly was not the case, it is revealing of the cognitive dissonance the South African War could create. On the one hand, the activist impulse of Evangelicalism and the strong link between the British state and Protestantism led many to support the war for religious reasons. But on the other hand, the war was a manifestation of God’s wrath and many of the war’s most fervent supporters, such as the Conservative Party and Primrose League, seemed to promote Catholicism. In the end, most concluded that the war was just, but it had occurred as a result of the Catholic idolatry existing in Britain and South Africa. God had allowed Satan to attack the British Empire, but this did not preclude patriotic Protestants from supporting the war effort.

- **Catholic Perspectives on the South African War**

British Protestants were not alone in taking a nuanced view of the South African War. Anglo-Catholics often found the war brought them face to face with the unresolved tension between their nationality and religion. Needless to say, Anglo-Catholics tended to assess the causes and results of the South African War differently than their Protestant neighbors. While Protestants believed the war was punishment for having turned away from the heritage of the Reformation, Anglo-Catholics felt it was the result of turning away from the Catholic faith. One reader of the popular High-Church newspaper the *Church Times* reminded his readers that God directed the destiny of the nations. The Boers, despite having a “bald” religion, trusted God. The English appeared to trust their own might. Moreover, the Church of England was abandoning the “ancient and solemn ways.” Churches were neglecting Catholic plainsong in favor of silly and sentimental

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tunes that drove men away from church. Those who did attend church “often hear taught a maudlin altruism, instead of the Catholic faith.” Others argued that God was using the Protestant Boers to punish England for its neglect of Catholicism. Another writer to the *Church Times* wrote “I still think Protestantism is the cause of our having, as a nation, ignored God. Protestantism (like evil itself) is a negative…. It only appears in the denial of truth.” For many Anglo-Catholics, even worse than England’s neglect of the Catholic faith was its active “persecution” of Catholic practices and clergymen within the Established Church. Rather than returning to God in humiliation and prayer, church leaders and politicians, such as Samuel Smith and William Harcourt, were preoccupied with the use of incense:

Possible solutions to the problems caused by the Church of England’s turn away from Catholicism included, obviously, returning to the faith, but also holding a national day of humiliation and prayer. Preferably, such a day would include special services and fasting. The Church of England bishops did eventually agree to hold a day of special intercession for the nation and troops in connection with the war on Septuagesima Sunday, 1900. Anglo-Catholics, and British Christians of other persuasions, called for not only a special day of prayer, but also for constant prayers for victory. Soldiers and officers who were openly religious and held prayer services in the field were commended by the media. The *Church Times*, for example, commended General Sir George White as a good example for British Anglo-Catholics. As the Boers besieged the British at Ladysmith, General White and other officers including General Sir Archibald Hunter

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53 QUOS DEUS VULT PERDERE PRIUS DEMENTAT, letter to the editor, *Church Times*, 5 January 1900, p. 4.
54 SACERDOS, letter to the editor, *Church Times*, 5 January 1900, p. 4.
55 See, for example, H. H. E., letter to the editor, *Church Times*, 5 January 1900, p. 4.
56 See *Church Times*, 19 January 1900, p. 60; and *Church Times*, 26 January 1900, p. 106.
held a service of thanksgiving to God for protecting them thus far. After the Archdeacon
gave an address, General White and his staff walked to the altar rails where they sung a
solemn Te Deum, completing what the *Church Times* felt was a perfect service.\(^{57}\)

In order to ensure the existence of godly soldiers like General White, others
argued for the creation and promotion of Anglo-Catholic chaplaincies and orders serving
among the military. One such organization active during the South African War was the
Guild of the Holy Standard, which W. H. P. Arden, the acting chaplain at Winchester,
reported was “quietly doing work along Catholic lines.”\(^{58}\) The Army Guild of the Holy
Standard (GHS) was a product of the nineteenth century proliferation of societies,
brotherhoods, and guilds within the Church of England. It was open to soldiers and
officers of all ranks and had around 1,000 members by 1877.\(^{59}\) Members pledged to
maintain their Christian faith, to remain sober, chaste, and manly, and to regularly attend
church and receive Holy Communion.\(^{60}\) Prominent members included Lord Kitchener,
who had joined in 1876 while serving overseas.\(^{61}\)

Despite the patronage of a few Protestant bishops, the GHS quickly acquired a
reputation as a High Church or even extreme Ritualist organization. A *New York Times*
London correspondent colorfully referred to it as a “bastard branch” of the Society of the
Holy Cross in 1877.\(^{62}\) By the conjunction of the outbreak of the South African War with
the Church Crisis in 1899, Protestants viewed the GHS and its sister organization the

\(^{57}\) *Church Times*, 26 January 1900, p. 106.
\(^{59}\) *New York Times*, 12 August 1877, p. 2.
\(^{60}\) “Objects of the Army Guild,” qtd. in G. E. W. Malet, letter to the editor, *Times*, 23 April 1903, p. 15, col. A.
\(^{61}\) Dominic Green, *Three Empires on the Nile: The Victorian Jihad, 1869-1899* (New York: Free Press,
2007), 245.
Guild of St. Helena with suspicion. Anti-Ritualist dislike of the GHS’s presence within the army exploded in 1903 when the Guild attempted to hold a memorial service in commemoration of fallen soldiers in St. Paul’s Cathedral. Anti-Ritualists including Austin Taylor claimed the Catholic GHS would be offering up prayers for the dead in a cathedral of the established church using an order of service that was almost identical to a Roman Catholic requiem mass. The Times later confirmed that the Guild planned to recite prayers for the dead, the Dies Irae, and the Agnus Dei, which was associated with belief in the Real Presence of Christ’s body and blood in the Eucharist. Lady Wimborne’s Ladies’ League sprung into action, arguing that St. Paul’s was the nation’s cathedral and that Romish practices unseen since the Reformation could not be introduced without question. Prominent Nonconformists like J. H. Rigg publicly congratulated Wimborne for her impassioned stand against “the daring and determined aggression of Romanizing clergy and their followers.” Guild members protested that Taylor and others had misrepresented their plans, but the council nevertheless decided to cancel the service “in view of the excitement” that had been caused.

The Catholic-leaning GHS was active in South Africa during the war.

Nevertheless, W. H. P. Arden also called for the creation of a religious order of chaplains

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64 Frank Penny, letter to the editor, Times, 19 March 1903, p. 8, col. C; Miles, letter to the editor, Times, 20 March, 1903, p. 6, col. C; and New York Times, 26 April 1903, p. 4.

65 “Ecclesiastical Intelligence,” Times, 9 April 1903, p. 4, col. A.

66 Cornelia Wimborne, et al., letter to the editor, Times, 20 April 1903, p. 6, col. F. Henry Wace, the dean of Canterbury, and H. W. Webb Peploe, a prebendary of St Paul’s Cathedral, also called for the Dean of St. Paul’s to reconsider allowing the service. See Henry Wace, H. W. Webb Peploe, and A. E. Fox, open letter to the Dean of St. Paul’s, Times, 24 April 1903, p. 11, col. D.

67 James H. Rigg, letter to the editor, Times, 23 April 1903, p. 15, col. A.

68 Robert Gregory, resolution of the council of the Army Guild of the Holy Standard, qtd. in letter to the editor, Times, 27 April 1903, p. 7, col. C. See also Frank Penny, letter to the editor, Times, 19 March 1903, p. 8, col. C. Penny was an army chaplain and a member of the GHS’s council.
“with the threefold vow of celibacy, obedience, and poverty,” because, “bright as is the prospect now, and many as are the number of true Catholic soldiers, the prospect then would be brighter, and the number of the faithful multiplied a thousandfold.”69 The prospect for work “along Catholic lines” in South Africa was, after all, bright, since Anglo-Catholics agreed with Protestants that Catholicity was far more widespread in South Africa than it was in Britain. South African parish priest Leonard Warner boasted that in South Africa the clergy did not have the “wrinkles” of Protestantism and Romanism to deal with and there was no pesky Reformation Settlement either.70

But while many of the English colonists living in South Africa supported the Catholic ideal, the Boers most definitely did not. While Protestants struggled with seeing co-religionists as a national enemy, Anglo-Catholics experienced no such dissonance; they saw the Boer religion as degraded and perverse.71 The “dark” Calvinist religion of the Boers caused them to mistreat the African natives, according to some. One South African priest argued that although technically illegal, slavery still existed in practice among the Boers.72 A British military victory would provide the opportunity to “civilize and convert” and generally improve the lot of the native Africans.73 According to the Church Times, the influx of Catholicism following a British victory would temper the negative impact of Calvinism upon the Africans:

Hitherto the Dutch population have ill-concealed their contempt for religion in its Catholic aspects, as well as for any race which professes it:

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69 Arden, “The Church and the Army,” 298.
71 Accord to one Anglo-Catholic, the Calvinist Protestantism of the Boers was “the darkest and most degraded type. Nevertheless, if (as the Psalmist says) the ungodly are used as a ‘sword of God,’ so also may Protestantism be – even the Protestantism of Boers.” SACERDOS, letter to the editor, Church Times, 5 January 1900, p. 4.
72 A South African Priest, “What does the War mean to the Church of South Africa?” The Anglo-Catholic 2, no. 6 (June, 1900), 205.
73 Ibid., 208.
in the future we may expect – not, perhaps, conversions from Calvinism, but a less bigoted intolerance among Calvinists. It is clear, also, that a settled peace, which will certainly secure as one of its best results a fairer treatment of the native races, will be all to the advantage of mission work among the coloured people.74

The success of the British army in South Africa would permit the growth of Catholicism and sweep away the worst aspects of Calvinist Protestantism.

In addition to seeing the Calvinist Boers as uncivilized in their treatment of the natives, some Anglo-Catholics also equated them with the historic Protestant persecutors of Catholics. A. H. Lang compared the Calvinist Boers to the Calvinist Dutch who had instigated the persecution of Roman Catholics in seventeenth-century Japan. The Dutch persuaded Ieyasu, the founder of the Shogunate, to persecute the Catholic Christians. According to Lang, the Dutch provided Nagasaki with the “powder and shot wherewith to kill the Christians. In the museum at Tokyo are crosses and images which Christians were compelled to trample on or suffer death. The Dutch looked on, and were allowed, under very humiliating conditions, to live with the Chinese, in Nagasaki, and trade. This they did for 250 years – the Japanese not recognizing that Protestantism was Christianity.”75 To Lang, the moral of the story was clear: the British must oppose Calvinism with prayer and faith.76

It is worth noting that Lang called for fellow Catholics to fight the Calvinist Boers with prayer and faith, not gunpowder and bullets. For Anglicans of a Catholic persuasion, the relationship between their religion and nation was less straightforward than it was for most Protestants. The relationship between Catholicism and patriotism was never unproblematic. While self-professed Protestants within the established church

75 A. H. Lang, letter to the editor, Church Times, 1 June 1900, p. 629.
76 Ibid.
emphasized the national character of the Church of England under the headship of the British monarch, Anglo-Catholics emphasized the Church of England’s character as a branch of the Catholic (that is, universal) Church. As we have seen, Anglo-Catholics were at pains to accentuate the trans-national and cosmopolitan nature of the Church. Thus, their ecclesiology led some to question what the relationship of members of an international Church should be towards nationalism, especially in a time of war.

While most Anglo-Catholics asserted their patriotism and supported the British war effort, especially since the enemy was avowedly anti-Catholic, “nationalism” remained a hot topic throughout the duration of the conflict. *The Anglo-Catholic*, a magazine begun in 1899 for the edification of High Churchmen, included several articles and poems on the topic of the South African War. Some writers, like George Davenport, equated the British soldiers in South Africa with martyrs who had shed their blood in Africa in the cause of advancing Christianity.77 Others, like Rev. G. Wingfield Hunt, warned that whatever happened politically, Catholics must avoid nationalism in religion. He complained that among Protestants the belief “that Englishmen are materially and political the special favorites of a pro-British Heaven seems generally to go without saying.” 78 Hunt reminded his readers that the Old Testament national religion of the Jews had been “broadened out into Catholicism.”79 Thus, nationalism in religion should not be the ideal of English-speaking Christians in the New Testament era. Another Anglo-Catholic priest, Hubert Handley, argued that the Church of England ought to exercise its patriotism by warning the state against the temptations of prosperity, self-

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79 Ibid., 104.
satisfaction, and pride. The Church’s patriotism derived from the tradition of the Church Catholic.

Some Anglo-Catholics and High Churchmen, especially those with socialist views, actively opposed both the war and standard definitions of patriotism. Already in 1886 during the Witwatersrand gold rush, many years before the war broke out, Charles Marson, a prominent Anglo-Catholic Socialist, was fiercely criticizing British colonial policy in South Africa in the *Christian Socialist* newspaper. The criticism did not abate once the war had begun. Henry Scott Holland and Charles Gore, two of the founders of the predominantly Anglo-Catholic Church Social Union, both vocally opposed the war. Gore, in particular, argued that Britain’s early military setbacks were the result of divine punishment for the sin of national pride. Father T. J. Hagerty, speaking to a meeting of the [Roman] Catholic Socialist Society in Glasgow, argued both that socialism “would sanctify labour, even as the Nazarene made holy the carpenter’s bench,” and that “the sturdy Boers listened to no preaching of peace while their liberties were assailed; and almost every veldt holds the grave of a hero who elected death in preference to a dishonourable contentment under British tyranny.”

Socialists who were familiar with or had been influenced by Catholic thinkers also tended to advance typically Christian Socialist arguments against the war. The Christian ecumenicalist Henry Lunn argued that patriotism did not mean blindly believing that whatever the government did was right. Rather, it meant “urging in the

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82 Ibid., 203.
national counsels those principles which are expressed in life by ‘doing justly and loving mercy and walking humbly with God?’”

Tolstoy enthusiast Aylmer Maude argued that Jesus had actively opposed patriotism since He had taught His followers to love their neighbors as themselves. Others, such as Ashley de Burgh argued that God was unhappy with the operations in South Africa, especially in light of the fact that national efforts should be focused on helping the poor in the slums of London, not killing Boers.

On this point, some anti-war Nonconformists and Anglo-Catholics found themselves in agreement. For example, John Clifford, a leading Baptist clergyman and president of the Stop the War Committee, opposed the war for humanitarian reasons. Rather than expending energy burning Boer farms and forcing Boer civilians into concentration camps, Clifford believed the government ought to occupy itself with bettering the life of its own people.

Some Anglo-Catholic socialists, however, did support the South African War, arguing that it would be a means of spreading Catholic Christianity throughout Africa. Father Paul Bull, for example, saw imperialism, like socialism, as an expression of the corporate spirit he found in the Catholic Church. Bull actually went so far as to equate the British Empire with the Kingdom of God, contrasting the African “Kingdom of Darkness” with the “Kingdom of Light” advanced by the British Empire. Following a British victory in South Africa, people would enter the British Empire where “Justice, Righteousness, Liberty and Peace reign supreme…under the protection of the British Empire.”

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85 Aylmer Maude, *War and Patriotism* (London: A. Bonner, 1900), 24-25; ILP/8/1900, 1900/49.
86 Ashley de Burgh, *If Christ Came to South Africa* (London: Langsford and Company Printing Contractors, c. 1900), 2ff; ILP/8/1900, 1900/20.
Flag.” In his equation of the British Empire with the Kingdom of God, Bull actually advanced a more typically Protestant argument.

- **The Spread and Influence of a Religious View of the War: The Case of the Church Association**

Regardless of religious persuasion, many commentators noted the importance of religion in the South African War. Even American books such as John Neville’s slightly pro-Boer *Boer and Britisher* (1900) were careful to mention the religious angle. In chapter 4, entitled “The Boers and Their Country: A Much Misrepresented People who are Hospitable and Intensely Religious…” Neville wrote that

> Religion dominates the whole life of the Boers. It is his first and last thought. He believes in a personal God, a literal heaven and hell and he believes literally in his Bible. It is the only book he reads, and he reads and re-reads it and draws from it inspiration for his every act. His conversation is liberally supplied with scriptural quotations and for every event he can find a scriptural significance. Once a year he goes to the capital to partake of communion. For those who live in remote section of the republic it is a long trip, in some cases requiring six weeks, but it is made with the same devotion that the pilgrimage is made to Mecca. The state church is the Dutch Reformed Church and so thoroughly does religion dominate the people that success in political is only possible on the part of those who have become conspicuous in religious affairs. Oom Paul is a fine illustration of this fact, he being one of the most powerful preachers in the republic.99

James Bryce, a prominent British politician and constitutional scholar, contributed an essay entitled “The Historical Causes of the Present War in South Africa” to another American-published collection. One of these historical causes alluded to by Bryce was the Boer dislike of the British government due to their love of freedom for its own sake.

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They were afflicted with this disposition because, as commentators of all stripes loved to note, their leading families were direct descendents of the Calvinist French Huguenots.90

It is difficult to know exactly how many Britons looked at the South African War through religious-colored spectacles. Peter Mandler has recently called attention to the importance of not only highlighting a particular discourse, but also exploring its significance or throw-weight.91 If only a dozen isolated individuals considered the South African War to be a worldly manifestation of spiritual conflict and they were unable to spread their ideas, then it is difficult to see the merit in devoting an entire chapter to an exploration of their views. One possible way to begin to assess the dissemination of this religious perspective is through an examination of the influence of the Church Association and other religious societies. At the Church Association’s 1900 Spring Conference at York, J. Howard offered a thorough and typical anti-Ritualist Protestant assessment of the South African War that also emphasized the importance of the Church Association in winning the “war” at home. After noting that the nation and church were embroiled in the twin emergencies of the South African War and Ritualism, he added,

Now it seems to me, and I think, to every loyal and consistent fellow member of the Church Association, and to every other Protestant fellow subject who even cursorily regards the events of history in light of Holy Scripture, that this national emergency is very directly connected with and readily traceable to the previously existing crisis in the National Church. The crisis in the National Church is intimately connected with idolatry in the National Church, and the inevitable result of idolatry in the National Church is to involve chastisement on the State which tolerates in the National Church the presence of recognised idolatry, from which it has, in God’s gracious and merciful Providence, the constitutional duty imposed upon it to protect, and the constitutional power to preserve that Church. In

the history of Israel we find that the practice of idolatry as a national sin was the cause of national ruin…. 92

If what Howard said was true, then most members of the Church Association and other self-consciously Protestant Britons saw the South African War from a religious perspective. But how big was the Church Association and how much influence did it have?

The Church Association claimed 8,000 members and 138 branch associations by 1870.93 By 1880 the Association consisted of around 400 branches.94 Martin Wellings has argued that the Church Association was not as influential as more moderate evangelical Anglican organizations such as the Protestant Churchmen’s Alliance (PCA) or the National Church League (NCL).95 However, Wellings failed to take into account the Church Association’s political influence, its close connections with numerous other Protestant organizations, and its support among Nonconformists. Moreover, although Church Association members initially resented the founding of the PCA in 1889 because they believed it would merely duplicate their own efforts, the two organizations soon ceased to be competitors since a core group of Protestant campaigners was active in each. For example, after the PCA had merged with the Union of Clerical and Lay Associations in 1892 to become the National Protestant Church Union (NPCU), W. D. Cruddas became its president. Cruddas also served as a Church Association vice president. T. Myles Sandys, who was the council chairman of the IPF, was also a vice president of the NPCU and a key parliamentary contact for the Church Association. Sandys attended

92 J. Howard, *Church Intelligencer* 17, no. 4 (April 1900): 54-56.
many of their council meetings and worked hard to convince the Association to federate with the IPF. Sandys was also a colleague of Sir John Willox, another Conservative MP, who was a president of the NPCU. In 1906 the NPCU merged with Lady Wimborne’s Church of England League to become the NCL. Cruddas became its first president. Lady Wimborne also worked closely with the Church Association, even offering the use of her home for council meetings. Like Cruddas, Lord Wimborne became a Church Association vice president. In any case, the NCL did not yet exist to influence anyone during the crucial years of the Church Crisis and in 1950 it merged with the Church Association to form the Church Society, which still exists today.

With the possible exception of the Imperial Protestant Federation, the Church Association was probably the most influential anti-Ritualist group among both Nonconformist and evangelical Anglican Protestants. In addition to its numerous Parliamentary contacts, the group worked with the other major Protestant organizations such as the Protestant Alliance, Calvinistic Protestant Union, the Church Association of Ireland, the Convent Enquiry Society, the Evangelical Protestant Union, the Luther Protestant Crusade, the Grand Lodge of the Loyal Orange Institution of England, the National Club, the Protestant National Leauge, Protestant Press Agency, Protestant Reformation Society, the Women’s Protestant Union and Lady Wimborne’s Ladies’ League. The CA also had very close financial and legal ties to John Kensit and Walter

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96 Church Association, Council Minutes, 16 March 1899, C. S. 11, Lambeth Palace Library.
97 Church Association, Council Minutes, 16 February 1899, C. S. 11, Lambeth Palace Library.
98 According to the CA’s 1900 almanac, the follow organizations were deemed in accordance with Association views: Army Scripture Readers’ Society, British and Foreign Bible Society, Calvinistic Protestant Union, China Inland Mission, Christian Evidence, Church Association, Church of England Book Society, Church of England Scripture Readers’ Association, Church Missionary Society, Church Pastoral Aid Society, Colonial and Continental Church Society, Dr. Barnardo’s Homes, Evangelical Alliance, Evangelical Protestant Union, Evangelization Society, Irish Church Missions, Irish Society, Ladies’ League, London City Missions, London Jews’ Society, Lord’s Day Observance Society, Mildmay
Walsh, the founders of the Protestant Truth Society and Imperial Protestant Federation, respectively. The Laymen’s League of Liverpool also worked closely with the Association. Austin Taylor, the chairman of the League and later an MP, frequently attended Association meetings and even convinced the CA to give the Laymen’s League control of anti-Ritualist political activity around Liverpool. In addition to producing its own very large number of writings, the Association endorsed and helped to distribute the literature of friendly organizations. According to the CA’s Annual Report for 1902, in that year alone eleven “Evangelistic Vans” traveled 14,023 miles and visited 1,235 villages and distributed 189,875 tracts. The Association’s income hovered around a respectable £15,000 per annum during the early twentieth century, allowing it to spend liberally to spread its message.

The Church Association, then, was at the center of a wide-reaching web of influence that potentially reached hundreds of thousands of Britons. Of course, the Church Association may have reached the most Protestant Britons through its clerical membership. Protestant clergymen would have spread the Church Association’s

perspective on the South African War via the pulpit on Sunday and perhaps throughout
the week in their contact with parishioners. Even if, as is probable, only a small
percentage of those associated in some way with the Church Association or those who
had heard its message through some medium, took the time to seriously consider the
South African War from a religious perspective, that small group could have been quite
large in absolute terms.

It is equally difficult to determine the number of Britons affected by a Catholic
perspective on the conflict. Chapter 1 has already discussed the massive growth of the
most influential High-Church organization, the English Church Union. The ECU’s
membership went from 203 at the beginning of 1861 to around 40,000 in 1905. Like
the CA, the ECU was merely the center of a large solar system of satellite organizations,
including the Society of the Holy Cross (SSC), the Confraternity of the Blessed
Sacrament, the Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity, the Order of Corporate
Reunion, the Alcuin Club, the Guild of All Souls, the Society of St. John the Evangelist
or Cowley Fathers, the Companions of St. John, and the Society for the Propagation
of the Gospel, which had come under Anglo-Catholic influence by the early-twentieth
century. As was the case with the Church Association, the message of the ECU must
have reached thousands via tracts and preaching. The *Church Times* alone had a
distribution larger than that of all the major Protestant periodicals combined. Again,
even if only a relatively small number of Anglo-Catholics or those who received the

Britain, 1869-1921*, 4-5. See also W. S. F. Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism: A Study in Religious Ambiguity*
103 John Shelton Reed, *Glorious Battle: The Cultural Politics of Victorian Anglo-Catholicism* (Nashville:
Anglo-Catholic message actually considered the South African War from a religious perspective, the numbers would still be quite large in absolute terms.

- Conclusion

While it is impossible to know or even closely approximate the number of Britons whose religious beliefs affected their view of the South African War, it is safe to say that a not inconsiderable number approached the conflict in this light. Naturally, those associating themselves most closely with the work and message of societies such as the CA and ECU would be the most likely to view the war from a religious perspective. This perspective evolved over the course of the war, focusing more on the wrath of God and his punishment of Britain for either the prevalence of Ritualism or abandonment of the Catholic Faith, depending on one’s perspective, when the war was going badly, and focusing more on Britain’s providential role and the war’s missionary possibilities when the war was developing in Britain’s favor.

Moreover, while religion in general and the Church Crisis in particular affected the way people saw the war, the war itself affected the progress of the Crisis, especially in the political arena. In early 1899 the Conservative Party under the Parliamentary leadership of Arthur Balfour was being severely tested by William Harcourt and the Liberal Party on the Church question. It appeared that the Church Crisis would be the major question on which the next General Election would be fought. This put the Conservatives in a difficult position, since popular opinion on this issue seemed to side with the Liberals. But when the Second Anglo-Boer War broke out, the Conservatives were able to drape themselves in patriotism and imperialism, making it seem un-patriotic

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to vote for the opposition party, which contained several pro-Boer members. The fact that the Church Association supported the war effort further complicated matters since many of their Parliamentary supporters, such as William Harcourt, were Liberals associated with an anti-war position. In any case, the war turned the attention of both pro and anti-Ritualists away from ecclesiastical affairs. Thus, W. J. Scott wrote in the *Nineteenth Century* that

…the ‘crisis ended, for the man on the street at least, when the Transvaal war began – ‘this most providential war,’ as a venerable North London incumbent solemnly called it some fifteen months ago…. Also, the Church Association is still alive, and so (in a sense) is Sir William Harcourt. The fire of straw has burned very low, but a little explosive fuel may make it burn again.\(^{105}\)

While the Crisis remained a matter of pressing concern for many and continued to color their views of the war, the war itself became the most important issue for all but fervent Church Association supporters. Nevertheless, as Scott affirmed, the Church Crisis was poised to return to its position of prominence in the public mind following the war. The *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* agreed, writing that, “this question, like all others, has been eclipsed for a while by the absorbing interest of the war; but it will soon reappear at the centre of the field of controversy, bearing along with it the destinies of the Church of England.”\(^{106}\) Indeed, the South African War ended in 1902, but the Church Crisis continued to rage, with Prime Minister Balfour being forced in 1904 by the anti-Ritualists in Parliament to appoint a Royal Commission to consider the problem.

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CHAPTER 4

“The Mass and the Masses”:
Christian Socialism*, The Labour Movement, and the Church Crisis

This chapter examines how Christianity and especially Anglo-Catholicism influenced British socialism around the turn of the twentieth century. Although it is little remembered today, Christian Socialism was a vibrant and recognized branch of socialism in the late-nineteenth century. The rich interaction that existed between Christian Socialists and other types of socialists has been overlooked or minimized by historians who, due to a Whiggish conception of labour history, have often tended to see Parliamentary socialism as the only “real” and, therefore, historically significant type of socialism. The first part of this chapter examines the intellectual contributions of Christian Socialists, arguing that their theologically-inflected brand of socialism was an important part of the fin-de-siècle progressive milieu. After briefly exploring the history of Christian Socialism, I examine the impact of Christianity broadly and Christian Socialism more specifically on the labour movement.

The second part of this chapter explores more specifically the perceived relationship between Christian Socialism and Anglo-Catholicism. Despite the fact that British Christian Socialists came from all backgrounds, from Nonconformist to Roman Catholic, Christian Socialism became especially associated with Anglo-Catholicism by the turn of the twentieth century. Catholic socialists often linked their political

*I define Christian Socialism as theologically-based socialism. A Christian Socialist is one who adheres to socialism on the basis of Christian religious or theological convictions.
convictions to an incarnational and sacramental theology. Moreover, for many adherents, Anglo-Catholic Christian Socialism was also part of Catholic polemic against supposed Protestant individualism and puritanism. Not surprisingly, the existence of an especially vocal and visible Anglo-Catholic socialist tradition led many anti-Ritualist Protestants to associate Catholicism and socialism. In the minds of Protestant organizations, such as the Church Association, Anglo-Catholicism and socialism had grown into a twin-headed hydra. To illuminate the marriage between Anglo-Catholicism and socialism, the chapter examines the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Christian Socialism of Stewart Duckworth Headlam and the first socialist organization in Great Britain, the Guild of St. Matthew (GSM).

However, in the heated religious landscape of turn-of-the-century Britain, not all socialists were prepared to work with Christian Socialists on the basis of shared politics. Indeed, on occasion the anti-Catholicism or anti-clericalism of some labour leaders trumped the commitment to socialism they shared with Christian Socialists. Since many union leaders and other labour activists came from a Protestant, often Nonconformist, background, some found it difficult to work with Anglo-Catholic Christian socialists. Falling back on old anti-Catholic stereotypes, they associated the rise of Roman Catholicism with devolution of the Christian Church away from the pristine communism of its founders. The final part of this chapter considers the reaction of labour leaders, especially Keir Hardie, to Catholic socialism in the context of the Church Crisis. Hardie provides an example of a labour activist whose sympathies with large swathes of Christian Socialism was muted by his allegiance to Protestantism. Although Hardie and

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1 Incarnational theology emphasizes the Incarnation of God as the man Jesus. Evangelicals often criticized incarnational theologies for emphasizing the incarnation at the expense of the atonement. Sacramental theology emphasizes the importance of the sacraments in delivering grace or salvation.
others embraced the arguments of Christian Socialism, they associated Catholicism and Ritualism with the upper classes and the oppression of the laity. As a result Headlam and Hardie never cooperated and the GSM maintained an anti-ILP line until its dissolution in 1909.

Twentieth-century British socialism quickly became associated with the development of the Labour Party, which became a major political force largely as a result of its ties to the trade union movement. Because most Christian Socialist groups – especially the predominantly Anglo-Catholic groups – failed to engage with trade unions, the Christian Socialist contribution to British socialism faded dramatically as the century progressed. The debates comprising the Church Crisis affected the reaction of Britons to socialism in general and Christian (usually Catholic) Socialism in particular by defining which political alliances were imaginatively possible. Because Christian Socialists did not make an effective alliance with the predominantly Protestant-influenced union movement, they failed to maintain a distinctive voice within socialism as it developed in the context of the Labour Party in particular.

- The Labour Movement and Christian Socialism

Historians of British socialism and labour have always been aware of the contributions of religion and Christian Socialism to both British socialism, which emerged during the 1880s, and the eventual formation of the Labour Party. However, those who have accorded Christian Socialism a role in their histories have tended to disregard it because it does not correspond to their ideal type of socialism. As David M. Thompson has noted, “historians in the past have seen Marxism and collective ownership as the touchstone of true socialism and judged the authenticity of Christian Socialism by
that criteria. Other forms of socialism are treated as stepping stones or inadequate version of scientific socialism.”² Labour historians have tended to see the history of socialism as an inevitable ascent towards parliamentary socialism culminating in state ownership of the means of production. This Whiggish tendency has prevented historians from seriously assessing the contributions of nineteenth-century socialists who remained outside of the mid-twentieth century definition of socialism. Older labour historians, such as Henry Pelling, have also fallen into this trap. For example, although Stewart Headlam loudly proclaimed his socialism and was considered a socialist by his contemporaries, Pelling has argued that Headlam was actually a Georgite rather than a socialist.³ Of course, Headlam was a Georgite, but for Pelling a Georgite socialist is something of an oxymoron since Henry George never accepted land nationalization and he ignored industry.

Stephen Yeo’s 1977 article “A New Life: The Religion of Socialism in Britain, 1883-1896” examines what he called “religious socialism” in its period of greatest influence and asks what the phenomenon tells scholars about the history of socialism.⁴ Yeo pays special attention to John Trevor’s Labour Church movement. Although Yeo is aware of the temptation to “dismiss socialists [like Trevor] who spoke a moral language of evangelical exhortation as not-quite-socialists, as fuzzy, peculiarly-British soft, unrevolutionary socialists who could not quite moult religious feathers,” he nevertheless

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tends to view his protagonists in just that way.⁵ Yeo notes that the tendency of his article would probably be to “exaggerate the extent of the religion of socialism, as opposed to the more orthodox development of the labour movement in the same years….”⁶ Oddly, in an article attempting to avoid Whiggish interpretations of the development of socialism, Yeo contrasts the religious socialism of the period 1883-1896 with the “more orthodox” socialism of later years. Later, he writes that “a serious socialist programme did not emerge from the 1890s.”⁷ But, although a program did not emerge, at least some “serious socialist thought did, of course, come form these years,” despite the preponderance of religious socialism.⁸ From the perspective of a mid-twentieth-century socialist, Yeo concludes that the religion of socialism contained both positive and negative aspects. “Positively, socialism was being practised. It was being experienced by people who, after all, would die long before, if ever, it became universal. Some experience of socialism, particularly on the scale of these years, was better than none for those generations who could not have it all.”⁹ Although Yeo’s subject matter is specifically religious socialism of the late-nineteenth century, he tends to view his subject through the later development of the Labour Party.

Even church historians, such as G. C. Binyon and Edward Norman, have used an anachronistic definition of socialism to judge their subjects.¹⁰ Because he judged fin-de-siècle socialism by a later ideal, Peter d’A. Jones has argued that “the Christian socialists’ contribution to the evolution of British socialist thought was minimal and their

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⁵ Yeo, “A New Life,” 14. See also page 30.
⁶ Ibid., 7.
⁷ Ibid., 47. Emphasis mine.
⁸ Ibid., 48. Emphasis mine.
⁹ Ibid., 46. Emphasis Yeo’s.
contribution to Christian thought was only slightly greater.” Avoiding such an anachronistic reading of socialism, this chapter argues that late-Victorian and Edwardian Britons drew no sharp line between religion and socialism. Before World War I British socialism had yet to acquire the precise definition it later did. Therefore, I will take at face value the assertions of Christians Socialists and their contemporaries that they were in fact socialists.

More recently, labour historians and historians of British socialism have failed to accord either religious socialism or Christian Socialism more specifically any substantial role in their narratives. Geoffrey Foote’s *The Labour Party’s Political Thought* (1997), for example, argues that the intellectual history of labour thought was not merely a case of one idea replacing another in sequence. Rather, labour thought was informed by a thick “web” of influences. As a result, there were no clear boundaries to early labour thought. While this was true, Foote goes on to argue that as a result of this latitudinarianism, ideologies such as Christian Socialism and Marxism were equally at home in the Labour Party. Such a statement – one of the only places Foote mentions Christian Socialism – has the effect of magnifying the role of Marxism in early British socialism.

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14 Ibid., 5, 6, 12.
socialism and minimizing the role of Christian Socialism. In chapter 2 Foote lists Marxism, Fabianism, and Ethical Socialism as the constituent parts of British socialism. The only mention of a Christian influence on British socialism is the comment that Ethical Socialists interpreted socialism through the lens of Nonconformity as opposed to Marxism.\textsuperscript{15} In reality, Christian Socialism and Christianity more generally exerted a greater influence on British socialism and the labour movement than Foote allows. Indeed, because at the time there was nothing unusual about being both a Christian Socialist and a Fabian or SDF member, the contributions of Christian Socialists are lost by seeing individuals as primarily Marxists, Fabians, or Ethical Socialists. George Chambers, for example, was an ex-Benedictine monk, the Christian Socialist Conrad Noel’s first curate, and a member of the SDF executive body.\textsuperscript{16} To see him as merely a member of the SDF ignores his religious-intellectual milieu.

Meanwhile, historiographical trends in the history of Christian Socialism have often mirrored those in the historiography of socialism more broadly. For example, Peter d’A. Jones’s still standard work on Christian Socialism, \textit{The Christian Socialist Revival} (1968), emphasized the dramatic reemergence of Christian Socialism during the 1880s, just as E. P. Thompson, Henry Pelling, David Clark, and others have pointed to a dramatic reemergence of British socialism more generally in the 1880s. More recent historians such as David Thompson have criticized Jones’s description of a “revival” and stressed the link between the Christian Socialism of F. D. Maurice in the 1850s and that of the 1880s.\textsuperscript{17} By emphasizing continuity over disjuncture, the approach of Thompson parallels that of Eugenio Biagini and Alistair Reid, who have turned scholarly attention

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 34. \\
\textsuperscript{16} Jones, \textit{The Christian Socialist Revival}, 248. \\
\textsuperscript{17} Thompson, “The Christian Socialist Revival in Britain: A Reappraisal,” 295.
away from the supposedly new socialism and unionism of the 1880s and toward the
continuities that existed among radicalism, Chartism, Gladstonian Liberalism, and fin-de-
siècle socialism and unionism.  

Just as revisionist histories of socialism have emphasized continuity and similarity
over disjuncture, so too have recent histories of Christian Socialism. Some historians
have reacted against the emphasis of Jones and others on Anglo-Catholic or
“sacramental” socialism. Jones dedicated the bulk of his description of Christian
Socialism to the sacramental socialist societies, including the GSM and CSU, noting that
few Evangelicals were to be found among the leaders of such movements. Moreover,
Jones sharply distinguished between Nonconformist Christian Socialists and sacramental
socialists, arguing that the few Nonconformist socialist groups that existed lacked the
cohesive theology of the sacramental socialists.

David Thompson later took issue with this argument as well, noting that the sharp
distinction between Nonconformist and evangelical and sacramental socialism was an
anachronistic analysis that read a later division between Evangelicalism and Catholic
Anglicanism back into the history of the Christian Socialist movement. After all,

\[ \text{Eugenio F. Biagini,} \ \text{Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone,} \\
\text{1860-1880 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992); Eugenio F. Biagini and Alistair J. Reid, eds.,} \\
\text{Currents of Radicalism: Popular Radicalism, Organised Labour and Party Politics in Britain, 1850-1914} \\
\text{(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and Alistair J. Reid, United We Stand: A History of} \\
\text{Britain’s Trade Unions, paperback ed. (New York: Penguin Books, Ltd., 2005). See also Biagini’s recent} \\
\text{study of the impact of Irish Nationalism and Home Rule on English Liberalism and Radicalism, British} \\
\text{Democracy and Irish Nationalism 1876-1906 (Cambridge University Press, 2007). J. P. Parry’s} \\
\text{Democracy and Religion: Gladstone and the Liberal Party 1867-1875 (New York: Cambridge University} \\
\text{Press, 1986) also emphasizes continuities among early nineteenth-century radicalism, religion, and} \\
\text{Liberalism. Reacting to the linguistic-based interpretations of Biagini, Reid, and others, Pat Thane and} \\
\text{Duncan Tanner have focused on the development of socialism and labour politics at the municipal level.} \\
\text{See Pat Thane, “Labour and Local Politics, Radically, Democracy and Social Reform, 1880-1914”; and} \\
\text{Duncan Tanner, “Ideological Debate in Edwardian Labour Politics: Radicalism, Revisionism and} \\
\text{Socialism” in Currents of Radicalism.} \\
\text{Jones, The Christian Socialist Revival in Britain, 202. Obviously few Evangelicals would be found} \\
\text{within sacramental socialist organizations since Evangelicalism rejected sacramentalism.} \\
\text{Ibid., 306-7.} \]
Thompson argues, both Evangelicals and Sacramentalists were influenced by the writings of F. D. Maurice and Henry George.21 Furthermore, Thompson takes issue with Jones’s claim that Nonconformist socialism had no defined theological core and that Evangelicalism was so enmeshed with individualism that making any theological connection between spiritual and social life was difficult.22 In reality, Evangelicals had a long tradition of social concern stretching back to abolitionism. In short, Thompson argues, there was less of a distinction between evangelical and sacramental or Catholic socialism than Jones had implied; Nonconformists, in particular, did have a core social theology. Thus, the historiography of Christian Socialism is split between those who emphasize the differences between Catholic and evangelical socialism, including Jones and Stanley Pierson, and those who emphasize the similarities among all types of Christian Socialism as a result of shared doctrines such as the Incarnation.23

This chapter will draw from and critique the work of those in both the “Jones” and “Thompson” camps. Although Thompson and others have criticized Jones for associating incarnational theology too closely with sacramental socialism, I would argue that Jones did not tie incarnationalism strongly enough to Catholic socialism. Jones listed the most common theological arguments of Christian Socialists across the theological spectrum as the patristic argument, the New Testament ethics argument, the sacramental

and *Book of Common Prayer* argument, and the divine immanence argument. In fact, Jones fails to list the incarnational argument, despite the fact that it was the one most widely used, especially among Catholics. As we shall see, Catholic socialists placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of the Incarnation to their social thought. Thomas Hancock of the GSM, for example, complained that the recently formed Christian Social Union used the word “Christianity” instead of “Incarnation” in the official justification of its socialist position. He found this problematic because using the broad term Christianity could

> open the floodgates to ‘superior-caste’ Christianity (Unitarianism), ‘elect-or self-separating-caste’ Christianity (Puritanism), ‘converted-caste’ Christianity (Methodism), or ‘illuminated-caste’ Christianity (mysticism). In contrast, use of the word ‘Incarnation’ asserts ‘the direct relationship of the vulgar, everyday carpenter, fisherman, publican, … tailor and docker to God in Christ Jesus.

It is also odd that Jones did not separately mention the doctrine of the Real Presence, which Catholics saw as a corollary of the Incarnation, in his list of Christian Socialist theological arguments. Additionally, as we shall also see, Jones’s anachronistic interpretation of socialism prevented him from appreciating the impact of Christian Socialism on British political life.

Thompson has complained that Jones’s “association of Christian Socialism in England with the high-church party has often meant that evangelical social concern has been treated as derivative.” While Thompson is certainly correct to point out the long history of evangelical social concern, he fails to distinguish between the more charity-

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24 Jones, *The Christian Socialist Revival in Britain*, 86. According to the “patristic argument,” the early Christians were communists.
25 Thomas Hancock, *Church Reformer* 8, no. 12 (December 1889), 273-4. Ironically, Jones also cites this passage on page 111. The *Church Reformer* was the periodical of the GSM.
based approach of most Evangelicals, who simply wanted to reform society, and the more radical approach of many socialists, who wanted to entirely remake society. Thompson is correct that part of the reason historians have bifurcated Catholic and evangelical socialism is due to the “increasingly intense polarization between Evangelicals and Ritualists in the Church of England in the last quarter of the century.”27 But if, as Thompson correctly says, this division between Protestantism and Catholicism within the Church of England already existed in the 1870s, then it is not anachronistic for historians to note the very distinctions that contemporaries made.

In fact, this distinction was so vital, especially during the years of the Church Crisis, that to gloss over it, as Paul Phillips conspicuously does in his *A Kingdom on Earth* (1996), is to risk distorting the period. Phillips’s transnational history attempts to illuminate the interaction between British and American Christian Socialists. However, his analysis lumps all Anglicans – including Anglo-Catholics such as Steward Headlam and the GSM! – into the category of Protestantism.28 Although he later acknowledges that Headlam was an Anglo-Catholic, by examining all of Anglophone social Christianity under the rubric of Liberal Protestantism, Phillips has inadvertently carpeted over a great deal of *fin-de-siècle* Protestant-Catholic animosity within Britain.29 In fact, what Jones and those who want to both reemphasize Protestant British socialism and stress the similarities among Christian Socialists fail to take into account is the heated ecclesiastical environment of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. The early prominence of explicitly Catholic Socialists such as Stewart Headlam, combined with the Protestant –

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27 Ibid., 276.
28 Philips *A Kingdom on Earth*, xiii fn. 1. Stewart Headlam would be spinning in his grave!
29 See ibid., xiii, xiv.
Catholic polarization of the religious scene during this period, caused many Protestants to associate socialism with Catholicism.

- **Part I: Christian Socialism**

  British Christian Socialism began during the mid-nineteenth century when groups of like-minded men began forming associations to advocate for socialism on the basis of religious beliefs.\(^{30}\) The rise of Chartism aided the formation of the most influential group around Frederick Denison Maurice, Charles Kingsley, Thomas Hughes, and John Malcolm Ludlow. Maurice, as a theologian, was the primary thinker in the group, and his political philosophy soon became known as Christian Socialism. Having been influenced by the Tractarian Movement, Maurice embraced the High Church emphasis on the visible Church as a unifying community.

  Maurice’s vision of Christian Socialism influenced a whole generation of leftist churchmen, including Samuel Barnett, the founder of Toynbee Hall, and Stewart Duckworth Headlam, his student at Cambridge. Headlam quickly become a crusader for anti-puritanical and socialist causes, and founded the Guild of St. Matthew (GSM) in Bethnal Green in 1877. Although Headlam never seemed to shy away from controversy – he supported the cause of music halls, ballet, Charles Bradlaugh, and Oscar Wilde, among others – and believed that “if you want to be a good Christian, you must be something very much like a good socialist,” the GSM did not begin publicly endorsing socialism until 1884.\(^{31}\) Nevertheless, the GSM was still the first officially socialist

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\(^{31}\) Qtd. in Burleigh, *Earthly Powers*, 386.
organization founded in Great Britain and pursued an advanced agenda involving the
nationalization of land, a progressive income tax, universal suffrage, and the abolition of
hereditary peerages. The Guild’s clerical membership included Thomas Hancock, who
had joined sometime prior to 1880. Although largely forgotten today, during the 1860s
and 1870s Hancock’s fiery sermons made him nearly as influential among Christian
Socialists as F. D. Maurice. In any case, the GSM’s radical agenda never attracted
much support from the Anglican hierarchy.

The Church Social Union (CSU), however, founded by Charles Gore, Henry Scott
Holland, and J. R. Illingworth in 1889 at Oxford, positioned itself as more of a Christian
Socialist think-tank than as a group of agitators. Consequently, it attracted a great deal of
support from the upper echelons of Church and society. For example, Brooke Foss
Westcott, the former headmaster of Harrow and after 1890 the Bishop of Durham, served
as the CSU president until 1900. Gore himself became the Bishop of Worcester in 1902,
and between 1889 and 1913 sixteen of the fifty-three newly appointed bishops were
members of the CSU. By 1895 the CSU could boast of 2,600 members, and the
membership eventually grew to around 6,000. The Union called for cooperation and an
end to individualism and competition, but failed to pursue any concrete policy, a fact that

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Christ and the People: Studies of Four Socialist Priests and Prophets of the Church of England between
1870 and 1930, Maurice B. Reckitt, ed. (London: S.P.C.K., 1968), 64; and Steward D. Headlam, The Guild
1906), 1.
33 Maurice B. Reckitt, “Introduction,” For Christ and the People: Studies of Four Socialist Priests and
Prophets of the Church of England between 1870 and 1930, Maurice B. Reckitt, ed. (London: S.P.C.K.,
1968), xii; and Stephen Yeo, “Thomas Hancock, 1832-1903: ‘The Banner of Christ in the hands of the
Socialists,’” For Christ and the People: Studies of Four Socialist Priests and Prophets of the Church of
popular sermons included the provocatively titled, “The Banner of Christ in the hands of Socialists,” “The
Social Democratic Pentecost,” and “The Magnificat – The Hymn of the Universal Socialist Revolution.”
34 Burleigh, Earthly Powers, 386; Jonathan Rose, The Edwardian Temperament, 1895-1919 (Athens, Ohio:
35 Rose, The Edwardian Temperament, 19; and Jones, The Christian Socialist Revival in Britain, 164.
probably accounted for its popularity. Nevertheless, the Union did manage to influence the political establishment through its members’ connections.

By the early-twentieth century the influence of the GSM was waning and those Christian Socialists looking for a more radical brand of politics than that available in the CSU were forced to turn elsewhere. Accordingly, the radical priests Conrad Noel, a former member of the GSM, F. L. Donaldson, and William Temple, a future Archbishop of Canterbury, founded the Church Socialist League (CSL) in 1906. The CSL quickly distinguished itself from the CSU by lambasting the Parliamentary Labour Party for its moderation and calling for communal control of factories.36

- **Religion, Christian Socialism, and the Labour Movement**

As we have seen, religion played an important role in the development of the labour movement. By 1893 the leadership of the Scottish Labour Party was filled with self-proclaimed Christian Socialists, including J. W. Warrington and Archie McArthur.37 As is well known, many labor activists and members of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) were former Methodist lay preachers. Historian Jonathan Rose notes that these former preachers worked Christian language into their socialist speeches. Moreover, they used the structure of Methodist connexions (or church bodies) as the model for the ILP’s structure.38 Popular labour speakers who were also practicing Nonconformists included William Abraham (a Calvinistic Methodist), Ben Pickard (a Wesleyan), and John Hodge (a Presbyterian).39 The ethical, as opposed to Marxian, socialism of much of the British

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labour movement undoubtedly stemmed from the beliefs and backgrounds of many of its grassroots leaders. Religious belief was not merely a factor in initiating interest in socialism, however. Christian belief remained a constituent part of the socialism of most of the labor leaders who had come from a religious background.

Not only did many socialist labour leaders see their political beliefs through the lens of Nonconformity, they also interacted with and were influenced by Christian Socialists. In fact, Christian Socialists often were labour leaders themselves. For example, ILP politician Philip Snowden was devoutly Christian and his socialist pamphlet *The Christ That Is to Be* (1903) became his best selling work. Snowden later became an active member of the Free Church Socialist League, which was founded in 1909. Snowden was a Protestant, but many Catholic socialists also supported and joined the ILP. W. E. Moll, for example, was a member of the GSM, the Church Socialist League, and a member of the National Administrative Council of the ILP. In fact, Moll was so dedicated to labour politics that he turned down the chair of the Church Socialist League to focus more fully on the political labour movement.

The activity of men such as Snowden and Moll indicates the degree to which labor activists engaged with the ideas and theology of Christian Socialism. For example, otherwise secular labour activists and socialists frequently made use of Christian Socialist arguments by citing the New Testament, especially the Sermon on the Mount, when trying to persuade their audiences to consider socialism. Many claimed that the message

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40 Snowden co-authored the work with Keir Hardie and became the national chairman of the ILP in 1903. Of course, not all socialists shared Snowden and Hardie’s positive assessment of Jesus. See H. S. Wishart, *Socialism: Christ, the Great Enemy of the Human Race ... A reply to Mr. Philip Snowden, M.P., proving that his “Christ that is to be,” is a Christ that never was on sea or land* (Anti-Christian Socialist League: Bradford, 1908).
41 Rose, *The Edwardian Temperament*, 27.
of Jesus of Nazareth primarily addressed secular and material concerns and He had therefore advocated socialism.43 Dennis Hird, a former priest turned labour activist, argued that Christians and others treated Jesus like an English duke or American millionaire while ignoring His social message about treating others as you would like to be treated.44 Rejecting his roots in the Church of England, Hird argued before audiences that Christianity – both Protestantism and Catholicism – as currently practiced in Britain was not the religion of Jesus. In reality, Jesus was a socialist.45 Similarly, the story of the rich young man was a favorite of socialist speakers.46 In this story a man approached Jesus to ask him what he must do to inherit eternal life. After being told he must keep the commandments, the young man replied that he already did so. Then

Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.47

Some labor leaders argued that although the churches paid lip-service to Jesus’ teaching, they failed to put it into actual practice. One anonymous pamphlet published by the socialist newspaper the Clarion argued that the religion preached by socialists consisted of caring for orphans and widows. In fact, this socialist “religion” would be identical to

43 See, for example, John Wynn, The Carpenter of Nazareth’s Message to the Unemployed (Swindon, Wilts.: J. Wynn, 1906), 2, 8; ILP/8/1906/84, British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics.
45 Dennis Hird, Jesus the Socialist being a Lecture Delivered at Ledbury on Monday, 13th January 1896 (London: Watts & Co., 1898), 3-5. 27; ILP/8/1898/23. By 1898 Hird’s lecture was in its 45th thousand.
46 See, for example, John Edwards, Liberalism and Socialism: A Reply to Recent Speeches of Mr. H. Vivian, M.P. and Mr. W. H. Lever, M.P. (Liverpool: The Liverpool Fabian Society, 1906), 7-8; ILP/8/1906/15. Edwards was the president of the Liverpool Fabian Society.
Christianity if the churches would put the teachings of Jesus into practice.\footnote{A New Testament Socialist, If the Churches Came to Christ. An Answer to a Sermon Entitled ‘If Carlisle Came to Christ’ (London: ‘Clarion’ Office, 1898), 13; ILP/8/1898/25.} Since socialists believed they actually did put the teaching of Jesus into practice, they argued that they were closer followers of Jesus than the British churches.

As is well known, when prominent Christians did appear to support the cause of the poor and unemployed, labor leaders were usually quick to praise them. Cardinal Henry Manning’s work in settling the London Dock Strike of 1889 earned him the appreciation of many labour leaders. For example, Francis Johnson, the long-time secretary of the ILP, wrote positively of Manning because he had indicted English Catholics for their failure to do more for social reform. Moreover, Manning had laid down the principle, “Every man has a right to work or to bread,” and disapproved of radical Toryism.\footnote{Francis Johnson, “Manning’s: Indictment of Catholicism in England” [incomplete], ILP/6/4/3 MSS ff. 1-2.} Tom Mann, Ben Tillett, and other labour leaders came to respect Manning as a result of his intervention in the labour dispute when Anglican leaders had refused to become involved.\footnote{See Shane Leslie, Henry Edward Manning: His Life and Labours (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd, 1921), 367ff; Ben Tillett, Brief History of the Dockers’ Union (London: Twentieth Century Press, 1910), 29; and Ben Tillett, Memories and Reflections (London: Long., 1931), 137.}

In fact, personal religious belief, Christian Socialism, secular socialist societies, and the burgeoning labor movement were so tightly enmeshed around the turn of the twentieth century, that to discuss the development of British socialism or the rise of the Labour Party without reference to Christianity is to risk distortion through omission. Many of the major socialist thinkers and labour activists were influenced by Christian
belief or Christian Socialism more specifically. Moreover, self-proclaimed Christian Socialists were active in all the major socialist and labor organizations, including the SDF, Socialist League, Fabian Society, ILP, and later the Labour Representation Committee (LRC). As a result, the membership of Christian Socialist and secular organizations overlapped considerably. In Bristol, for example, 75% of the Labour League’s leaders were also members of the Clifton and Bristol Christian Socialists.

Of course, although Christian Socialism and other strands of socialism were in dialogue and influenced each other, not all socialists and political activists took a favorable view of either Jesus or Christianity. The Anti-Christian Socialist League, for example, saw Christianity as a barrier to socialism. But these groups remained on the political and cultural fringe. The most prominent labour and socialist organizations in turn-of-the-century Britain, remained at least officially neutral on the topic, although, as we have seen, many influential members of these organizations did write favorably about Christian socialists, Christian Socialism, and the teachings of Jesus. J. Bruce Glasier, one of the “Big Four” of the ILP, a member of its national administrative council from 1897 to 1909, and its chairman from 1900 to 1903, gave the general ILP position when he noted that socialism itself did not teach any one religion and that it came “with no revelation concerning Heaven, Hell, Death or Judgment.” Nevertheless, Glasier also argued that sincere Christians concerned with the worldly welfare of mankind ought to

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53 Some prominent socialists, such as G. B. Shaw and Sydney Webb were raised in a secular environment.
54 J. Bruce Glasier, “Thoughts on Socialism and Religion,” ILP/6/2/2 MSS ff. 2, 4, 15; and Chris Wrigley, “Glasier, John Bruce,” ODNB.
work for socialism. Although Glasier may not have considered himself a Christian Socialist, his religious background and association with Christian Socialists such as Keir Hardie and Philip Snowden forced him to consider the relationship between the teachings of Jesus and the implementation of socialism.

- **The Rainbow Circle: An Example of the Interaction between Christian Socialism and the Progressive Party**

The attitude of prominent socialists like Glasier allowed for the possibility of dialogue between Christian and non-Christian socialists. A microcosm of this dialogue can be observed in the proceedings of the Rainbow Circle, a London-based political and social discussion group active between 1894 and 1931. The Rainbow Circle brought together members of the diverse late-Victorian progressive movement to consider current policy problems and events. Its members included J. Ramsay MacDonald (the future Labour Prime Minister), J. A. Hobson (the economist and Liberal intellectual), William Clarke (the Fabian journalist), Herbert Burrows (the co-founder of the Social Democratic Federation), Percy Alden (a Liberal MP and Christian Socialist), and Richard Stapley (a philanthropist and the Circle chairman). The group influenced government social policy during the early and mid-twentieth century. Michael Freeden argues that it served as an important intellectual laboratory for much of the progressive agenda that inspired Liberal governments before the First World War, for the welfare ideology that permeated British social-democratic politics in the early twentieth century, and for developing ethical foreign policy… The Rainbow Circle was … one of the most significant focuses of British social thinking and political creativity at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.56

The Rainbow Circle allowed prominent Christian and secular socialists to meet and share ideas. Most meetings consisted of a paper reading and discussion. Since some

55 Glasier, “Thoughts on Socialism and Religion,” f. 15.
56 Michael Freeden, “Rainbow Circle,” ODNB.
members, such as Archdeacon A. L. Lilley and Rev. Douglas Morrison were clergymen, religion and Christianity in particular played a prominent role in discussions. Lilley had a history of Christian Socialist advocacy, having been a member of the Anglo-Catholic GSM’s Council between 1896 and 1897. Lilley and Morrison often read papers on religious topics, such as religious societies, the church and the state, and the political contributions of St. Augustine. In fact, the discussion of papers with a religious theme was often the most heated. Following Morrison’s presentation on the relationship between the church and state a “hostile” discussion ensued, focusing on topics like whether or not the social utility of the church was the only valid argument for establishment, whether the church was an “anti-democratic organisation and had been one of the greatest obstacles during the present century to progressive legislation,” and whether both the church and state derive their authority from the same source or not. While the Circle was able to debate land reform, Parliamentary reform, industrial relations, the coercive implementation of socialism, and other topics in a friendly manner, the discussion of religion often became heated. This is not surprising in the context of the Church Crisis with its important ramifications for the church-state relationship -- should the Church be disestablished? Disendowed? Encumbered with further Parliamentary legislation? Left alone?

The relationship among Christianity, socialism, and the current government also emerged in discussions and papers that lacked an overtly religious theme. Ramsay MacDonald’s 1896 paper on the state and education focused on the nature of religious instruction to be given by the state. This, as we have seen, was the major issue.

preventing further reform in education policy and an especially sensitive topic among anti-Ritualist Protestants who often refused to support High Church Anglican schools.\textsuperscript{59} The Circle’s 1900-1901 sessions involved discussion on the contributions to political thought and science made by Aristotle, St. Augustine, Dante, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Bentham, and Comte. The discussion of the political philosophies of Augustine and Dante centered on the questions of Papal authority and Romanism. Given concern with the advances of Roman Catholicism in Great Britain the Circle’s discussions had a great deal of contemporary relevance. Discussion of Hobbes centered around the issue of puritanism and its relation to the state.\textsuperscript{60}

On an earlier occasion, Herbert Burrows, a member of the National Secular Society and a founder of the Social Democratic Federation, spoke on the topic of socialist societies. In his paper, Burrows traced the growth of socialism through Chartism and then Christian Socialism to the founding of the Social Democratic Federation.\textsuperscript{61} That a secularist such as Burrows would trace the origin of the Social Democratic Federation from Christian Socialism is evidence of the influential nature of Christian Socialist arguments on the development of socialism in general and the labor movement in particular. At a later meeting the Circle elected Rev. John Bullock to membership, which was officially limited to twenty. Later during the same meeting the Circle concluded that socialism “did not vitally depend on Marxism,” thereby allowing room for a religious interpretation of socialism.\textsuperscript{62} Burrows’s lecture and Bullock’s election by the mixed audience that comprised the Rainbow Circle again illustrate the fruitful dialogue that was

\textsuperscript{59} RC, Minutes Book I, 3 June 1896, Coll Misc. 575/1.
\textsuperscript{60} RC, Minutes Book II, 1900-19001, Coll Misc. 575/2.
\textsuperscript{61} RC, Minutes Book I, 4 December 1895, Coll Misc. 575/1.
\textsuperscript{62} RC, Minutes Book I, 4 May 1898, Coll Misc. 575/1.
occurring within the world of progressive politics and organized Christianity. Although some historians such as Callum Brown have attempted to distinguish between Christian Socialism as an ethical movement and as a political movement, the dichotomy is false. \textsuperscript{63} 

\textit{Fin-de-siècle} Christian Socialists were every bit as much a part of progressive political dialogue as secularists or pragmatic trade unionists. \textsuperscript{64}

- **Part II: Socialism and Anglo-Catholicism**

While Christian socialists ranged the theological spectrum -- the prominent Christian Socialists R. J. Campbell and Silas Hocking were both (initially) Nonconformists -- the majority of well-known activists were Anglican High Churchmen. In fact, Anglican Evangelicalism and middle-class Nonconformist denominations obtained a reputation for anti-socialism. \textsuperscript{65} For example, Samson Bryher, an early chronicler of the socialist and labor movement in Bristol, wrote that during labor strikes and other times of tension, it was not unusual for Nonconformist ministers to encourage strikers to return to work while High Churchmen sided with the workers. During the 1889 cotton operatives strike in Bristol, for example, labour leaders met with Nonconformist ministers through the medium of the Bristol Ministers’ Fraternal Society. The Nonconformists showed the strikers little sympathy, but the Anglican priests T. W. Harvey and J. R. Graham both offered support. \textsuperscript{66}


\textsuperscript{64} See Searle, \textit{A New England?}, 232, 534.


\textsuperscript{66} Bryher, \textit{An Account of the Labour and Socialist Movement in Bristol}, Part 2, p. 18-19. Harvey was a member of the GSM and was regarded as a leader of the Labour Movement. Harvey especially endeared himself to the Bristol Labour League when offered the use of his church building to the unemployed during the winter of 1887-1888. See Bryher, \textit{An Account of the Labour and Socialist Movement in Bristol}, Part 2, p 42.
Like many Anglican socialist sympathizers and proponents, Harvey was not merely a “high and dry” churchman, he was an Anglo-Catholic. In fact, of the eight major explicitly Christian Socialist groups founded either during or before 1906 four were strongly associated with Catholicism. The GSM and Catholic Socialist Society were explicitly Catholic in theological orientation and the CSU and Church Socialist League were Anglican organizations that were known to veer strongly towards Anglo-Catholicism in practice. Although the CSU in particular was technically a non-party organization, its members were primarily Anglo-Catholics. Charles Gore, after all, had been an organizer and superior of the Society of the Resurrection, a celibate Anglo-Catholic priestly brotherhood located at Mirfield. Thanks to the presence of Gore and others, the Union had a decidedly Catholic orientation. Anti-Ritualist Protestants recognized the CSU as a Catholic organization. An Anglo-Catholic theological orientation also marked the Church Socialist League, since most of its members had formerly been associated with either the GSM or CSU.

Of the other four major Christian Socialist organizations founded before 1907, one was a Quaker organization. The other three – The Christian Socialistic Society (CSS), Christian Socialist League (CSL), and Christian Social Brotherhood (CSB) – were inter-denominational organizations that had short life spans of seven, four, and five years, respectively. Moreover, although the CSS and CSL were technically ecumenical, they were shaped by Anglo-Catholic leadership. Charles Marson of the GSM was a founder

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67 See Appendix.
68 Regarding the question of whether the CSU could properly be called a Ritualist organization, E. G. Bowring noted that “at St. Michael’s-at-Plea Church, Norwich, the Holy Eucharist was offered for the repose of the souls of the deceased members of the Christian Social Union…. This would appear to brand the C. S. U. as a Ritualistic Society.” See E. G. Bowring, letter to the editor, *The Church of England League Gazette* 5, no. 2 (February 1904): 52. By 1932 H. D. A. Major could argue that thanks to the influence of Charles Gore, the “Anglo-Catholic clergy” had become “the socialist party at Mass.” See H. D. A. Major, *The Modern Churchman* 21 (February, 1932), p. 583.
of the CSS, and although the CSL was founded by the Baptist John Clifford, its executive body included the Anglo-Catholics Charles Marson (again) and H. C. Shuttleworth. As a result, six of the eight Christian Socialist organizations founded before 1907 had associations with Anglo-Catholicism.⁶⁹

Due to this correlation fin-de-siècle Protestants often linked the threats of Catholicism and socialism. Maurice Reckitt remembered that during the spring of 1883 the ultra-Protestant Rock had called the attention of its readers to H. C. Shuttleworth, a minor canon of St. Paul’s Cathedral. Shuttleworth, a member of the GSM, represented “an alliance utterly inexplicable, between the Ritualists and the Revolutionists…. If insurrection should break out in England, it will be due, and largely indeed, to the clerical and other firebrands, Mr. Shuttleworth and his friends, who are seeking to propagate what they call Christian Socialism.”⁷⁰ Shuttleworth did in fact attempt to cement the bonds between socialism and Anglo-Catholicism by lecturing to the ECU on socialism and inviting John Trevor, the founder of the Labour Church movement, to speak to his High Church curates’ club.⁷¹ Unlike the “Protestant” solution of charity, such as that practiced by William Booth’s Salvation Army, Shuttleworth argued that Catholic socialism would attack the root causes of poverty.⁷² Like Headlam, Shuttleworth undoubtedly further aggravated conservative Protestants through his membership in the Church and Stage

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⁶⁹ See Appendix.
⁷¹ See Christian Socialist, no. 1 (June 1883): 3; and Labour Prophet 6, no. 78 (June 1898): 187.
Guild and anti-Sabbatarian National Sunday League. Sabbatarianism, in particular, was a cause near to the hearts of many Nonconformists.73

The activities of priests like Shuttleworth and Headlam led many Protestants to associate socialism and Anglo-Catholicism. One evangelical clergymen wrote to the *English Churchman* complaining that

> I am well and sadly aware of the existence of a small section (I had almost said sect) in the Church, which professes to hold opinions both ‘Catholic’ and Socialistic. Such is the body of men composing the ‘Guild of St. Matthew’ and constituting, as I believe, one of the most dangerous elements in the Church. Plausible, as all Socialism is, winning over High Churchman by its professed ‘Catholicity’ and Broad Churchmen by its similarity with Atheism and the Secularists (for whom its precepts doubtless smooth and widen the narrow way, with the facility of a Jesuit missionary), this Guild has from small beginning advanced of late with threatening rapidity. Indeed I believe the Evangelicals alone have been uncontaminated by its spirit.74

Even John Trevor was accused by the Arminian Wesleyan-Methodists of taking part in “the revival of the selfishness and narrowness of Catholicism and Calvinism in their very worst forms,” since the Labour Church divide men by classes just as Catholicism divided men by their membership in the true Church and Calvinism divided men on the basis of predestination.75 On occasion Protestants equated even secular socialists with Anglo-Catholicism. In 1895, for example, the *Methodist Times* accused Robert Blatchford of supporting the High Church party in the Church of England.76 Conversely, the association between socialism and Catholicism and Protestantism and individualism also led many anti-Ritualists to publicly support capitalism. H. W. Webb-Peploe, for example, who was recognized as a prominent evangelical theologian and anti-Ritualist and became

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73 Ibid., 118, 122.
74 Qtd. in *Church Reformer* 4, no. 10 (October, 1886): 236-7.
76 *Clarion*, 30 March 1895, p. 101; *Clarion*, 20 April 1895, p. 125. See also Yeo, “A New Life,” 18.
a founder of the Nation Protestant Church Union, was also active in the Anti-Socialist Union of Churches.\textsuperscript{77}

Even the attempts of Christian Socialists and non-Socialist philanthropists to reach out to the working class directly were seen through the perspective of the conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism within the Church of England. For example, Protestant Anglicans and the Church Association believed the Church of England Working Men’s Society (CEWMS) was a covert Ritualist organization, designed to Romanize the Established Church.\textsuperscript{78} Founded by the English Church Union in 1876, the CEWMS did propagate a Catholic interpretation of Anglicanism.\textsuperscript{79} For example, in 1880 Fr. Richard Enraght, a member of the Anglo-Catholic Society of the Holy Cross (SSC) who would be imprisoned for illegal Ritualism only months later, preached at the Mass celebrating the fourth anniversary of the CEWMS. After the service, J. B. Spalding, the president of a local chapter of the CEWMS presented Fr. Charles Lowder, the founder of the SSC, with the silver badge of the Working Men’s Society. Not surprisingly, although the CEWMS was active in social work, Protestants regarded it with suspicion.

Charity organizations aimed at helping the working class, even those that had no connection whatsoever to either socialism or theology as such, were also caught up in the Church Crisis. The Church Association annually blacklisted supposedly “Ritualist” organizations in its Church of England Almanack. The blacklist included the Waifs’ and Strays’ Society, which had been founded in 1881 to provide homes for destitute and

\textsuperscript{77} I. T. Foster, “Peploe, Hanmer William Webb-,” ODNB.

\textsuperscript{78} Burleigh, Earthly Powers, 372.

orphan children.\textsuperscript{80} Protestants were told to donate instead to Dr. Barnardo’s Homes.\textsuperscript{81}

Thomas Barnado was, after all, in addition to being a philanthropist also a member of the Council of the Imperial Protestant Federation. Generally speaking, while over-active Protestant imaginations may have exaggerated the threat of Anglo-Catholic socialist and charity organizations, it is true that such institutions and societies were very much a part of the late-nineteenth century propaganda war between Protestants and Catholics for the hearts and minds of the working classes.

Indeed, the perceived association between Anglo-Catholic clergymen and Christian Socialism was not the product of Protestant paranoia, or even coincidental. In fact, the vast majority of Anglo-Catholic socialists made a clear connection between their Catholicism and their socialism. The most common argument made by Catholics in favor of socialism was that the Incarnation of God had hallowed human life. Therefore, all of human life ought to be respected and treated with dignity. Socialism seemed like the best way to assure a decent standard of living for most people. While all Christians confessed to believe in the Incarnation, an emphasis on the Incarnation, as opposed to the atonement, was characteristic of Anglo and Roman Catholicism. Henry Scott Holland, a founder of the CSU, argued that due to the fact of the Incarnation, “socially, we are compelled to demand a corporate Christian society….\textsuperscript{82}” W. E. Chadwick, writing under the auspices of the CSU, argued that the Incarnation had sanctified everything that aided the

\textsuperscript{80} The Church of England Almanack For the Year of our Lord 1900, compiled by Henry Miller (London: Shaw; Kensit; and Thynne, 1900), 7, 13.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{82} Henry Scott Holland, God’s City and The Coming of the Kingdom, new and cheaper edition (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1897), vii-viii. See also Matthew Grimley, Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England: Liberal Anglican Theories of the State between the Wars (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 38.
development of life because it provided the reason for man’s infinite value.\footnote{William Edward Chadwick, \textit{Christian Citizenship} (London: Mowbray, 1911), vii.} W. E. Moll, the ILP activist, proclaimed that

as a Catholic, I boldly avow myself a Christian socialist. As a Catholic I believe that the Church is the Body of Christ, filled with His Spirit, bound to do the works which He did on earth…. As a Catholic I believe that the Church is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth – an organised society for the promotion of righteousness and freedom and truth among nations.\footnote{W. E. Moll, \textit{Church Reformer} 4, no. 6 (15 June 1885): 121-2.}

Moll could argue that the Church was the Body of Christ on earth and therefore must be involved in doing His work, even in politics, because “it always has been and always must be the mission of the Church to realise the unity of mankind revealed by the Incarnation.”\footnote{Qtd. in Jones, \textit{The Christian Socialist Revival}, 124.}

Prominent Anglo-Catholic parish priests also found themselves drawn to socialism. Father Arthur Stanton, the famous Ritualist slum priest of Saint Alban the Martyr in Holborn, was quoted as warning an audience that “as the only thing I care much for is Socialism, I am a very dangerous lecturer.”\footnote{Qtd. in Ted Mellor, “The Eucharist is the Source”; internet, available at \url{http://www.anglocatholicsocialism.org/holborn.html#stanton}; accessed 12 September 2007. See also George W. E. Russell, \textit{Saint Alban the Martyr, Holborn: A History of Fifty Years} (Milwaukee, Young Churchman Co., 1913).} Stanton’s sermons and lectures may have been “dangerous” to most audiences, but, needless to say, he was a frequent and welcome preacher for the GSM.\footnote{Qtd. in Ted Mellor, “The Eucharist is the Source”; internet, available at \url{http://www.anglocatholicsocialism.org/holborn.html#stanton}; accessed 12 September 2007.} Another famous Ritualist slum priest, Father Robert Dolling, embraced aspects of socialism as a means of breaking down barriers between classes. His invitation to the GSM and Headlam to give a series of five lectures to a working class audience at S. Agatha’s Church in 1890 proved to be quite scandalous. The planned lecture topics were “Christian Socialism,” “Why men do not believe the Bible,” “Why is the Church of England a failure?,” “The Incarnation: its value to
Humanity,” and “Prayer.” In his 1903 biography of his friend, Father Dolling, Rev. C. E. Osborne wrote that

His attitude … was the same as that of a well-known London priest of similar convictions, who, when accused of using his office as a spiritual teacher to interfere in merely secular matters, said: “I speak out and fight about the drains because I believe in the Incarnation.” ‘The redemption of the body’ was to Dolling essentially a practical truth, and a most vital part of the Christian religion. It supplied to him the motive power of his ceaseless efforts as a social worker.

For Dolling and other “slum priests,” faith in the Incarnation led them into a career of social ministry.

Percy Dearmer, the vicar of St. Mary’s Primrose Hill, moved in very different social circles than Stanton or Dolling, but as we have seen, nevertheless had a long-standing association with socialism, the arts and crafts movement, and other progressive causes. Dearmer was associated with the Anglo-Catholic Alcuin Club, the GSM, and the CSU, even serving as its London secretary. Following the publication of the popular Parson’s Handbook (1899) and the English Hymnal (1906), he became a well-known and respected figure on the High Church ecclesiastical scene. In his Handbook, Dearmer complained that “a modern preacher often stands in a sweated pulpit, wearing a sweated surplice over a suit of clothes that were not produced under fair conditions, and, holding a sweated book in one hand, with the other he points to the machine-made cross at the jerry-built altar, and appeals to the sacred principles of mutual sacrifice and love.”

Obviously, Dearmer felt that supporting industrial capitalism was not compatible with the Christian message of love for one’s neighbor. He wrote that since Christianity called for the love of one’s neighbor, all good Christians ought to take up the “social question”

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89 Ibid., 245.
and join groups such as the CSU. He called for Britons to look at socialism without prejudice and ask “what would Jesus do?”\textsuperscript{91} He answered that “Socialism is doing just the very work which they have been commanded by their Master to do…. [Christianity] does not only provide a few noble sayings that Socialists would welcome. It \textit{is} Socialism, and a good deal more.”\textsuperscript{92} Through his writings and position at St. Mary’s, where he came into contact with Conrad Noel and Cecil and G. K. Chesterton, Dearmer was able to influence other members of the Anglo-Catholic scene.\textsuperscript{93}

Both Noel and Chesterton remained fixtures of the Catholic Socialist scene. Noel later helped to found the CSL, which had grown out of Charles Gore’s monastic Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield in Yorkshire. Members of the Community like Father Paul Bull turned Mirfield into a center for Anglo-Catholic Socialist propaganda, which claimed that the Protestant Reformation was the root cause of individualism, capitalism, and warfare.\textsuperscript{94} Noel’s CSL, as the Community’s progeny, strongly supported community and socialism as the road to peace. Unlike previous Catholic socialist organizations, such as the GSM, the CSL openly supported the newly formed Labour Party.\textsuperscript{95} Stewart Headlam and Keir Hardie had never liked each other, and the GSM remained fundamentally a middle-class London-based society throughout its existence. Moreover, both the GSM and CSU tended to favor intellectual debate over concrete action on behalf of the working class. The CSL, by contrast, was designed as a northern-based and trade-union-oriented version of earlier Christian Socialist societies.

\textsuperscript{91} Percy Dearmer, \textit{The Church and Social Questions} (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., Ltd., 1910), Chapter 4, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{92} Percy Dearmer, \textit{Christian Socialism and Practical Christianity} (London: The Clarion, 1897), 1, 16.
\textsuperscript{94} Jones, \textit{The Christian Socialist Revival}, 232.
\textsuperscript{95} Keir Hardie, J. Ramsay MacDonald, and J. Bruce Glasier sent congratulations to the CSL after its founding. See ibid., 239.
After World War I, however, Noel founded the even-more-radical “Catholic Crusade of the Servants of the Precious Blood,” which aimed to create the demand for the Catholic Faith, the whole Catholic Faith, and nothing but the Catholic Faith. To encourage the rising of the people in the might of the Risen Christ and the Saints, mingling Heaven and earth that we may shatter this greedy world to bits, and remould it to the heart’s desire.96

Noel also displayed the green flag of Sinn Fein and the red flag of communism inscribed with “He hath made of one blood all nations” in his church at Thaxted.97 While Noel remained busy with the CSL and Catholic Crusade, his friends G. K. Chesterton, Cecil Chesterton, and their Roman Catholic friends Hilaire Belloc and Father Vincent McNabb developed “distributism” during the early-twentieth century as a distinctively Catholic form of socialism.98 Distributism sought to put the Catholic social principles expressed by Pope Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum* (1891) into practice by spreading the ownership of land and the means of production among a wider range of individuals. A wider distribution of land and wealth would be achieved in part by turning back the clock on enclosure and returning to a system of medieval-like guilds. Distributism, like guild socialism more broadly, was not a practical program for social reform. Rather, it reflected the influence of a medieval conception of Catholicism on ethical socialists.

- **Stewart D. Headlam: A Catholic Socialist**

As we have seen, many prominent Anglo-Catholics linked their Catholicism to their socialism. One of the best examples of this phenomenon was Stewart Headlam. Headlam was a prolific writer and speaker, and the founder and driving force behind the

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97 Noel, *Conrad Noel*, 110.
98 Cecil and G. K. Chesterton converted from Anglo to Roman Catholicism in 1916 and 1922, respectively.
GSM, which influenced many later Christian Socialists. In 1931 G. C. Binyon argued that the GSM was the “red hot centre of Christian Socialism” in Britain, and J. Bruce Glasier claimed that the “Guild of St. Matthew…may rightly claim to have sounded the note of the forthcoming Socialist movement.”\(^{99}\) But despite its eventual reputation for being red hot, the Guild had humble origins. It began as a parish guild at St. Matthew’s Church, Bethnal Green, designed to ensure attendance at the early morning Mass.\(^{100}\) In 1877 the Guild had only forty members, but just three years later it claimed 470 members. By 1895 it had 364 official members, and by 1906 it had around 200 members.\(^{101}\) The dip during the 1880s and 1890s may have occurred due to the Guild’s production of the following socialist inflected resolution in 1884:

> Whereas the present contrast between the great body of the workers who produce much and consume little, and of the classes which produce little and consume much, is contrary to the Christian doctrines of brotherhood and justice, this meeting urges on all churchmen the duty of supporting such measures as will tend: \((a)\) to restore to the people the value which they give to the land; \((b)\) to bring about a better distribution of wealth created by labour; \((c)\) to give the whole body of the people a voice in their own government; \((d)\) to abolish false standards of worth and dignity.\(^{102}\)

Although its membership always remained relatively small, many influential Christian Socialists were members at some point, including H. C. Shuttleworth, W. E. Moll, Thomas Hancock, C. W. Stubbs (later the Bishop of Truro), Conrad Noel, A. L. Lilley, Charles Marson, Percy Dearmer, and Percy Widdrington.\(^{103}\)

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\(^{100}\) Leech, “Stewart Headlam, 1847-1924,” 63.


\(^{102}\) Qtd. in Widdrington, “Epilogue,” 251fn1.

\(^{103}\) Leech, “Stewart Headlam,” 63, 76.
Headlam was an enthusiastic Anglo-Catholic and had been influenced in his youth by F. D. Maurice. As a result, he sought to combine Catholic sacramentalism and Maurician socialism. The GSM eventually came to embody Headlam’s effort to create a distinctively Catholic socialism. The Guild’s objects were:

1) To get rid, by every possible means, of the existing prejudices, especially on the part of ‘Secularists,’ against the Church – Her Sacraments and Doctrines: and to endeavour ‘to justify God to the people.’

2) To promote frequent and reverent Worship in the Holy Communion, and a better observance of the teaching of the Church of England as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.


Headlam later described his Guild as “a Society of Catholic Socialists, who really believe in the reality of the Christian Faith; and are therefore pledged to leave no department of life untouched by its influence.”\footnote{Headlam, \textit{The Guild of St. Matthew: What it is and Who Should Join it}, 1.} As Percy Widdrington later remembered it, “The Guild of Saint Matthew was a Catholic society, and its members were practising Catholics. Belief in the Incarnation and the Mass constituted our theological basis.”\footnote{Widdrington, “Epilogue,” 251.}

To Headlam and the Guild’s other members, then, Catholicism and socialism were merely two sides of the same coin. He claimed that “a Socialist is not doing his best for the spread of Socialism unless he is a thoroughly Catholic Churchman.”\footnote{Stewart D. Headlam, “Socialism, Liberty and the Church,” \textit{Church Reformer} 14, no. 10 (October 1895): 222.} By the same token, a Christian was not living out Catholicism to the fullest if he was not also a committed Socialist. The link was absolutely essential for Headlam: “We have from the beginning of this Guild, and rightly, connected the restoration of the Mass to its proper place with our secular and political work: our Sacramentalism with our Socialism…we
are Socialists because we are Sacramentals.\textsuperscript{108} Headlam liked to say that the Guild emphasized the “secular” work of Jesus and the social and secular side of Christian teaching. Moreover, he argued that “the great Sacraments which we call the Lord’s Supper, the Holy Eucharist, the Holy Communion, or the Mass, are power for working this social and secular salvation.”\textsuperscript{109} This was so because

As the \textit{Lord’s Supper} (i.e. the Christian Passover), it sets forth Jesus Christ the great Emancipator; it ennobles the common things of life, which the ‘superior person’ pretends to despise. As the \textit{Eucharist} (or Sacrifice of Joy and Thanksgiving) it is the antidote to sourness and gloom; it dispels dark thoughts about God and Man; for hope makes men reformers, despair makes them reactionary. As the \textit{Holy Communion} it pledges us to a holy communism, it protests against man-made barriers, it brings men to God, and holds them together. As the \textit{Holy Sacrifice} it teaches the democratic lesson that Christ, and those who are like Him, serve rather than rule, give rather than take.\textsuperscript{110}

The celebration of the Mass also entailed a recognition of the corporate nature of the Body of Christ. The individualism of Protestantism and atheism destroyed the bond between men, making unbelievers inhuman and self-centered.\textsuperscript{111} Thus, for Headlam and other “Catholic Socialists,” the theology and experience of the Sacrifice of the Mass compelled them toward socialism and even communism.\textsuperscript{112}

In addition to his work with the GSM and Catholic socialism \textit{per se}, Headlam was also an active member of the Fabian Society after 1886. There was no contradiction for Headlam between being both a fervent Christian Socialist and a Fabian. In fact, Headlam believed his membership in both the GSM and Fabian Society went hand in hand. He hoped that the GSM’s work would break down barriers between the working classes and

\textsuperscript{108} Stewart D. Headlam, \textit{Church Reformer} 10, no. 10 (October 1891), 221.
\textsuperscript{110} Headlam, \textit{The Guild of St. Matthew: What it is and Who Should Join it}, 2. Emphasis in the original.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 1.
\textsuperscript{112} Headlam, \textit{The Guild of St. Matthew: An Appeal to Churchmen}, 15-16.
religion and between agnostic or atheist socialists and the church by showing the compatibility of socialism and Christianity. His association with the Fabians was also designed both to further the political goal of socialism and attract non-believers to the Church. According to Headlam, both the Fabians and GSM were in full agreement regarding their vision of socialism.  

Headlam and other Fabian Society leaders apparently got on well together and enjoyed a relationship based on mutual respect. Bernard Shaw later claimed that Headlam’s *Church Reformer* was “one of the best socialist journals of that day.” After Headlam died in 1924 Sidney Webb wrote an obituary for his friend, claiming that “he found in us a society in which he could avow his devotion to Christianity and feel at home in so doing; he saw in our movement the nearest modern equivalent he could discover to the Christian Socialism of F. D. Maurice. We at least were not anti-Christian…” For a time, Headlam’s license to officiate in the Diocese of London was revoked due to his Ritualism. Webb remembered his happiness when Bishop Mandell Creighton of London restored Headlam’s license in 1898, claiming that he and his wife may have “had a little to do with it,” since Beatrice was an old friend of the Bishop and had spoken to him concerning Headlam’s faith and service to the Church.

Despite the support of friends like the Webbs, Headlam’s Catholic socialist society did not last long into the twentieth century. The GSM voted to voluntarily disband itself in 1909, but the decline had set in much earlier. It was forced to

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113 Stewart D. Headlam, “Fabianism and Land Values [a lecture delivered to the Fabian Society on 23 October 1908],” Fabian Society Collection, Fabian Society/C/63/1 f. 4, British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics.


116 Ibid., f. 6.
discontinue its newspaper, the *Church Reformer*, in 1895. That year also saw a rift develop between Headlam and several other stalwart members over Headlam’s public support of Oscar Wilde. As a result of Headlam’s actions, James Adderley left the Guild and Charles Marson turned against Headlam’s leadership. But Headlam saw the Guild’s lack of momentum after 1895 in a different light. According to him, it was the Guild’s triumph and influence that had brought about its decline. The Guild’s primary purpose had been to battle against the Protestant individualism (and Puritanism) that supported capitalism and gave ammunition to secularists. According to Headlam, “the decay of the narrow Protestant and Calvinist individualism which once dominated English theology, has robbed the secularist controversy of much of the importance which it had in the early days of the Guild.” Anglo-Catholicism had been so successful that secularists had begun to realize that Christians were their socialist allies! Already in 1892 Headlam had noted that the publication of *Lux Mundi*, the Archbishop of Canterbury’s “action in opening Mr. Barnett’s picture gallery while East End dissenters were protesting because it was not closed against the peoples on Sundays,” and “the writings of such men as Mr. Clifford and Rev. R. F. Horton…show that the liberal teachings of a revived Catholicism are finding an echo even among dissenters.”

Although the GSM did not last long into the twentieth century, Headlam at least believed its brand of politically liberal Anglo-Catholicism had had some positive effect. In fact, the Christian Socialism of men like Headlam was just a much a dynamic part of British socialism as ethical socialism, doctrinaire Marxism, or trade unionism. According to the

118 Qtd. in ibid., 134.
119 Steward Headlam, *Church Reformer* 11, no. 10 (October 1892): 235. *Lux Mundi* (1889) was a collection of liberal Anglo-Catholic essay that were edited by Charles Gore and caused a minor scandal among Protestants and Biblical literalists at the time of their publication.
priest and historian Ivan Clutterbuck, Headlam’s Guild had “considerable influence upon men like Thomas Mann, Keir Hardy [sic], George Lansbury, [and] the developing Parliamentary Labour Party.” While Mann, Lansbury, and especially Hardie did not always agree with Headlam, his ideas and influence were nonetheless a force to be reckoned with.

- **Part III: The Church Crisis and Socialism**

  The peak years of Catholic Socialist activity coincided with the Great Church Crisis. Since staunch Anglo-Catholics often saw Christian Socialism as part of their battle against Protestant individualism in the Established Church, this correspondence was not necessarily coincidental. During the years of the Church Crisis, Protestant attacks on Catholic Ritualism and sacerdotalism were common currency, even among socialist and labour activists. Claims that Anglo-Catholics wanted Britain to submit to the spiritual and temporal tyranny of the Bishop of Rome were common. Within this context, some Labour politicians, especially those who had been raised as Nonconformists, saw the relationship between Catholicism and socialism in a much different light than men like Stewart Headlam did. Rather than associate Catholicism with the Incarnation and community, they associated it with priestly tyranny over the laity. This could easily be read in class terms, especially since many Anglo-Catholics were members of the upper class.

  Socialists often romanticized early Christian communities on the basis of Acts 2:44-45 (KJV), which records that “all that believed were together, and had all things

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120 Ivan Clutterbuck, *Marginal Catholics: Anglo-Catholicism: A Further Chapter of Modern Church History* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1993), 116. Clutterbuck can remember attending Conrad Noel’s church in Thaxted on St. George’s Day and seeing the flag of St. George flying between the red flag of communism and the green flag of Sinn Fein (118).

121 See Chapter 2.
common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.” They contrasted the egalitarian and communitarian vision of the author of Acts with the rise of a wealthy episcopacy. While ordinary believers struggled to find enough food to eat, wealthy bishops and Popes supposedly wore jewel encrusted robes and sat upon golden thrones. This vision could easily morph into anti-clericalism as socialists blamed the rich clergy for oppressing and taxing the poor laity. Bruce Glasier, for example, believed that although the early Christian communities were not perfect, they were unlike anything that had existed previously. Because the modern church had strayed from the communitarian ideal of the original disciples, Glasier issued “a warning and a prophecy! The Church is blind, dumb, and prostituted. It does not believe in a god or Christ” since “Socialism is Christ.” It was, however, not the fault of the common laity that the Church had become so godless and far removed from the socialist ideal. Glasier condemned “the Bishops, the priests, and the parsons as traitors to their office and perverters of Christ’s teaching.” The spirit of the Anti-Christ, meaning capitalism and exchange, had infected the clergy, causing them to sell Christ for silver, just as Judas had betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.

Throughout the Church Crisis organized Protestant groups, such as the Church Association, saw themselves as the champion of the rights of the laity. Meanwhile, the Anglo-Catholic party explicitly desired greater recognition of the spiritual and sacerdotal rights of the priesthood over and against the laity. As a result, socialists who shared Glasier’s anti-clerical beliefs opposed Ritualism. Although he had once been the rector

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122 J. Bruce Glasier, “The Early Xian Communities,” ILP/6/2/2, MSS ff. 1, 13. Underlining in the original.
of the Church of England parish in Eastnor, Dennis Hird had little sympathy for Christian clergymen and argued that the modern day equivalents of the Pharisees who had opposed Jesus were the Ritualists.\footnote{Hird, \textit{Jesus the Socialist}, 12.} According to Herbert Burrows, “priesthood and sacerdotalism are anti-democratic, and the organisation which shelters them [the Church of England or the Episcopacy] is necessarily anti-democratic in character, and should therefore be opposed as an organisation by every true Socialist.”\footnote{Qtd. in John Glasse, \textit{The Relation of the Church to Socialism} (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Branch of the Independent Labour Party, 1900), 20.} Rev. John Glasse, the minister of Old Greyfriars’ in Edinburgh, quoted Burrows and noted that his assessment of the anti-democratic nature of the priesthood applied chiefly to “the Romish and Anglican forms of Christianity,” and that “there are many both of the clergy and laity who have as little sympathy with sacerdotalism as Mr. Burrows.”\footnote{Ibid. Sidney Webb thought Glasse was one of the “most influential Scotch Socialists.” Qtd. in Jones, \textit{The Christian Socialist Revival}, 311.} Glasse went on to argue that he personally saw no reason why a democrat should not be at home in the Church of England since he was at liberty to reform it. However, he would absolutely oppose any attempt to introduce “sacerdotalism” into Presbyterianism, since it was a “reactionary” force. In short, Glasse agreed with Burrows that sacerdotalism implied the exact opposite of democracy,

\begin{quote}
for while one may have a certain sympathy with the present demand of the English Church Union for greater freedom in spiritual [ritual] matters, still one cannot help feeling that it is not popular demand, but rather a desire on the part of the clergy to escape from the control of the State, that they may magnify their office and themselves. The Socialists will certainty find many in all our churches, both in Scotland and in England, prepared to support them in resisting such a movement.\footnote{Glasse, \textit{The Relation of the Church to Socialism}, 20-21.}
\end{quote}
Thus, for Glasse, true Christians (Protestants) and socialists could agree on the necessity to combat the spread of Ritualism, which carried the sacerdotal germ. In this way, socialism could merge with anti-Ritualist Erastianism. Both argued that the laity/people ought to have control of the national church as long as it remained established by law.

Keir Hardie, who founded the ILP in 1893, accepted and even promoted many of the tenets of Christian Socialism, but found Catholicism and Ritualism to be antithetical to the true teachings of Jesus. Hardie claimed to have been raised as an agnostic individualist. As a child he was raised to be indifferent and even hostile to religion. But as Hardie grew, he discovered “more and more that in the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth was to be found a completeness, a unity, a simplicity, and a dignity which I could find nowhere else.”\(^{129}\) As a result, Hardie converted to Protestant Christianity. Later, as a Christian, Hardie converted from individualism to socialism and “felt that at last my Christianity had been rounded.”\(^{130}\) As both a Christian and a socialist, Hardie argued that “there is not, and cannot be any antagonism between Christianity and the Labour movement.” After all, the impetus that drove Hardie “first of all into the Labour movement, and the inspiration which has carried me on in it, has been derived more from the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, than from all other sources combined. Labour men cannot afford, even if they were inclined, to neglect Christianity.”\(^{131}\) While Hardie saw Marx as an important source, his socialism remained of an ethical and Biblical rather than “scientific” character.\(^{132}\)

\(^{129}\) Keir Hardie, “The Church, Socialism, and Selfishness,” c. 1902, ILP/6/1/6, MSS f. 1.
\(^{130}\) Ibid., f. 3.
\(^{131}\) Keir Hardie, \textit{Labour and Christianity: An Address given by J. Keir Hardie, M.P. in Browning Hall, on May 5th, 1910} (London: W. A. Hammond, 1910), 2-3; ILP/5/1910/41. For a good discussion of Hardie’s religious beliefs and their relationship to his development as a socialist, see Reid, \textit{Keir Hardie}.
Like Glasier, Hardie saw the early Christian communities as models of brotherly love and, therefore, socialism. After all, he argued that “Communism, the final goal of Socialism, is a form of Social Economy very closely akin to the principles set forth in the Sermon on the Mount.”

Therefore, the Church Fathers had all been communists, and it was only after Christianity had become the state religion during the reign of Constantine that it had rejected its communist origins. As a result of the wealth derived from its newly privileged status, Christianity became “Churchianity,” a bourgeois institution devoted to the preservation of private property and wealth. The modern-day British church had forgotten that Christ had denounced the rich and called His followers to lives of poverty. Therefore, socialists ought to attack the corrupt church, but not Christ Himself, since “the work of the Labour movement to-day is to apply those principles of Christ’s teaching to modern industrial and economic problems so as to bring about the time when there shall be no poverty….”

Moreover, true Christianity would never be realized in Britain “until there is full, free Communism, and the very idea of private property had disappeared from men’s minds.” Thus, by working for socialism, those both inside and outside the Church were “serving Him who loved us, and loved us so much that He gave His life for us.”

On occasion, Hardie could even tend toward post-millennialism, arguing that “socialism, by banning unhealthy competition, would give

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134 Ibid., 5.
men a chance to grow into the image of God,” which could in turn lead to the “millennium.”138

For Hardie, then, one of the major obstacles to true Christianity – socialism – was “Churchianity.” Churchianity was not only the result of state privilege. It also resulted from the spiritual and material tyranny of priests, bishops, and popes. Not surprisingly then, Hardie noted that “reverence for Bishops is not one of my besetting sins. It is a standing puzzle to me how so many good people can delude themselves into believing that there can be a connection between the ceremonial pomp and high-sounding titles of Churchianity, and the simple faith taught by the Lone Wanderer of Galilee.”139 Hardie went on to blast Ritualism and the elevation of the priesthood:

That which ministers to the sensuous feelings does not produce reverence, without which there can be no worship. Between a ritual and the Chinese praying-wheel, or Carlyle’s steam-motored automaton, I prefer one or the other of the latter. There could be neither insincerity nor hypocrisy about the iron parson worked by steam. In a certain place where, during its sittings a man wearing a cassock comes to read prayers out of a book at given times of week, it would be a district relief to know that the figure was a lay one. In fact, were the whole Place occupied by lay figures, wood by preference, an improvement on the national life become at once apparent.140

In referring to “sensuous feelings,” Hardie was describing Ritualism or Anglo-Catholic worship, which was often condemned by Protestant critics as being sensuous and therefore pagan due to its use of choral music, bright colors, and (sometimes) incense. The Kensit imitator R. C. Fillingham, for example, argued that “ritual of the Buddha in China was like the ritual of Roman Catholicism: incense, bells and richly-vested

138 Ibid.
139 Keir Hardie, “Bishops and Lay-men,” 13 April 1901, ILP/6/1/5 MSS f. 1.
140 Ibid.
priests.”\textsuperscript{141} In other words, both religions appealed to the senses: smell, hearing, and sight.

That Hardie and Fillingham both mentioned Chinese Buddhist ritual (the prayer wheel) is not accidental. The Buddhist prayer wheel represented the epitome of pagan superstition for Protestants and they were quick to notice similar “wheel” motifs used in Roman and Anglo-Catholic art. One Protestant writer called attention to the “Mystic Wheel of Paganism,” which adorned the “modern super Ritualistic church of St. Anne, Kenington Park.”\textsuperscript{142} He complained that

winged figures (so-called angels), [stood] upon a large gilt wheel. Whether these are meant to refer to the pagan Roman goddess Fortune, and the pagan Saxon god Seater (who both bore the Wheel emblem), or whether they have only a general reference to the idolatrous Buddhistic prayer Wheels, I have not heard; but one things is certain, that these gross realisms of religious symbols are as utterly out of place in a Protestant house of prayer as they are illegal.\textsuperscript{143}

The wheel was originally a symbol of paganism, had later been absorbed by Roman Catholicism, and finally had been adopted by the Anglo-Catholic priests.\textsuperscript{144} Hardie preferred the mechanical preacher to the Ritualist – the cassock was only worn by Anglo-Catholic and Roman Catholic priests – because the machine was incapable of hypocrisy. He also claimed to prefer the prayer wheel to Ritualism, most likely for the same reason: the Chinese Buddhists sitting at the prayer wheel were openly and honestly pagan, whereas Ritualists made use of the same sensuous worship as the pagans, but hypocritically claimed to be Christians. Years earlier Hardie had approvingly quoted a poem, writing:

\textsuperscript{141} Dunstable Advertiser, 10 March 1900, p. 5, col. A.
\textsuperscript{142} Caius, “The Mystic Wheel: The Wheels were Full of Eyes,” Protestant Observer 12 (April 1900): 61.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid., 61, 62.
I’m not the thing I should be,
Nor am I even the thing I could be,
But twenty times I rather would be
An Atheist clean,
Than under Gospel colours hid be
Just for a screen.\(^{145}\)

Hardie, like most Protestant Britons, valued straightforwardness and honesty, and, therefore, disapproved of Catholicism’s seeming secrecy and mental reserve.

Two years after recording his poem, Hardie had a memorable encounter with hypocrisy in the form of several Anglo-Catholic clergymen when he attended a then-fashionable play entitled the “Sign of the Cross.” After he had entered the theater, Hardie noticed a large number of priests. Moreover, “the familiar way in which these gentlemen traversed the corridors and foyers showed that they were not strangers to such places. Perhaps they were all disciples of Stewart Headlam.”\(^{146}\) Hardie apparently knew that in addition to being the head of the Guild of St. Matthew, Headlam was also the honorary secretary of the Church and Stage Guild and encouraged Christians to attend the theater. As the play began, Hardie carefully watched the clergymen who had sat near him. He observed that they were completely unmoved by the play’s representation of the persecution of the early Christians. Later, when composing his thoughts, he ruminated that

when it is possible for minister, deacon, and worshipper to sit in a theatre and to hear unmoved by shame or anger, the ‘truths’ they have hitherto held to as sacred spoken by the lips of those whose profession it is to tickle the ear and please and amuse the crowd, it is a sign that to parson and deacon alike, Christianity is no longer a reality. Imagine Savonarola, John Knox, or Oliver Cromwell [all Protestant heroes] witnessing such as play and then measure how far we have traveled away from Christianity.\(^{147}\)

\(^{145}\) Keir Hardie, “The Church and Democracy,” 1 September 1894, ILP/6/1/2 MSS f. 2.
\(^{146}\) Keir Hardie, “‘Sign of the Cross’ – (Play),” 2 May 1896, ILP/6/1/3 MSS f. 1.
\(^{147}\) Ibid., ff. 1-2.
Hardie associated Headlam and the GSM with a frivolity that he found wholly inappropriate. Like many prominent labor leaders, Hardie adhered to a tee-totaling asceticism completely at odds with the anti-Puritanism of many Anglo-Catholics. He remembered that “as a Scotsman and a Nonconformist, I well remember the shock it gave me that the leading member of the Guild divided his attention fairly evening between socialism and the ballet.”\textsuperscript{148} At least partially as a result of the religious and cultural differences between the GSM and the ILP, the two were never able to cooperate at an institutional level.

Hardie, meanwhile, was prepared to do more to put British Christianity on the right path than just complaining to himself about the behavior of Anglo-Catholic priests in his journal. Shortly before the October General Election of 1900 he “expressed sympathy with the Protestant cause.”\textsuperscript{149} Going one step further, when asked by Protestant activists how he would vote on a Church Discipline Bill that would punish Anglo-Catholic priests who performed illegal rituals with deprivation, Hardie replied that he “would give such bill my support in the division lobby” and pledged his support to the Church Association.\textsuperscript{150} But Hardie would not have the opportunity to do so in 1900. Only in 1903 would a Church Discipline Bill reach its Second Reading. Hardie, of course, was not the only Labour member who supported a Church Discipline Bill. Eight months after the Bill’s Second Reading in March 1903, Will Crooks won the Woolwich bye-election. Like Hardie, Crooks had pledged to support a Church Discipline Bill and

\textsuperscript{148} Qtd. in Jones, \textit{The Christian Socialist Revival}, 146.
\textsuperscript{149} \textit{The English Churchman}, 11 October 1900, p. 677.
\textsuperscript{150} “Protestantism before Politics. Remarkable Result of the Protestant Vote at the General Election, 1900,” \textit{The English Churchman}, supplement edition, 25 October 1900, p. 720.
the abolition of the bishops’ veto.\textsuperscript{151} G. I. T. Machin has argued that the Labour Party remained “firmly indifferent to religious concerns and ignored the ritualist controversy.”\textsuperscript{152} While Machin may be correct about the Labour Party’s official stance, individual members like Hardie and Crooks were nevertheless willing to involve themselves in the religious controversies of the day.

The cultural and religious divide between the many influential Protestant labor leaders and the predominantly Anglo-Catholic Christian Socialist societies ensured that the two groups never developed a close working relationship. While Hardie and Glasier blasted the bishops and sacerdotalists, many Catholic socialists insisted on linking individualism, capitalism, and Protestantism. Henry Scott Holland of the CSU, for example, claimed that he wanted to “overthrow the Nonconformist capitalist.”\textsuperscript{153} Sentiments such as this did not endear the CSU to the labor movement, since its many Nonconformist leaders did not appreciate being equated with capitalists.\textsuperscript{154} The failure of much of the Christian Socialist movement to effectively cooperate with the growing labor movement condemned Christian Socialism to increasing irrelevance as the twentieth century progressed.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{Conclusion}
\end{itemize}

Denominational identification and the hostility between Protestantism and Catholicism, as seen in the Church Crisis, was one factor that affected Britons’ attitudes towards socialism. Turn-of-the-century British Christianity was riven by fighting

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\textsuperscript{151} The Church of England Almanack For the Year of our Lord 1904, compiled by Henry Miller (London: Shaw; Kensit; and Thynne, 1904), 7-9.
\textsuperscript{153} Henry Scott Holland to Adderley qtd. in Henry Scott Holland: Memoir and Letters, Stephen Paget, ed. (London: John Murray, 1921), 211. Before calling for the overthrow of the “Nonconformist capitalist,” Holland called on churchmen to “repudiate Sir William Harcourt and all his works…”
\textsuperscript{154} Caroline Benn, Keir Hardie (London: Hutchinson, 1992), 205.
\end{flushleft}
between its Protestant and Catholic traditions. Most historians of the late-nineteenth century have argued that religion became increasingly privatized during this time. According to José Harris, “…a new approach to public policy was clearly emerging, one that was overtly neutral on matters of belief and that assumed the existence of areas of public life in which religion had no competence.” Generally speaking, there was a “shift from a religion that was strongly community-based to a religion that was increasingly internalized and private.” Yet as we have seen, Harris over-emphasizes the degree to which British religion had become privatized prior to World War I. For most fin-de-siècle Britons, religion was not yet compartmentalized from their political and social beliefs. As a result religious conflict spilled over into other areas, including the development of British socialism and the labour movement. Evangelical Protestants often associated Ritualism with socialist politics, and they were not always mistaken. Catholic theology in this period provided the rationale or intellectual foundation for many committed socialists. Indeed, some descriptions of conversion to socialism are only explicable in terms of Anglo-Catholic theology.

The fin-de-siècle Protestant-Catholic antagonism was a much more important phenomenon than historians have realized. Religion remained a vital aspect of life and culture for a many Britons, so much so that things though of as foundational to society, culture, and thought, such as politics could in fact be driven by or bearers of religious concerns. In fact, between roughly 1880 and 1906 the religious dimension of socialism

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156 Ibid., 179.
157 See, for example, Katherine St. John Conway’s description of her conversion to socialism while attending Mass at an Anglo-Catholic church as qtd. in Bryher, An Account of the Labour and Socialist Movement in Bristol, Part 2, 29. See also Pierson, Marxism, 163-4. Conway later married J. Bruce Glasier.
was as powerful as any other. However, the inability of Christian Socialists to make strategic alliances with trade unions and the unwillingness of most Protestant-reared labour leaders, like Keir Hardie, to reach out to the Christian Socialists led to the demise of Christian Socialism as a dynamic wing of British socialism. While many Christian Socialists remained active in the Labour Party, they did so as labour activists, not as Christian Socialists *per se*. Nevertheless, the role of Christian Socialism in late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century progressive culture and politics demonstrates that politics and social ideals often served as bearers of religious concerns. The previous chapter examined responses to the Boer War as an example of this phenomenon. This chapter has explored the complex relationship between Christianity and socialism in the context of the Church Crisis. The next chapter will examine popular literature as a bearer of religious concerns.
Appendix to Chapter 4: Prominent Christian Socialist Groups Founded in or prior to 1906

Guild of St. Matthew
Active: 1877-1909
Theological Orientation: Explicitly Anglo-Catholic
Publication(s): Church Reformer

Christian Socialist Society
Active: 1885-1892
Theological Orientation: Explicitly inter-denominational, but largely Nonconformist and founded with help from the GSM’s Charles Marson and H. H. Gore
Prominent Members: Alfred Howard, John Glasse, Charles Marson, and H. C. Shuttleworth (associated with, not technically a member)
Publication(s): Christian Socialist (edited by Marson)

Christian Social Union
Active: 1889-1919
Theological Orientation: Church of England, but tended towards Anglo-Catholicism in practice
Publication(s): Economic Review, Goodwill, and Commonwealth

Christian Socialist League
Active: 1894-1898
Theological Orientation: Explicitly interdenominational. Founded by the Baptist John Clifford as another attempt at a non-Catholic socialist organization after the failure of the Christian Socialist Society
Prominent Members: John Clifford, Percy Alden, Charles Marson, Percy Dearmer, and H. C. Shuttleworth

Christian Social Brotherhood

Active: 1898-1903
Theological Orientation: Inter-denominational (the successor to the Christian Socialist League). They were associated with the Congregationalist Mansfield House Settlement
Prominent Members: Percy Alden

**Socialist Quaker Society**
Active: 1898-1924
Theological Orientation: Quaker
Prominent Members: Charles Wynne, S. G. Hobson, and Percy Alden
Publication(s): *Ploughshare*

**Church Socialist League**
Active: 1906-1923
Theological Orientation: Church of England, but tended towards Anglo-Catholicism in practice
Publication(s): *Church Socialist*

**Catholic Socialist Society**
Active: 1906-?
Theological Orientation: Roman Catholic
Prominent Members: John Wheatley and William Regan

**Appendix to Chapter 4: Major Socialists and Labour Leaders, c. 1880-1906, and their relationship to Christianity and/or Christian Socialism**

William Abraham was a Calvinistic Methodist.

*Willie Adamson* was an active Baptist.

Percy Alden was an Anglo-Catholic and member of the Christian Socialist League, CSB, and Socialist Quaker Society.

*George Barnes* was a Congregationalist.

Samuel Barnett was an Anglican priest interested in social reform. Barnett and his wife Henrietta are best known today for founding Toynbee Hall and starting the settlement house movement. Barnett was influenced by the theology of F. D. Maurice.159

Hilaire Belloc was Roman Catholic distributist (a form of guild socialism).

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159 Seth Koven, “Barnett, Samuel Augustus,” *ODNB.*
**Robert Blatchford** was an agnostic secularist who provides a good example of an influential British socialist who, at least initially, sought to maintain a policy of neutrality towards Christianity. Blatchford’s argument that socialism had no logical connection to atheism and his positive view of the “communistic” teachings of Jesus reflected the general tone of the *Clarion* until the period of the Boer War. Although the *Clarion* published pieces critical of organized Christianity, it also published the works of prominent Christian Socialists such as Percy Dearmer. 160 Thus, Blatchford and the *Clarion*’s position on Christianity approximated that of the Independent Labour Party. Following the War, Blatchford alienated many *Clarion* readers by launching into a campaign against organized religion. 161 Although this attack obviously delighted some, it came as the *Clarion*’s influence was declining. In contrast, during its years of peak circulation the *Clarion* and Blatchford had maintained a public position that held out the possibility of the compatibly between Christianity and socialism.

**John Burns** was a Nonconformist Christian Socialist. 162

**Herbert Burrows** was a secularist who associated with Christian Socialists through membership in the SDF and Rainbow Circle.

**R. J. Campbell** was a Nonconformist minister and later became Anglican priest. Campbell also edited the *Christian Commonwealth*.

**Edward Carpenter** was ordained as an Anglican priest, although he resigned his orders in 1874.

**Henry Hyde Champion** was the editor of the *Christian Socialist* (periodical of the Georgist Land Reform Union) between 1882 and 1884. H. M. Hyndman called Champion, J. L. Joynes, and R. P. B. Front the “Christian Socialist Trio.” 163

**G. K. Chesterton** was an Anglo and later Roman Catholic who advocated distributism. He was a member of the CSL.

**John Clifford** was a Baptist minister.

**A. J. Cook** was a Baptist lay preacher.

**Charles Alfred Cripps** was a High-Church Anglican who was heavily involved in church affairs. He was a member of the Oxford House of Laymen beginning in 1890 and served as the chairman in 1911 and 1913. His son, Stafford Cripps, was a devout Anglo-Catholic socialist. Stafford played a major role in founding the General Synod of the

160 See, for example, Percy Dearmer, *Christian Socialism and Practical Christianity* (London: The Clarion, 1897).
Church of England and the British Council of the World Alliance, an ecumenical Christian organization.

**Will Crooks** was a Congregationalist.

**Percy Dearmer** was an Anglo-Catholic priest and member of the GSM, CSU, Christian Socialist League, and CSL.

**J. N. Figgis** was an Anglo-Catholic priest.

**J. Bruce Glasier** was a Scottish Protestant and was the husband of the socialist Katherine St. John Conway, who came from an Anglo-Catholic background.164

**John Glasse** was a Presbyterian minister and member of the CSS.

**Charles Gore** was a liberal Anglo-Catholic bishop and a founder of the CSU.

*Victor Grayson* was a Unitarian who came from a Christian background. Grayson was a brief socialist phenomenon during the 1907 by-election. Grayson’s candidacy was supported by over forty clergymen under the slogan “Socialism – God’s Gospel for Today.”165

**Thomas Hancock** was an Anglo-Catholic priest and GSM member.

*Keir Hardie* was a Scottish Protestant and Christian Socialist.166 He was a member of the Evangelical Union (a Morisonian church that rejected Calvinism) and joined the Congregational Church in 1881.

**Stewart Headlam** was an Anglo-Catholic priest and the founder of the GSM.

*Arthur Henderson* was a Wesleyan-Methodist lay preacher.

**John Hodge** was a Presbyterian.

**Henry Scott Holland** was an Anglo-Catholic priest and a founder of the CSU.

**H. M. Hyndman** associated with Christian Socialists through the SDF.

*Frederick Jowett* was “a strong Christian Socialist.”167

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*George Lansbury* was a “Christian Socialist” with Anglo-Catholic leanings. He was influenced by the Christian Socialism of Philip Snowden in the 1890s and helped convert Keir Hardie to Christian Socialism in 1897.168 He served as a president of the Church Socialist League.

*Jack Lawson* committed to Wesleyan Methodism in 1901 and spent sixty years as a lay preacher.

*Ramsay MacDonald* was a Unitarian who interacted with Christian Socialists through the SDF, ILP, Fabian Society, and Rainbow Circle. He was a reader of J. L. Joynes’ monthly *Christian Socialist* as a young man.169

*Tom Mann* was “deeply interested in Christian religion” without attaching himself to any one denomination. Mann and Keir Hardie shared “staunch but not entirely orthodox Christian beliefs.”170

Charles Marson was an Anglo-Catholic priest and member of the GSM, CSS, and Christian Socialist League. He edited the CSS’s newspaper, the *Christian Socialist*.

W. E. Moll was an Anglo-Catholic priest and member of the GSM, CSU, and CSL.

*William Morris* moved in religiously-charged pre-Raphaelite circles and practiced an ethical socialism shared by Christian Socialists.

Conrad Noel was an Anglo-Catholic priest and member of the GSM, CSU, CSL, and founder of Catholic Crusade.

*Sydney H. Olivier* briefly wrote for the (Land Reform) *Christian Socialist* and interacted with Christian Socialists through the Fabian Society and Rainbow Circle.

A. J. Penty was an Anglo-Catholic guild socialist.

Ben Pickard was a Wesleyan Methodist.

*John Ruskin* was a friend and associate of the major mid-century Christian Socialists F. D. Maurice, Thomas Hughes, and Charles Kingsley.

*George Bernard Shaw* was a secularist, but associated with Christian Socialist members of the Fabian Society such as Stewart Headlam.


*Philip Snowden was a Wesleyan Nonconformist and Christian Socialist.\footnote{Richards, “George Lansbury,” 346.}

J. H. Thomas was a Baptist. (Although a labour leader, Thomas was not a socialist.)

Will Thorne had a Nonconformist background.

Ben Tillett was a Congregationalist.

John Trevor was the founder of the Labour Church and associated with the Anglo-Catholic socialist H. C. Shuttleworth.

*Beatrice and Sidney Webb were secularists who associated with Christian Socialists like Stewart Headlam through the Fabian Society.

*John Wheatley was an Irish Roman Catholic who attempted to demonstrate the compatibility of Catholicism and socialism. He was a founder of the Catholic Socialist Society in 1906.

Percy Widdrington was an Anglo-Catholic and member of the GSM and CSL. He married Enid Stacy, another Anglo-Catholic socialist. Enid was the sister of Paul Stacy.
CHAPTER 5

Conniving Jesuits and Captive Nuns:
Fin-de-siècle Popular Protestant and Catholic Literature

Fin-de-siècle popular literature, not unlike today’s fare, was dominated by romance, adventure, shady villains, and harrowing escapes. Besides providing entertainment, literature can reveal a great deal about the concerns and preoccupations of both those who produced it and those who consumed it. As journalist Claud Cockburn asserted in Bestseller, “the author of a bestseller consciously or unconsciously produces a mirror of his time…”¹ Examining popular literature and bestsellers in particular, then, sheds light on the attitudes and preoccupations of the book-buying middle class and book-borrowing upper-working class, since “of all indices to mood, attitudes, and, above all, aspirations, the bestseller list is one of the most reliable. There is no way of fudging it.”²

This chapter explores a selection of religiously-themed fin-de-siècle popular novels and in particular the works of Emily Sarah Holt, Joseph Hocking, and Guy Thorne. It argues that the popular works of both Protestant and Catholic authors demonstrated the existence of widespread anxiety among ordinary people over the Great Church Crisis and related questions of religious and national identity. The conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism did not take place only in abstruse theological journals poured over by

intellectuals and divines. It also occurred between the covers of spine-tingling potboilers read insatiably throughout the nation.

- **Protestant Fiction from the Mid-Victorian Period to the Edwardian Period**

  Anti-Catholic fiction has had a long history in the British Isles, but it came to special prominence during the years surrounding the “Papal Aggression” of 1850. Within this environment stories featuring Catholic villains became popular. The historical fiction of William Harrison Ainsworth, such as *The Tower of London* (first published serially in 1840) and *Guy Fawkes; or, the Gunpowder Treason* (1841), remained popular into the twentieth century.³ Ainsworth’s novel *Jack Sheppard: A Romance* outsold even Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist*.⁴ Novelists such as prominent Welsh author, journalist, and priest Maurice Davies also targeted Anglo-Catholicism during these years.⁵

  The most popular form of anti-Catholic novels focused on convent life or the confessional. Protestant fears spawned a massive outpouring of literature, which provided the public with both education about the evils of Catholic convents and a good dose of entertainment. Books such as *Sister Agnes; or the Captive Nun: A Picture of Conventual Life* and *The Convent: A Narrative Founded on Fact* included “Every ingredient of popular fiction…high life…love, mystery, adventure, stolen fortunes, heroism, melodrama, villainy, horror, wicked foreigners – and sex in nasty forms as well

³ *Guy Fawkes* was reprinted in 1842, 1857, 1878, 1885, 1891, 1893, 1900, and 1945.
⁵ See Philip Paternoster (1858), *Shadow Land* (1860), and *Verts, or, The Three Creeds* (1876).
as nice." Many of these books proved to be wildly popular, such as *The Schoolgirl in France* by Rachel MacCrindell, who was also the author of *The Convent*. *The Schoolgirl*, which warned British parents about the dangers of continental conventual schools, went through at least seven editions between 1840 and 1859. The terrors of “conventual life” also became a staple of late-Victorian penny dreadfuls; tales such as *Geralda the Demon Nun* provided young boys with equal servings of horror and smut.

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8 “Geralda appeared in *The Calendar of Horrors*, edited by one of the leading writers of Lloyd’s Salisbury Square school, Thomas Peckett Prest, the distinguished inventor of Sweeney Todd.” Best, “Popular Protestantism,” 132.
Paranoia about the supposed intrusion of Catholicism into family life also found its expression in fiction. Jemima Luke’s *The Female Jesuit: or, the Spy in the Family* (1851) told the story of a woman who worked as a Catholic spy among Protestants and secretly reported to the General of the Society of Jesus in Rome. Luke’s novel spawned *A Sequel to the Female Jesuit* in 1852 and caused Charles Seager to jump on the bandwagon with *The Female Jesuit Abroad* in 1853. Other works like Lynn Linton’s *Under Which Lord?* (1879) dramatized fears that the priest or confessor would usurp the

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husband/father’s own role within his family. The point made by authors such as Linton was that while Protestantism strengthened the patriarchal family, Catholicism introduced a destructive alien element.

Protestant fears also filled the pages of mid-century comic and adventure literature. The very popular Ingoldsby Legends, for example, turned Papist bogeymen into comic figures. In one of the most well-known legends, “The Jackdaw of Rhiems,” Richard Harris Barham told the comedic story of a “jackdaw” who steals a Cardinal’s ring and is made a saint. In another legend, “The Auto-Da-Fé: A Legend of Spain,” Barham made light of the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition in rhyme, describing Catholic glee as “heretics” burned alive. Most Victorians were at least familiar with The Ingoldsby Legends. H. Rider Haggard’s notoriously unlettered hero Allan Quartermain carried a small copy of it in his pocket; other than the Bible and Shakespeare, it appears to have been one of the only books he had ever read. Rider Haggard himself occasionally flavored his adventures with anti-Catholic sentiment. John Kensit’s Protestant Truth Society thought so highly of Haggard’s The Lady of Blossholme (1909) that they advertised it in their publications.

By the time The Lady of Blossholme hit the market there was already an established genre of Protestant pulp fiction including novels like The Vicar of St. Bede’s (first published serially in 1900), which used the setting of an evangelical vicar’s conflict

11 Best, “Popular Protestantism in Victorian Britain,” 137. See Chapter 2 for an extended discussion of this anxiety.
12 Richard Harris Barham [Thomas Ingoldsby], The Ingoldsby Legends; or, Mirth and Marvels (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1882), 279.
with his Ritualist congregation to rebut Anglo-Catholic arguments, and A. A. Isaac’s very similar *The New Vicar* (1904). But while some works like Isaac’s can only be described as Protestant propaganda pieces, most works of late-Victorian and Edwardian Protestant fiction existed within the nondenominational genres of romance, adventure, or thriller. Mary Cholmondeley’s popular dramatic romance *Red Pottage* (1899), for example, included a strong anti-Catholic sub-text by highlighting the appalling bullishness and intolerance of the Anglo-Catholic priest Mr. Gresley, who referred to Nonconformists as “worms.”

The genre of supernatural fiction, however, lent itself especially well to colonization by a Protestant or anti-Catholic ethos. Even during the mid-Victorian period ghost stories were often associated with anti-Catholicism. For example, the Abbé Calmet’s anti-Eastern Orthodox *The Phantom World* was ironically republished in England in 1850 as an anti-Catholic work and continued to be reprinted throughout the nineteenth century. Sheridan Joseph Le Fanu, the Anglo-Irish writer of short ghost stories bought and edited the *Warden and Protestant Guardian*.

M. R. James, a great fan of Le Fanu and one of England’s finest writers of ghost stories, occasionally imbued his tales with an anti-Catholic ethos. James’s most famous story, “Oh, Whistle, and I’ll Come to You, My Lad,” featured a skeptical professor and a militantly Protestant colonel. It is worth noting here that a disproportionate number of the leading figures of political Protestantism, especially within the Church Association, were military men. In any event, Professor Parkins dug up an ancient whistle at the ruins

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18 Ibid.
of a Templar preceptory and Colonel Wilson warned him that he ought to “be careful about using a thing that had belonged to a set of Papists, of whom, speaking generally, it might be affirmed that you never knew what they might not have been up to.”19  After blowing on the whistle had summoned a supernatural being, the Colonel remarked that the whole affair had “served to confirm his opinions of the Church of Rome.”  Professor Parkins found his skepticism rattled and “he cannot now see a surplice hanging on a door quite unmoved…”20  It apparently took a ghost to give Parkins some reservations about Catholicism.

Ghost stories like James’s were especially popular during the Edwardian period and added to the growing corpus of Protestant fiction that appealed to teenagers and young adults.  In fact, anti-Ritualist Protestants were especially keen to spread their message to the young.  They frequently worried that the Anglo and Roman Catholics did a better job of catechizing their youth than Protestants did.21  In order to reach the young, Protestant propagandists produced exciting works of historical fiction designed to teach applicable lessons about the perfidy of Rome.  Most of these books were set during either periods when Catholics had bloodily persecuted Protestants, or at a time when Protestants had won some type of victory over their Romanist enemies.  Preferably both themes could be combined.  Popular topics included the persecution of the heroic French Huguenots,22 the defeat of the Spanish Armanda, the discovery of Guy Fawkes’s Plot,23 and the siege of Protestant Londonderry in Ireland by the Catholic James II.24

19 M. R. James, “Oh, Whistle, and I’ll Come to You, My Lad,” Collected Ghost Stories (Ware: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1992), 76.
20 Ibid., 81.  Wearing a surplice in the pulpit was seen as a sign of Ritualism.
Perhaps because they were writing for children, authors such as W. Stanley Martin were very explicit in making a connection between dramatized historical events and the present Church Crisis. Following a telling of the story of the siege of Londonderry, Martin added a chapter entitled “Rome’s Motto: - ‘Always the Same.’” Here, Martin told boys that the story of the brave Protestant lads of Londonderry should encourage them to continue the fight against Catholicism. After all, “there are many particulars in which the position of the defenders of the City of Londonderry was similar to our own to-day. They had an unscrupulous foe; and so in Romanism and Ritualism have we.”25 Indeed, Ritualists were even today craftily sneaking Roman worship into the Protestant Church of England. In order to illustrate the extent of the danger, Martin included an accompanying pictures to “show better than any words of mine to what extend this Ritualism has grown, for it represents what actually took place in certain churches in London on a particular Sunday in the year 1899.”26

26 Ibid., 70. See below.
In his book *Fireships, Fireworks, and Firebands* about the Spanish Armada, Guy Fawkes, and the Glorious Revolution, Martin also reminded his readers that “another way in which Romanism is making headway in our country is by the Ritualism with which the Church of England is honeycombed.” The conclusion was that just as


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Figure 2: The “Ritualistic Conspiracy in the Church of England,” in Martin, *The Brave Boys of Derry*, 71.
Protestant boys and girls had defended the faith during the tumultuous events of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, so, too, could they defend the faith at another time of danger at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although Martin did have a flair for drawing his readers into the story, his books were overly didactic and designed to appeal primarily to boys. Emily Sarah Holt, by contrast, wrote slightly subtler books aimed at girls and young women.

- **Emily Sarah Holt**

Emily Sarah Holt was born in 1836 in Stubbylee, Lancashire to John and Judith Holt. This is virtually all historians can say for certain about her life. Even the date of her death is uncertain. Her last work was published in 1904, and so it is assumed that she died either that year or soon thereafter. From her vast output of well-referenced biographies and historical fiction, however, it is clear that she had an excellent education, especially in English and ecclesiastical history.\(^{28}\) Given Holt’s popularity and output, it is surprising that so little is known about her life. In any case, Holt published her first work in 1861. The two-volume *Memoirs of Royal Ladies* was a collective biography of both well-known and forgotten women of the past. Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg, who wrote Holt’s entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, noted that her biographies were well documented and showed a “wide knowledge of the sources.” Her *Memoirs* remain a helpful introduction to women like Ela de Rosman, Alicia de Lacy, and Joan of Kent.\(^{29}\)

Holt’s career in historical fiction began with the publication of *Mistress Margary: A Tale of the Lollards* in 1868. In all, she published forty-five historical novels aimed at

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\(^{28}\) Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg, “Holt, Emily Sarah,” *ODNB*.

\(^{29}\) Ibid.
girls aged 10-16 at regular intervals until 1897. Many of her novels were set at symbolic moments in Protestant history, such as the failed Gunpowder Plot of 1605. In 1901 she moved into the genre of etiquette writing and published the Encyclopedia of Etiquette. Her last published work, The Secret of Popularity: How to Achieve Social Success, appeared in 1904. Although her works were fashionable and well-received among girls and women during her lifetime, few have heard of Emily Holt today. Schnorrenberg laments that today “Holt is scarcely ever noticed in works about nineteenth-century children’s literature. When she is mentioned it is only as a minor Sunday school writer.” Yet, Holt’s work is significant because it illuminates both her own desires and concerns and those of her audience.

Holt’s work reveals, for example, her committed evangelical Anglicanism, which even tended toward Puritan iconoclasm. In one of her Church Association tracts entitled “Cross Bearers” she asked her readers why they wore crosses as pieces of jewelry. The cross was the Roman gibbet and a symbol of Satan’s temporary triumph on Good Friday, she argued. Moreover, it was also a pre-Christian pagan symbol used by the Chaldeans, Egyptians, and Druids, and recognized by the early Christians as such. To those who merely wore it as “a pretty ornament,” Holt replied “Is it a pretty ornament? or is it, if you pause to think, a revolting and disgusting one? Would you wear a gibbet or a guillotine, as an ornament?” For Holt and many others, such as her Church Association supporters, not only the crucifix, but also the empty cross denoted Roman Catholicism and therefore paganism.

30 See Emily Sarah Holt, It Might Have Been. The Story of the Gunpowder Plot (London: John F. Shaw, 1890).
31 Schnorrenberg, “Holt, Emily Sarah.”
Given her opposition to Catholicism, it is no surprise that Holt was especially critical of Ritualism within the Church of England and sought to use her influence as a writer in order to arrest its spread. She wrote numerous anti-Ritualist tracts published by the Church Association, John F. Shaw, and others. In one she argued that Ritualists gilded the sheep gate to attract new converts, but did not feed existing members with the Gospel. Just because colors, ceremony, song, and sweet smells could lure people into a church did not mean these things were actually good for the soul. After all, candy pleased children, but it was not healthy. Addressing Ritualist priests she complained that they fed their flock on nothing but creams and sugar-plums.\(^{33}\) In other words, Ritualists pleased their parishioners by entertaining them, not by giving them the Protestant teachings that provided spiritual health. In another pamphlet, Holt has a Ritualist rector, a moderate curate, a rationalist doctor, and a Protestant professor debate why preachers seemed to have lost their hearers. Not surprisingly, the Protestant professor wins.\(^{34}\) In “King and Priest,” Holt attempted to defend Erastianism. Many anti-Erastians pointed to the Biblical story of the High Priest Azariah preventing King Uzziah from offering incense at the Temple as evidence that the state should not interfere in ecclesiastical affairs. Holt explains that “we now see that the action of modern clergy in braving the secular tribunals, and refusing to obey the laws of their country, finds no parallel in the act of Azariah and his fourscore brethren, and has no connection with it.”\(^{35}\) After all, the High Priests, including Azariah, were merely types of Christ, the Great High Priest in the


order of Melchizedek. Since Azariah corresponded to Christ and not to contemporary clergymen, the analogy fell apart. Holt possessed theological acumen, but she did not only write polemical tracts. She attempted to spread her message primarily through historical novels.

Most of the central characters in Holt’s novels were women. Schnorrenberg writes that Holt’s stories carried two obvious and consistent messages. First “what females do is important; marriage is not their only option.” Second, evangelical Protestantism was the only true religion and steadfast adherence to its teachings led to happiness either in this life or in the next following martyrdom. Given Holt’s fervent Protestantism and tendency to focus on times of persecution, most of her books were set during the tumultuous years following the English Reformation or during other times of religious upheaval. In these novels Catholicism was portrayed as a false pagan religion with a penchant for persecuting the Protestant (or non-Catholic if the story was set before the Reformation) faithful. Readers were expected to understand that Catholicism did not change. Thus, if Catholics persecuted English Protestants in the sixteenth century, they would surely do so again if they were able to regain supremacy in Great Britain, either through the growth of Ritualism within the Established Church or through the growth of Roman Catholicism itself. Readers were not left to connect the dots on their own. In the preface to Robin Tremayne of Bodmin: A Story of the Marian Persecution (1872), Holt warned that “…England has been creeping gradually closer to the outstretched arms of the great enchantress [Rome]” in her own day. In the preface of Imogen: A Story of the

36 Holt, King and Priest, 13-16.
37 Schnorrenberg, “Holt, Emily Sarah.”
38 Ibid.
39 Qtd. in Schnorrenberg, “Holt, Emily Sarah.”
Mission of Augustine (1876), she wrote that although Popery called itself the truth, God’s Word revealed it as a lie. The common belief that St. Augustine of Canterbury had first brought Christianity to Britain in 597 AD was mistaken. In reality, pure non-Catholic Christianity had already existed in the British Isles. All Augustine had brought with him were lies and spiritual slavery. In other words, the coming of Catholic Christianity to Great Britain with St. Augustine brought a step backwards, not forwards.

Imogen graphically compared Catholicism to paganism, arguing that “Italian” priests merely told the native inhabitants of the isles to change the names of their gods rather than bring them the Good News. When the non-Catholic Christian Imogen asked Nanna (a Catholic/pagan) what the Italian priest had taught about Christ, Nanna replied that “he said He was once a little babe in His mother’s arms, as Balder was; and He died the terrible death at the lands of Loki, as Balder did. And we must be baptized, he said, and trust in Hertha – I mean Mary – to speak for us to Balder.” Thus, Catholicism merely reinforced preexisting paganism. To make matters worse, the Italian priests also told their converts that non-Catholic Christians were heretics living outside the true church.

Moving chronologically forward, Holt’s first novel Mistress Margery was set in the late-fourteenth century. The Lollard William Sastre (or Sawtre) preached a Protestant-like message in England, but the religious establishment persecuted him until he recanted. Eventually, like Thomas Cranmer, Sastre reverted to non-Catholic

40 Emily Sarah Holt, Imogen: A Story of the Mission of Augustine (London: John F. Shaw, 1876), v-vi.
41 Ibid., 113-114.
42 Ibid., 312-313.
Christianity and was burned at the stake. In her preface, Holt warned her reader about the horrors of persecution, but assured them that

I have in the ensuing pages, in charity to my readers, avoided shocking their sensibilities with the worst features of Romish persecution. The stake, however, was in reality only the end of a long previous martyrdom. The rack, the pulleys, and all the numberless and nameless instruments employed by the craft and subtilty [sic] of the devil or man for the torture of God’s saints, have been carefully kept out of sight in these pages – not because they did not exist, nor with the least view to conceal the iniquity of her who is ‘drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus,’ but simply from a desire to spare the feelings of my readers.44

The message, of course, was that should Catholicism regain power in England, the rack and pulleys would reappear in public sight.

In The King’s Daughters; or, How Two Girls Kept the Faith (1888), set during the Marian persecutions, Holt told the tale of Protestant bravery in the face of torture and possible martyrdom. The story opened with a brief history lesson: “Queen Mary had brought back the Popish mass, and all the images which King Edward had done away with; so that to go to church was not to worship God but to worship idols. And so terrible was the persecution Mary had allowed to be set up, that the penalty for refusing to do this was to be burnt to death for what she called heresy.”45 In essence, the entire novel consisted of a long series of Protestant heroines and heroes standing trial for heresy, denying Transubstantiation, refusing to attend Mass, attend confession, or accept the authority of the Pope, and, therefore, being tortured in various ways. Luckily, our heroines Elizabeth and Rose Allen escaped death when Queen Elizabeth providentially ascended to the throne.

44 Emily S. Holt, Mistress Margery, etc. (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1936 reissue), 8.
45 Emily S. Holt, The King’s Daughters; or, How Two Girls Kept the Faith (London: John F. Shaw and Co., 1888), 32.
Holt’s books were well-received by both the religious and secular press.

Regarding *The King’s Daughters*, the *Record* wrote that “We never met with a book more suited to read aloud to young people on a Sunday afternoon.”

Reviewing Joyce Morrell’s *Harvest* (1881), the *Congregationalist* wrote that “These chronicles are full of good things, which are sure to be as precious seed in the heart of any young person into whose hands they may come.”

The secular *Athenaeum* thought Robin Tremayne was “very well written,” while *The Daily Review* noted that *Imogen* brought “before the reader times and customs of a period so far removed from the present, and to give such a vivid picture as is done in ‘Imogen’, testifies to the author’s power. The work is sure to interest.”

The popularity of Holt’s works is indicated by their long life-spans. Many of her novels were being sold until at least 1909 and her first novel, *Mistress Margery* was reprinted as late as 1936.

Schnorrenberg has written that “an indication of their long print life was given by the advertisements for variously priced editions included in each new publication. The more expensive editions were touted as gift books, the less expensive as Sunday School prizes.”

The Church Association promoted Holt’s works into the early-twentieth century. A customer could buy a forty-volume set of Holt’s novels for 60s, or for 2s 6d each.

Given the reputation and sheer quantity of Holt’s output, Schnorrenberg has concluded that she probably influenced at least as many girls as Charlotte Yonge, the much better remembered Anglo-Catholic novelist.

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47 Qtd. in ibid., v.
48 Qtd. in ibid., v.
50 Schnorrenberg, “Holt, Emily Sarah.”
52 Schnorrenberg, “Holt, Emily Sarah.”
Most of Holt’s works were published in the 1870s and 1880s, yet they continued to be read into the early and mid-twentieth century. This long life-span can be attributed to the context of the Church Crisis and contemporary religious upheaval. The on-going popularity of Holt’s novels demonstrates that readers concerned about the growth of Catholicism were eager to buy books that they believed would both reinforce their convictions and provide an entertaining history lesson. Holt’s historical novels shed light on the many anxieties of fin-de-siècle British women. Men had similar concerns, but were drawn to other novelists, such as Joseph Hocking.

- **Joseph Hocking**

  Joseph Hocking was born in 1860 to James Hocking, the part owner of a tin mine, and Elizabeth Kitto at Brannel, Cornwall. Joseph’s siblings included Silas Kitto and Salome, both of whom also became novelists. In fact, Silas’s book *Her Benny* (1879) became the first novel to sell over a million copies. Later Silas co-founded *Temple Magazine*, which published works by his brother and other authors. Salome Hocking Fifield published ten novels during her lifetime and also moved within bookish circles, even befriending intellectuals like George Bernard Shaw. Joseph claimed to have written his first novel at age thirteen, although he deemed it “not a success.” In 1884 he followed his older brother Silas into the Methodist ministry and was ordained into the United Methodist Free Church, eventually becoming the pastor of Woodford Green Union Church in Essex. In 1891 Joseph continued to follow in his brother’s footsteps by

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54 Ibid., 12.

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publishing his first novel, *Jabez Easterbrook*. He proved to be a popular writer and later became the President of the Protestant Press Association. In 1978 Roger Thorne noted that

Both Hocking brothers were leading writers until the third decade of this [twentieth] century, but precious little can now be discovered about the two men, their personal lives and their writing. … Such is the verdict of history upon two men whose works are being recognized as part of the wider religious and social scene of the twentieth century, but interest shown is inhibited by the lack of information available.

Thorne attempted to rectify the situation himself by writing the first account of the Hockings and their works. In 2002 Alan Kent built upon Thorne’s foundation by publishing a much longer study of the Hocking siblings that focused on their Cornish roots.

Joseph also resembled his brother in his strident Protestantism and concern with the growth of Catholicism in England and within the Established Church. Speaking at a meeting of the World Evangelical Alliance in Cardiff, Hocking left no one in doubt regarding his views of Ritualism and Roman Catholicism. To him Ritualism seemed even worse than Roman Catholicism, since it was merely a dishonest form of the latter. Moreover, “Romanism means the ruin of a nation…. This meeting is not dealing with a trifling matter, but one of vital importance to the nation; to our great Empire; and to the welfare of the world…. There is no country in the world to-day dominated by

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56 Ibid.
59 See Kent, *Pulp Methodism*.
60 Ibid., 73.
Romanism…that is not decadent, moribund, and decaying.” When James Britten, the president of the Catholic Truth Society, and the Jesuit Joseph Keating criticized Hocking and fellow Protestant author Robert Horton for their anti-Catholicism, Hocking and Horton fired back by co-authoring *Shall Rome Reconquer England?* (1910), in which they argued that Catholic supremacy would spell the end of liberty and national progress. Not surprisingly, many of Hocking’s novels reflected his Protestantism and fear of the growth of Catholicism. In all, Hocking published ninety books during his lifetime, including *The Sword of the Lord, Lest We Forget, A Flame of Fire, Follow the Gleam, The Coming of the King,* and *The Chariots of the Lord,* which dramatized the struggle for religious freedom. He also published the explicitly anti-Catholic novels *The Scarlet Woman, The Purple Robe, The Woman of Babylon, The Soul of Dominic Wildthorne,* and *The Jesuit,* which addressed the perceived dangers of Anglo and Roman Catholicism.

Hocking’s novels enjoyed both popularity and a wide circulation, although publication figures are generally unavailable. In his study of Silas, Joseph, and Salome Hocking, Alan Kent notes that the Hockings’ “novels, books and essays were once consumed and read by millions of people … [becoming] perhaps the most popularly purchased texts in the English-speaking territories.” Although Silas became the world’s first author to sell a million copies of a single novel, taken as a whole, Joseph’s books were more popular and had a longer life-span, continuing to be read into the mid and late

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62 Ibid., 2.
64 Kent, *Pulp Methodism,* 11.
Perhaps more so than Silas, Joseph had his finger on the pulse of contemporary English culture. Whereas Joseph was an enthusiastic imperialist and supporter of the Boer War, Silas became a Christian pacifist and prominent opponent of the war. Silas even wrote a thinly fictionalized account of his struggles as a minister opposed to a popular war, although several editors deemed the book too controversial to publish. Despite attaining public prominence – Silas was a member of the Royal Literary Society, was offered an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Columbia University, served as a member of the executive council of the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, and was featured in *Vanity Fair’s* 1906 “Men of the Day” satirical series – his pacifism and other positions, such as his support of women’s suffrage and socialism, may have curbed his popularity.

While his brother was engaged with the anti-War Movement, Joseph caught the wave of turn-of-the-century Boer War patriotism and anti-Catholic paranoia. His novels *The Scarlet Woman* (1899) and *The Purple Robe* (1900) appeared on the market as the frenzy associated with the Church Crisis was peaking. *The Scarlet Woman* first appeared in serial form between October 1898 and September 1899 in Silas’s *Temple Magazine*. The first book-bound edition sold 6,000 copies before publication. The second edition then sold another 10,000 copies, also before publication, and a third edition of 15,000 soon appeared. By the time Hocking had published his anti-Ritualist novel, *The Soul of Dominic Wildthorne*, in 1908, Catholic Truth Society President James Britten could
bemoan the fact that “…the circulation of his previous works shows that Mr. Hocking has a large public….” Jonathan Rose, in his study of *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (2001), cites C. H. Rolph’s description of his policeman father’s reading habits. The authors most popular among the Rolph family included Silas and Joseph Hocking. Rolph recalled that pulp fiction, like the Hockings’, “went through our household [sic] like a benignly infectious plague.” Recalling his childhood reading habits, H. M. Creswell Payne remembered reading new installments of Hocking’s serial novels in the *Christian Globe*, “all of which met with considerable sale in book form.”

According to Payne, Hocking’s greatest successes were novels dealing with religious themes. He could remember sitting around the head of the household as he read Hocking’s stories, such as *The Soul of Dominic Wildthorne*, out of the *British Weekly*. “How popular he was in thousands of homes!”, Payne concluded.

Hocking also earned money as a public lecturer and Payne remembered that he had “first heard Joseph Hocking speak in the Public Rooms, Bodmin, in the early years of this century. Disturbed at what he considered the insidious encroachment of Jesuitry in Britain and the growth of Roman Catholicism, he has written some of his successful and anti-catholic novels.” Most early twentieth-century families, like the Rolphs and Paynes, feverishly consumed the works of Joseph Hocking, not Thomas Hardy or Samuel Butler. Alan Kent argues that “Works read on this scale had a big effect on the way their

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72 Qtd. in ibid., 129.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
readers looked at life, at religion and may even have had an effect on the way they voted.”76 The effect Joseph Hocking strove for was to turn his readers away from Catholicism and towards evangelical Protestantism.

In addition to exerting their influence through sheer numbers, Hocking’s works could exert additional influence because they were serialized and published by “respectable” firms. Britten lamented the fact that *Quiver*, a magazine published by Cassell and Company, was serializing *The Woman of Babylon*. Cassell and Company had attained “a well-deserved reputation for their enormous out-put of educational literature…” 77 The Catholic Truth Society feared that because of Cassell’s reputation Hocking’s work would receive a circulation in the thousands and the veracity of its contents would be taken for granted.78

Perhaps Hocking’s association with Cassell and other respectable publishing houses added extra luster to his prose, since at least one contemporary considered him to be the literary equal of Thomas Hardy or Arthur Conan Doyle: “He has all Thomas Hardy’s insight into the depths of human character – without this pessimism, and all the skill and ingenuity of Conan Doyle or Hall Caine in working out his plot. The baneful influence of what is called ‘the realistic novel’ is largely counteracted by such writers as Joseph Hocking.”79 In fact, Hocking was so popular and influential, that around the turn of the century, he could earn as much as £10 to preach on a Sunday and lecture on a Wednesday.80 Although Hocking is virtually unknown today, at least some of his

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78 Ibid.
contemporaries classed him among authors who have better stood the test of time and were willing to pay top dollar to hear him speak.

Joseph Hocking, then, was a popular and influential author of pulp fiction and polemical works around the turn of the century. But what message was he propagating and how did his audience receive it? They key to understanding Hocking’s popularity lies in his ability to dramatize the fears of Protestants in the context of the Great Church Crisis. I will briefly examine Hocking’s principle anti-Catholic novels *The Scarlet Woman* (1899), *The Purple Robe* (1900), *The Woman of Babylon* (1906), *The Soul of Dominic Wildthrone* (1908), and *The Jesuit* (1910).

*The Scarlet Woman* told the tale of wealthy but bored Norman Lancaster and his attempt to save his friends Jack Gray and Gertrude Winthrop from the “living death” of life as a priest and nun, respectively. After a tragic misunderstanding, sweethearts Jack and Gertrude broke off their courtship and in their overwhelming sorrow Jack entered a monastery and Gertrude a convent. Norman and his friend Tom Carleton sought to free Jack and Gertrude from their “prisons” in order to reunite the couple and prevent a major coup for Roman Catholicism in England. As Tom explained, the Romanists believed the educated and well-connected Jack would greatly help them to convert England by serving as a missionary to the “cultured classes.” As a result, the Catholic Church was making every effort to retain the very valuable Jack.81

Unfortunately for Norman and Tom, efforts to “rescue” Jack were thwarted by the devious Jesuit mastermind Father Anthony Ritzoom, whom Payne considered to be

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Hocking’s “best-known character.”\textsuperscript{82} Norman debated Ritzoom, arguing, “What is Spain to-day? A decaying civilization…. These facts show that your religion does not make nations strong, progressive, victorious. Vigorous life repudiates your dead hand. Think of America, for example.”\textsuperscript{83} But Ritzoom triumphantly responded that “I can assure you, Mr. Lancaster, that you make a huge mistake. Why, even in England the trend of the nation is towards Romanism. Your Anglican Church practically asks the Pope to admit the validity of their orders. Your clergy are calling the Reformation a gross error, and they are aping us in every possible way.”\textsuperscript{84} Although Ritzoom prevented Norman and Tom from freeing Jack and Gertrude from the clutches of the Catholic Church – Jack became a priest and Gertrude a fully-professed nun – Norman did manage to draw one Jesuit away from the order and rescue another nun from her Irish convent. The story ended with Norman’s Protestant wedding to the now ex-nun and Jack’s refusal to help Ritzoom break up the wedding, although he chose to remain in his vocation as a priest.

*The Scarlet Woman* touched on several contemporary concerns. First, it addressed a spreading fear of unregulated Catholic monasteries and, especially, convents throughout Great Britain. The book was published during the heyday of S. J. Abbott’s Conventual Enquiry Society, which sought government inspection of all conventual houses. As we have seen, during this period the life of a nun was commonly described as a “living death,” a phrase employed by Hocking.\textsuperscript{85} Secondly, the novel played into contemporary fears regarding the growth of Catholicism both outside and within the

\textsuperscript{82} Qtd. in Kent, *Pulp Methodism*, 106.

\textsuperscript{83} Hocking, *The Scarlet Woman*, 88-89.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 89.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 14. See also Emily Holt’s, *In Convent Walls: Story of the Despensers* (London: J. F. Shaw & Co., 1888), which told the story of one of Queen Isabelle of France’s gentlewomen. The heroine wound up confined in a convent as a nun, despite remaining in love. “Poor caged bird as I am!” she complained, “how can my wings unfold themselves?” During the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century convent scare, the public appetite for convent fiction proved insatiable.
Established Church. This, of course, was the Protestant concern at the center of the Church Crisis. Finally, the book gave fictionalized form to fears that the Jesuit order was engaged in a massive conspiracy to convert England, because, according to Ritzoom, the conversion of England, the strongest and most influential nation, was the key to the conversion of the whole world. Although the book ended with the conversion of a nun and Jesuit to Protestantism and the nun’s marriage to Norman, the victory was pyrrhic, since the Church had managed to retain the services of the brilliant and well-connected Jack. Thus, the novel closed on a rather foreboding note for Protestant readers.

Hocking’s *The Purple Robe* followed fast on the heels of his success with *The Scarlet Woman*. *The Purple Robe* followed his now proven formula of Protestant valor in the face of Jesuit duplicity, spiced with a dash of romance. As the story opens, the aristocratic and Roman Catholic Alizon Neville has become curious about Protestantism and attended a Protestant chapel, noting that the Protestants seemed to be “intelligent, thrifty, respectable people,” whereas “most of the Catholics of the town are Irish, and they are poor and thriftless.” Soon, Alizon and the brilliant young Nonconformist minister Duncan Rutland fall in love. The Jesuit Ritzoom saw this as an opportunity for both ridding the town of Rutland and a propaganda coup if he could convert the popular Rutland through Alizon. Through the conversion of intelligent (and handsome!) men like Rutland, Ritzoom and the Jesuits hoped “to see the world one vast Theocracy.”

Although Ritzoom’s scheme initially seemed to bear fruit, after a trip to Rome and a meeting with the Pope, Rutland became confirmed in his Protestantism and Alizon converted in order for them to be married.

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88 Ibid., 172.
The Purple Robe also proved to be highly successful and cemented Hocking’s status as a popular Protestant author. The Church Association’s official organ, The Church Intelligencer, reviewed Hocking’s latest offering, claiming that “since the days of Kingsley and Charles Reade, no novelist has contributed to the Protestant cause anything nearly so attractive or so convincing: it is the interest and duty of Protestants to procure for these volumes as wide a circulation as possible.”90 The National Church League answered the Association’s call by carrying Hocking’s novels in its Church Book Room.90

Hocking’s next major explicitly anti-Catholic novel was The Woman of Babylon (1906), which again featured the crafty Jesuit Ritzoom. As the story opened, Walter Raymond has discovered he could afford to give his Protestant daughter Joyce a good education by sending her to the Roman Catholic convent school of St. Mary the Martyr on the continent. Through their association with St. Mary the Martyr, the Raymond family befriended the seemingly tolerant and open-minded priest Father Patrick Brandon. Through Brandon’s efforts Walter’s wife Lucy converted to Catholicism. Brandon, however, was secretly a Jesuit scheming to convert the whole Raymond family and lure Joyce into a convent in order to seize her inheritance money. The situation proved too complicated for Brandon, who sent for Ritzoom. Ritzoom did succeed in converting Joyce and luring her into a convent, but luckily her father and his friend, the stout Protestant Ned Harrington, located the convent and freed Joyce before she was able to sign away her fortune. Joyce renounced her vows and married Harrington, although

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89 Qtd. in Britten, “The Scarlet Woman,” 1.
90 Wellings, Evangelicals Embattled, 88.
Lucy remained a Catholic and moved away from Walter in order to live in seclusion and pray for his conversion.

Hocking’s main theme in *Woman of Babylon* was the destructive effect of Catholicism upon family life. The novel especially focused on the loss of intimacy between husband and wife, which was a major concern of opponents of auricular confession as we have seen in Chapter 2. After Lucy decided to convert, Fr. Brandon told her not to tell Walter yet. Hocking ominously noted that “this was the first time that a secret had ever existed between husband and wife.” Following her conversion, Lucy’s practice of confession and attempts to convert the children further worried Walter, who felt that a cloud had descended between himself and his wife. After Joyce’s conversion and confinement in a convent, Lucy again failed to inform Walter and the deception between them deepened. Stories such as Hocking’s had a powerful resonance in the context of real life scandals, such as the Cavalier Case, in which young Arthur Cavalier converted to Anglo-Catholicism without his evangelical father’s permission and was then kept hidden from his father by Anglo-Catholic priests. Although the story ended with Joyce’s wedded bliss thanks to her conversion back to Protestantism, Walter’s marriage ended in shambles after Lucy moved out of his home.

Like *The Scarlet Woman*, *Woman of Babylon* acted as a critique of Catholic convents in Great Britain. While searching for Joyce after she had been taken to a convent, Ned complained to Walter that English laws made convents sealed houses since

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92 Ibid., 33.
no one had the right of entry.94 To drive home the danger of convents closed off to public inquiry, Hocking devoted most of one chapter to a discussion of English law in relation to conventual houses. Luckily, both Walter and Ned were lawyers, and Ned was an especially brilliant barrister; so they were well-equipped to lead the readers through such a complex topic. Again, the *Woman of Babylon* was able to resonate so widely because Joyce’s “captivity” in a convent and her near loss of the Raymond family inheritance mirrored contemporary scandals, such as the sensational case of Miss Hazelwood, who had entered a convent with a fortune of £30,000. The case between the Hazelwoods and the convent was eventually tried before the Master of Rolls on June 5, 1899.95 Finally, also like *The Scarlet Woman, The Woman of Babylon* ended with only a muted victory for Protestantism: One couple was happily married, but another happy marriage was ruined. By depriving readers of a complete victory for Protestantism, Hocking called attention to the dangerous times in which his readers lived, aiming to spur them on to action in their real lives. It is also worth noting that the titles -- *The Scarlet Woman, The Purple Robe, and The Woman of Babylon* -- all derive from the imagery of the Biblical book of Revelation. In chapter 17 St. John records:

> So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with

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the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.\textsuperscript{96}

Most Protestants of Hocking’s day interpreted the Woman of Babylon, who was robed in scarlet and purple and drunk with the blood of the saints, as the Roman Catholic Church.

*The Woman of Babylon* proved to be successful, especially among Protestants.

Lady Wimborne thought the novel was “likely to have a very useful influence in arousing people to see the insidious manner in which Roman Catholics effect an entry into English home life. Anything that can be done in this direction is of the utmost value.”\textsuperscript{97}

Nonconformist leader John Clifford wrote that

I have read *The Woman of Babylon* with deepest interest, and have taken, and shall take, every opportunity of commending it to the young people of this country. It is a story of thrilling interest. It is most opportune in its appearance. It comes at a moment of critical peril in the political and social life of our land. It is as strongly to be commended for its scrupulous accuracy and complete restraint, as for its clearness of statement and skill of development. It ought to circulate by hundreds of thousands.\textsuperscript{98}

Not surprisingly, S. J. Abbott, the president of the Conventual Enquiry Society also endorsed the novel, but even moderate figures such as Prebendary H. W. Webb-Peploe thanked Hocking for exposing the dangers that beset England as a result of Catholicism.\textsuperscript{99}

In his critique of Hocking’s work, Britten warned his readers that Catholics ought to know something of the “falsehoods” circulating with the approval of “leading Nonconformists and such Anglicans as Lady Wimborne,” and “which are put forward as ‘of the highest value’ by a respectable firm of publishers” and “commended by the

\textsuperscript{96} Revelation 17:3-6 (King James Version). Most Protestants would have used the King James Version, while most Roman Catholics would have used the Douay-Rheims Version. See William Wileman, *Fall of Babylon: God’s Call to His People: A Lecture* (London: William Wileman, 1899) for an example of an anti-Catholic interpretation of Revelation.

\textsuperscript{97} Qtd. in Britten, “The Scarlet Woman,” 3-4. Britten is quoting from the publisher’s advertisement.

\textsuperscript{98} Qtd. in Britten, “The Woman of Babylon,” 1.

\textsuperscript{99} Britten, “The Woman of Babylon,” 2, 3; and *Quiver* (April 1906): 528.
Protestant press and other organs." The Catholic Truth Society’s concern demonstrated the high circulation and perceived influence of Hocking’s novels on the public.

After 1906 the Great Church Crisis slowly abated as the report of the Royal Commission was released, new alliances formed around the 1906 Education Bill, and as both Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals began to see liberal Modernist clergymen as their true enemies. Nevertheless, the passions of many remained inflamed and Hocking, among others, continued to produce Protestant pulp fiction. In 1908 he published *The Soul of Dominic Wildthorne*, which told the none-too-subtle tale of the advanced Anglo-Catholic priest Dominic Wildthorne. Wildthorne joined the monastic Community of the Incarnation at Meremeadows, a barely-concealed reference to the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield. Later, Wildthorne made a trip to Rome. Like Duncan Rutland and Alizon Neville, after visiting the Eternal City in person Wildthorne realized that Catholicism was built upon lies. But unlike Rutland and Neville, who had Protestantism to fall back upon, Wildthorne became an agnostic. Although Hocking was probably unaware of it, the American author Harold Frederic had already published a similar novel detailing a Catholicism-induced fall from grace entitled *The Damnation of Theron Ware* (1896). In any case, Britten called Hocking’s novel “A School for Slander” and wondered why the Community of the Resurrection had failed to prosecute Hocking.

Two years later Hocking produced his topical novel *The Jesuit*. Again, the story involved a plucky young Protestant hero, an incipient romance, a harrowing escape from

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a convent, and the diabolical machinations of the Jesuit order. At the beginning of the novel Protestant MP Kerry Trevanion Killigrew declared his intention to rid Roman Catholics of all political disabilities, including the elimination of the monarch’s Declaration against Transubstantiation, which would open the throne to Roman Catholics. Moreover, Killigrew was in love with the beautiful Catholic Kathleen Castlereagh and even considering conversion himself. Although warned by the old Protestant Morton Gascoigne, that “…the alteration of the King’s Declaration is but a stepping-stone to the Romanists’ real desires. They desire the destruction of the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement,” Killigrew nevertheless remained firm in his seemingly tolerant convictions.103 Little did Killigrew realize, however, that behind the scenes he was being manipulated by the Jesuit mastermind Simon Maynooth (Anthony Ritzoom perhaps having passed on to glory by 1910.)104

Eventually though, Killigrew overheard Maynooth give a speech at a secret Jesuit meeting. According to Maynooth the Church’s one goal was to make Catholicism supreme in Britain. “For that we labour night and day. To that end we are prepared to sacrifice everything, to do anything, to be anything, to suffer anything.” Maynooth crowed that Catholics were taking advantage of misguided Protestant notions of freedom of religion and toleration. “Of course,” he told his audience of Jesuits, we know how pernicious the doctrine of religious liberty is. We have encouraged it here in England, where we are in a minority, but where we have had power we have not allowed it. We could not allow it. It would violate the very genius of our faith…. Thus, when we gain power in England we must ruthlessly destroy this poisonous fungus of so-called religious toleration and religious liberty. The Church must be supreme in every department of life. 105

104 It is worth noting Hocking’s obvious reference to the Maynooth episode of 1845 in his villain’s name. 
105 Hocking, The Jesuit, 226-229.
In order to achieve this goal, the Jesuits hoped to place “a Catholic King, subservient to, obedient to, and taking his orders from Rome” upon the British throne. Indeed, Maynooth’s goal was nearly accomplished since Catholicism had almost become fashionable in Britain and assertive Protestants were seen as bigots.106

After overhearing Maynooth Killigrew finally realized that there was a great difference between individual Catholics and the Church as an organization. “The former might be a saint, but the latter was a huge organisation opposed to the advancing liberties of the nation.”107 Meanwhile, Killigrew discovered that Kathleen’s pious father had “consign[ed] her to the living death of a nunnery.”108 But in the end, Killigrew saved Kathleen and learned an important lesson. When Maynooth asked him why he had changed his mind about abolishing the King’s Declaration, he replied that “If the King of England were a Romanist, he would be in submission to Rome, … he would have to vow allegiance to Rome; he would have to take his orders from Rome; and as an Englishman I could never labour to make it possible for England’s King to take his orders from an Italian priest. I am a patriot.”109

The Jesuit was an especially topical work since Parliament debated altering the King’s Declaration in 1901 and 1910. The issue aroused both Protestant and Catholic passions inside and outside of Parliament. Although the move to alter or abolish the Declaration failed in 1901, the time was right in 1910 when the Declaration was changed from

106 Ibid.
107 Ibid., 241.
108 Ibid., 300.
109 Ibid., 327-328.
I do solemnly and sincerely, in the presence of God, profess, testify, and declare that I do believe that in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper there is not any transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, at or after the consecration therefore by any person whatsoever; and that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary, or any other Saint, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, as they are now used in the Church of Rome, are superstitious and idolatrous….

to “I am a faithful Protestant” due to pressure from Anglo-Catholic and Irish MPs.

Despite the immediacy of the book’s topic, The Jesuit remained popular enough to go through several reprints “well into the latter half of the twentieth century.”110

Joseph Hocking’s works, then, demonstrated the existence of a sizeable market for Protestant pulp fiction. In fact, his circulation was large enough that it almost certainly extended beyond the radical core of political Protestantism. If popular literature acts as a mirror, then Hocking’s works illustrate widespread concern over the spread of Catholicism. Moreover, if Hocking was in any measure successful, his works not only met the demand of an anxious Protestant market, but also helped to create and feed those very anxieties. The trenchant critiques of the Jesuit Joseph Keating and Catholic Truth Society President James Britten indicate that the Catholic intelligentsia took Hocking’s potential to influence the masses very seriously indeed.

- **Victorian English Catholic Fiction**

Since England was a predominantly Protestant nation, it produced more Protestant than Catholic-oriented fiction. This was especially true since Anglo and Roman Catholic writers tended to focus more on the production of devotional materials than fiction. Nevertheless, several mid-century authors did attempt to combat Protestant calumnies and spread their faith through fiction. Charlotte Mary Yonge (b. 1823) was probably the most well-known Victorian Anglo-Catholic novelist, completing over two hundred

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110 Kent, *Pulp Methodism*, 120.
written works before her death in 1901. Yonge’s most popular novel, The Heir of Redclyffe (1853) illustrated Tractarian theology through the transformation of the young and impetuous Guy Morville into a saintly hero. The work influenced the artists William Morris and Dante Gabriel Rosetti, and Charlotte’s brother Julian told her that “nearly all the young men in his regiment had a copy.” After Yonge’s death, the Anglo-Catholic magazine eulogized her by saying that her works had translated the Oxford Movement into ordinary life.

Even the evangelical Rock argued that

…it is impossible to estimate the value to the community of such work as Charlotte Yonge did. Fiction for girls and young people has, unhappily, degenerated a good deal in character of late, and is not likely to improve until its authors are moved by the same serious convictions which penetrated the characters of Charlotte Yonge, Emma Marshall, and Emily Holt.

In short, Yonge’s vast output and popularity made her the nineteenth-century Tractarian and Ritualist movement’s “most important lay voice as well as its most comprehensive chronicler.”

Of course, there were other explicitly Anglo-Catholic authors besides Yonge, such as Lady Georgiana Fullerton, who attempted to combat the negative Protestant image of auricular confession. Her 1844 novel Ellen Middleton made auricular confession central to the salvation of Ellen’s family. Only by unburdening herself through confession was Ellen able to draw her family closer together after past sins had threatened to tear them apart. Ellen Middleton went into a second edition within a year.

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111 Qtd. in Elisabeth Jay, “Yonge, Charlotte Mary,” ODNB.
113 The Record, 29 March 1901, p. 317.
114 Jay, “Yonge, Charlotte Mary.”
and was translated into French the following year. But in terms of influence, probably no Anglo-Catholic novel could top Joseph Henry Shorthouse’s *John Inglesant* (1880). Shorthouse caught the late-Victorians’ hunger for romance and chivalry with his tale of a knight who forgave his brother’s murderer. In their writings, converts to both Anglo and Roman Catholicism mentioned the influence of *John Inglesant* with surprising frequency.  

Although *John Inglesant* became highly influential and other late-Victorian Catholics attempted to write novels portraying their faith in a positive light, Protestants maintained their dominance over the genre. Victorian Catholic authors had more conspicuous success in other areas, such as poetry. When poet Francis Thompson published his *New Poems* in 1897 the reviews were so enthusiastic that Protestants “accused Thompson of being ‘deliberately put forward by the Catholic intelligentsia.’”

The *New Poems* were dedicated to the Catholic convert poet Coventry Patmore and featured such works as “Orient Ode,” which described creation celebrating the coming of God into its midst through the Eucharist. While poets such as Thompson and his Decadent friends sparked Protestant outrage, the journalist Cyril Ranger-Gull was just embarking on his career as a novelist.

• **Guy Thorne**

Through the efforts of authors such as the Hocking brothers, Protestants held a virtual monopoly over the genre of popular pulp fiction and novels. Realizing this, Anglo-Catholic author and journalist Guy Thorne set out to rectify matters. Thorne was

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117 Qtd. in Wheeler, *The Old Enemies*, 290.
born as Arthur Edward Ranger Gull in 1875 in Lancashire to Rev. Joseph Edward Gull and Jessie Ranger. Arthur briefly attended Oxford, but left within a year to try his hand at journalism. He moved to London, took the first name Cyril, and became a staff member of The Saturday Review, and later a writer for The Echo, The Bookman, The Academy, and London Life. He also worked as a staff member for The Daily Mail and Society. Despite living in London, Gull loved the countryside, was an avid sportsman, and wrote for hunting and fowling publications, serving as the Vice President of the Wild Fowlers’ Association of Great Britain and Ireland.118

Caroline Zilboorg, the author of Gull’s entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, wrote that her subject was “…a serious drinker and convivial man about town….” Gull “was popular on Fleet Street and the Strand, and made a number of friends among the circle of bohemian artists and writers encouraged by the publisher Leonard Smithers….”119 Members of Gull’s “bohemian” circle included the Decadent Catholic converts Aubrey Beardsley and Ernest Dowson. The Anglo and later Roman Catholic author Compton MacKenzie was also a friend of Gull’s and remembered that he “made a habit of concealing bottles of whisky all over the moors so that on country walks he could boast he was never more than a quarter of a mile from refreshment.”120 Gull’s neighbor Richard Aldington similarly described Gull as “a tubby little bon vivant who never refused a double whisky.”121 Gull’s colorful personality and his friendship with numerous writers led to his appearance as an “identifiable character in fiction by his

118 Caroline Zilboorg, “Gull, Cyril Arthur Edward Ranger,” ODNB.
119 Ibid.
friends,” perhaps most notably in R. G. Bacchus’s erotic novel The Confessions of
Nemesis Hunt (1902-6).122 In 1898 Gull published his first novel, The Hypocrite. His
first major success, however, did not come until 1903 with the publication of the
bestseller When It Was Dark under the pseudonym Guy Thorne. Zilboorg has argued that
“Apparently Gull assumed his pseudonym in this work for at least a double purpose: to
mask, for a wide readership, the racy young cynic that indeed he was, and simultaneously
to give him the freedom to explore conservative Christian ideas rooted in his vicarage
upbringing.”123 Over the course of his life Gull published more than fifty books, some
under his own name and some as Guy Thorne, and earned himself an entry in Who’s Who.

The common portrait of Gull as a bohemian bon vivant is correct, but incomplete.
It is doubtful, as Zilboorg asserted, that Gull assumed the pseudonym Guy Thorne to
either mask the fact that he was “a racy young cynic” or to “give freedom to explore
conservative Christian ideas rooted in his upbringing.” In fact, Gull was equally open
and enthusiastic about both enjoying the good things of life and his faith as a sincere
Anglo-Catholic. This is not a contradiction, although Aldington apparently had expected
Gull to be more serious as a result of “the strong moral line he took in print.”124 As we
have seen in Chapter 1, many Britons embraced Anglo Catholicism precisely because
they believed its incarnational theology and sacramentalism embraced the joys of
enfleshed existence more fully than many evangelical churches did. Moreover, “racy
young” intellectuals and artists like Gull often embraced Anglo and Roman Catholicism
since the religions stood outside of and challenged popular notions of respectability. The

123 Ibid.
philosophy of many Anglo-Catholics like Gull could be summarized in the Biblical verse “the joy of the LORD is your strength.”\(^\text{125}\)

It is more likely that Gull, who had already adopted the name Cyril upon embarking on a career in journalism, picked up the name Guy Thorne as part of his effort to launch a new career as a novelist after 1898. After his major success with _When It Was Dark_, Gull was known to readers almost exclusively as Guy Thorne and therefore continued to use the name. Nevertheless, Gull did not publish his sequel to _When It Was Dark_ under his pseudonym, demonstrating that he was not afraid to associate himself with the “conservative ideas” of _When It Was Dark_.

In 1907 Gull, now Thorne, published a collection of essays entitled “*I Believe*” and Other Essays, each of which had already been published in _The Daily Mail_ some time earlier. In his essay “An Author’s Post-Bag,” he noted that he wrote specifically as a Christian.\(^\text{126}\) Thorne, however, wrote not merely as a Christian, but also as a Catholic. He heaped scorn upon bishops who seemed to compromise the historic and authentic Catholic Faith of the Church of England, writing that for the sake of popularity they hid the Athanasian Creed in an appendix to the Prayer Book.\(^\text{127}\) Thorne was no supporter of ecumenicalism. His works consistently championed an Anglo-Catholic conception of the Church of England according to the Branch Theory.

Like many Catholics of his day, Thorne argued that Biblical higher criticism had undermined Protestantism but strengthened the position of Catholicism: “And in the

\(^{125}\) Nehemiah 8:10 (King James Version).


result a scientific criticism of the Old and New Testament is found to be compatible with, and often a compulsion to an acceptance of the Christian creed, not the creed of Calvin, or the Westminster Confession, but the reasoned statement of Nicæa.”

Continuing this line of thought, Thorne further argued that far from disproving Christianity, the new physics of the turn of the century actually supported the supernatural doctrines of Catholicism. After all, Thorne contended that the “student of physical science” now realized that the sacramental “union of the spiritual with the material” was “in accordance with the laws of the Universe.” He concluded that “In England, at any rate, the Church is not bound down to any mechanical theory of the inspiration of the Bible, and accepts all the discoveries of Modern Physical Science without misgiving…” Moreover, Thorne argued, as did most of his contemporaries, that the world’s moral order depended upon the divine revelation of Christianity. Referring to the 1906 Education Bill, he argued that if people studied ethics rather than theology then “there arises a prospect of anarchy and disorder” because “the experience of all civilization is that you cannot separate morality from religion.”

Finally, respect for women and marriage being held in honor were the direct creation of the Catholic Church and its incarnational theology.

Thorne believed that as a writer of fiction, it was his duty to use his medium to instruct others in the Catholic Faith. After all, “Mr. Gladstone sat up all night to finish John Inglesant.” Fiction and especially novels were influential forces, and Thorne aimed to harness their power for the good of the Catholic Church.

128 Ibid., 17.
129 Ibid., 17-19.
130 Ibid., 26, 27.
131 Ibid., 22, 23.
132 Ibid., 28.
133 Ibid., 34-35.
134 Ibid., 34-35ff.
From the Book Beautiful (1908), which attempted to retell Biblical stories, Thorne wrote that “since the birth of our Lord, Art has changed in its relations to human life.” It “is necessary to culture, and culture is necessary in order to bring the kingdom of God in effective relation with the modern world.”\textsuperscript{135} By using his influence as a writer, Thorne hoped to bring Catholicism and modern culture closer together.

Thorne found himself propelled into the position of an influential novelist after the success of When It Was Dark in 1903. The book rapidly became an Edwardian best seller, selling over 500,000 copies. Greening & Company declared it to be “the most daring and original novel of the century,”; Claud Cockburn – no friend of religion – included an analysis of it in Bestseller: The Books That Everyone Read, 1900-1939, concluding that the novel’s publishers were not exaggerating, since “When It Was Dark was one of the most significant works of the Edwardian and early Georgian eras. It was read by people who found little to excite them in the novels of the period, which have, as the saying goes, ‘lived’.”\textsuperscript{136} The novel was read by all sections of society.\textsuperscript{137} In 1905 publication of “De Profondis” caused a sensation “almost without parallel in modern times.”\textsuperscript{138} In fact, the only contemporary parallel to the excitement caused by “De Profondis” was the craze surrounding “a very different production called ‘When it was Dark,’ an over-rated sensational novel by a Mr ‘Guy Thorne’…”\textsuperscript{139} Ingleby may have seen When It Was

\textsuperscript{135} Guy Thorne, From The Book Beautiful Being Some Old Lights Relit (London: Greening & Co., Ltd., 1908), viii.
\textsuperscript{136} Cockburn, Bestseller, 19.
\textsuperscript{137} The first copy I was able to read was a part of Hilaire Belloc’s personal library, which is housed at Burns Library, Boston College.
\textsuperscript{138} Leonard Cresswell Ingleby, Oscar Wilde (London: T. Werner Laurie, Ltd., 1907), 362.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 363.
Dark as over-rated, but he nevertheless acknowledged the sensation it caused among the reading public.

The basic plot of *When It Was Dark* ran as follows: Rev. Ambrose Byars and his curate Basil Gorte of St. Thomas parish in Walktown, Manchester discussed their mutual distain for the Unitarian Jewish multi-millionaire MP and owner of the *Daily Wire* (i.e., *The Times*) Constantine Schaube. Gorte predicted that “he [Schaube] is already, and will be in the future, the great enemy of Christianity.” Gorte was soon proven correct.

While Gorte moved to London and began work as the curate of the Ritualist priest Father Ripon at St. Mary’s, Bloomsbury, Schaube blackmailed the famous archaeologist Sir Robert Llwellyn of the Palestinian section of the British Museum into helping him destroy Christianity. On Schaube’s orders, Llwellyn forged an inscription purporting to be a confession by Joseph of Arimathea stating that he had moved the body of Christ out of the original garden tomb and to another location without telling the disciples. Llwellyn then planted the forgery in Palestine for an honest archaeologist to find.

Soon the honest and famous archaeologist Cyril Hands, who happened to be one of Gorte’s flat mates, found the inscription. Hands also worked as a correspondent for Harold Spence, a leader-writer for the *Daily Wire* and another of Gorte’s flat mates. After making the discovery, he sent news of it by letter to Spence, who quickly ran to tell his editor Ommaney that he had “…the most stupendous news any newspaper has ever published.” Spence realized the horrifying implications of his news, namely “THAT

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140 Guy Thorne, *When It Was Dark: The Story of a Great Conspiracy* (London: Stanley Paul & Co., Ltd., 1925), 21. The 1925 edition is marked as the “580th Thousand.” It is worth noting that Gorte and Byars’s daughter Helena are engaged to be married, although this plays no great role in the main plot.

141 Ibid., 163.
CHRIST NEVER ROSE FROM THE DEAD, THAT CHRISTIANITY IS ALL A LIE.\textsuperscript{142} Reeling from the gravity of the situation, Ommaney told Spence that

I hold in my hand something that will come to millions and millions of people as an utter extinction of hope and light. It’s impossible to say what will happen. Moral law will be abrogated for a time. The whole fabric of society will fall into ruin at once until it can adjust itself to the new state of things. There will be war all over the world; crime will cover England like a cloud….\textsuperscript{143}

After contacting the Prime Minister and Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany and appointing an international commission, led by Llwellyn, to verify the discovery, \textit{The Daily Wire} published the news. Ommaney’s prediction came to pass as all hell broke loose around the world. Without belief in Christianity to uphold the moral order, wars, genocide, and riots suddenly broke out on a global scale. Worst of all, men lost all sense of restraint and began raping women en masse. In England alone the number of assaults on women increased by 200%. The increase was only 8% in Ireland, excluding Ulster. Since Ireland was a Catholic country and the Pope had warned his followers to neither believe nor discuss the inscription, Irishmen retained their civilized behavior.

Meanwhile, Gorte, who had always suspected Schaube had evil intentions, set out to discover the truth behind the troublesome inscription. Gorte met Llwellyn’s mistress, the famous music-hall actress Gertrude Hunt, who was dying of a venereal disease. Wanting to do the right thing before she died, she agreed to help Gorte uncover Llwellyn’s role in the plot. At his mistress’s prodding Llwellyn confessed to the forgery and Gertrude in turn told Gorte before dying. Once the truth was known, angry crowds lynched and trampled Llwellyn and Schaube went insane before being confined to an

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 166. All caps in the original.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 167.
asylum. Once the truth of Christianity was again established moral sanity resumed and the world returned to normal.

*When It Was Dark* immediately earned rave reviews. *The Pall Mall Gazette* said “The story is as effective a piece of work as could be desired…. Mr. Thorne is always reverent, and is touched with the dignity of the amazing scenes which he has invents… We welcome his book as a real achievement in a very difficult line.”¹⁴⁴ *The Daily News* likewise praised it as being “A remarkable book” full of “finely conceived and finely delineated” characters with a plot that was “skillfully adumbrated.”¹⁴⁵ The novel also garnered praise from clergymen such as the Dean of Durham, the Bishops of Exeter, Truro, and London, and the Nonconformist leader R. J. Campbell. Bishop John Gott of Truro claimed that the book had helped him personally and wrote Thorne several letters. He also advised his candidates for ordination to read it.¹⁴⁶ Bishop Arthur Winnington-Ingram of London preached on *When It Was Dark* several times, including once at Westminster Abbey when he asked his listeners

I wonder whether any of you have read that remarkable work of fiction entitled *When It Was Dark*? It paints, in wonderful colours, what it seems to me the world would be if for six months, as in the story is supposed to be the case, owing to a gigantic fraud, the Resurrection might be supposed never to have occurred, and as you feel the darkness creeping round the world, you see how Woman in a moment loses the best friend she ever had, and crime and violence increase in every part of the world. When you see how darkness settles down upon the human spirit, regarding the Christian record as a fable, then you quit with something like adequate thanksgiving, and thank God it is light because of the awful darkness when it was dark.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Qtd. in Thorne, *From the Book Beautiful*, ii.
¹⁴⁵ Qtd. in ibid.
¹⁴⁶ Thorne, “An Author’s Post-Bag,” 308.
In a time when the historic Christian faith seemed increasingly under attack by skeptics, clergymen appreciated Thorne’s triumphant vindication of faith in the physical Resurrection of Christ.

While Thorne received many appreciative letters from important men like Gott, most of his correspondence came from ordinary men and women who were eager to share how *When It Was Dark* had touched their lives. One grateful reader from Bridgewater wrote Thorne to tell him that

> Will you please accept my best thanks for your book, *When it was Dark*. I started to read it as one distinctly prejudiced against it, but I finished the last page saying, ‘It is wonderful.’ I only wish that those who condemn it would read it for themselves and see the forcible manner in which you have depicted what the world would be if the Resurrection was a myth. Faith cannot but be strengthened by reading it, and the coming Eastertide will be more real to me through having read *When it was Dark*.148

Letters also poured in from far-away places like Brantford, Canada, San Remo, Italy, and Madras, India.149 On man living in Cilicia wrote Thorne to tell him that his novel

> stirs thousands of us, and you must feel thankful as you look round to see the success which is granted you in drawing people to ponder upon subjects of such weight. You will like to know that I have spread your book right and left in Cyprus, having obtained three copies, one of which I sent to a Judge.… Sir, what I want to do is to suggest that you should have your book translated into French and German. I lent it to a French engineer a month ago, and I feel sure it would do good in those countries.150

In fact, *When It Was Dark* was translated into French, German, and many other languages.

In all, Thorne claimed to have received “thousands of personal letters from readers about

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148 Qtd. in Thorne, “An Author’s Post-Bag,” 284. See also the letter from a “gentleman from Hull” on page 283 and the letter from a seventy-year old clergymen writing from his rectory in Brecon on page 289.

149 Ibid., 284-5, 288, 290-1.

150 Ibid., 286-287.
this one book.\textsuperscript{151} The accolades and letters Thorne received help to answer why an explicitly Catholic novel sold over a half million copies in a still largely anti-Catholic country. Although readers could not ignore the obviously Anglo-Catholic slant of the work, all Christian readers could appreciate Thorne’s defense of Nicene orthodoxy. *When It Was Dark* excited readers around the world in a way that other contemporary books, which are better known today, failed to do.

Despite the sensation caused by *When It Was Dark* in 1903, the novel’s relative obscurity today has meant that few scholars have examined the work. Of those who have, all, to the best of my knowledge, have analyzed the novel primarily in terms of its anti-Semitic portrayal of the villain Constantine Schaube. Cockburn argues that Schaube represents the first appearance of the rich Jew stereotype in early-twentieth century British fiction. This character later became the “Devil-figure” of Nazi propaganda and the *Protocol of the Elders of Zion*.\textsuperscript{152} Later scholars Colin Holmes and Gina Mitchell have disagreed with Cockburn’s reading of the Schaube character, arguing that he was similar to neither the characters of Nazi propaganda, nor the characters of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, since he worked on his own and not as part of a world-wide conspiracy.\textsuperscript{153} They also correctly noted that Thorne was a fervent Christian and that his beliefs shaped his writing, arguing that Thorne addressed the topic of national degeneration “in terms of moral and spiritual miasma caused by the denial of God.”\textsuperscript{154}

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 309.
\textsuperscript{153} Holmes and Mitchell, “*When It Was Dark*: Jews in the Literature of Guy Thorne,” 232-233.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 234.
Thus, Schaube represented the hostility between Judaism and Christianity in specific, but more generally the decline of religion in English society.

While Holmes and Mitchell were correct to focus more closely upon the religious dimensions of Thorne’s work, they were wrong in their assumption that Schaube represented spiritual and moral degeneracy as a Jew. Rather, Schaube represented spiritual degeneracy because he was a Unitarian. Neither of Thorne’s two Jewish characters in *When It Was Dark* actually practiced Judaism. Schaube renounced the faith of his ancestors to become a Unitarian, a fact repeatedly stressed by Thorne. For Anglo-Catholics like Thorne, Unitarianism was the ultimate form of Protestantism, since they believed it was merely Protestantism taken to its logical godless conclusion. Schaube “is no longer a Jew,” declared Gorte, “Judaism is nothing to him – one can reverence a Montifiore, admire an Adler.” Schaube, by contrast, knew Christ was God but rejected Him anyway. The other major Jewish character in the book, Sir Michael Manichoe, a former Conservative Home Secretary, was one of Thorne’s heroes. Sir Michael was a devout Anglo-Catholic and the wealthy patron of Fr. Ripon and St. Mary’s, Bloomsbury. Like Gorte and Ripon, Manichoe’s faith prevented him from doubting the reality of the Resurrection, even when all hope seemed lost. Schaube and Manichoe are mirror images. Both were born into Judaism, but one chose the spiritually destructive path of radical Protestantism, and the other the true faith of the Holy Catholic Church. One financed Llwellyn and his attempt to destroy Christianity, and the other

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157 Ibid., 47.
158 Ibid., 180-181.
159 Ibid., 200.
financed the efforts of Fr. Ripon and Basil Gorte to restore faith in the Resurrection. Given the character of Sir Michael Manichoe, Thorne was probably not an anti-Semite in the sense portrayed by Cockburn.

Not only Thorne’s Jewish characters, but his entire story was framed as a contest between radical Protestantism, which Thorne believed led to a denial of Christianity, and Catholicism. As even Claud Cockburn noted when discussing another bestseller, *The Garden of Allah*, that Basil Gorte was a fervent Anglo-Catholic who held not only Nonconformists, but also evangelical Anglicans in contempt. The only other denomination he seemed to respect was Roman Catholicism. Like Thorne himself, Gorte’s moderately High Church vicar in Walktown was a man conversant with the latest scientific trends. He believed that science and Biblical higher criticism strengthened the Faith.

Fr. Ripon, the advanced Ritualist vicar of St. Mary’s, also revealed Thorne’s opinions. After the publication of Hands’s “discovery,” Ripon sat down to read through the latest issue of *The Tower*, an imaginary “ultra-Protestant” weekly that could stand in for any one of several real newspapers. Addressing the “marvellous” discovery of the tomb inscription, *The Tower* gloated that the disproval of Christ’s physical Resurrection had vindicated the spiritual theology of Protestantism and destroyed the foundation of “carnal” Catholicism. According to *The Tower*, “Rome and Ritualism have received a shock which demolishes and destroys the very foundation of their sinful system. Carnal in its conception, it cannot survive.” The ultra-Protestant writer went on to say that “the great heart of Protestant England is still sound and whilst Rome and

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160 Cockburn, *Bestseller*, 43.
161 Thorne, *When It Was Dark*, 8-10.
162 Ibid., 266-267.
Ritualism are aghast as the foundation of their fabric of lies crumbled into dust, we stand sure and steadfast, rejoicing in hope.”163 Moreover, “the blasphemous [Anglo-Catholic] mimicry of the Mass will perish from amongst us,” since “no man, in England at least, will dare affirm that the flesh in which the Saviour bore our sins upon the Cross is exposed for adoration on the so-called ‘altar.’”164 In other words, denial of a physical Resurrection rendered impossible belief in Christ’s physical appearance in the Eucharistic feast. Thorne’s four pages of an imaginary article from an ultra-Protestant newspaper give historians a major clue as to how the novel was meant to be read. 1903, of course, was also the only year that a Church Discipline Bill passed its Second Reading and a year before Parliament forced Balfour to appoint a Royal Commission in order to calm the ongoing crisis. Thorne’s novel was about the dangers of spiritual degeneracy, but it was primarily about the spiritual degeneracy caused by a radical Protestantism that could deteriorate into godlessness.

I am not the only one to read When It Was Dark in this manner. Although the bishops nearly always avoided saying anything potentially divisive in their public addresses on the topic, it is striking that the novel’s biggest supporters among the Episcopacy were well-known and out-spoken Anglo-Catholics. Ordinary men and women, however, were not so hesitant to comment on the book’s clearly pro-Catholic position. Ingleby pointed out that the sensation caused by Thorne’s novel was due to the fact that it “excited the various religious parties in the Church of England to a sort of frenzy for and against” it.165 In the preface to A Lost Cause, which Thorne wrote as a

163 Ibid., 228, 229.
164 Ibid., 229.
165 Ingleby, Oscar Wilde, 363.
follow-up to *When It Was Dark* to more explicitly vindicate the Catholic position, he wrote that

After *When it was Dark* made its appearance, the writer received a great number of letters from his readers, and up to the present moment he still continues to receive them. Out of nearly two hundred communications, a large proportion are concerned not so much with the main issue of the tale, as with the controversial matters in the Church of England arising from it. The definite Catholic tone of the first book aroused, as might be expected vigorous protest, and not less vigorous commendation. The five or six Bishops – and many other dignitaries – who preached or lectured about the story avoided the controversial sides of it. But the writer has received innumerable letters form clergy and others to the following effect. It was pointed out to him that while the extreme ‘Protestant’ party was constantly employing fiction as a method of propaganda, church were almost unrepresented in this way. The Catholic Faith has been bitterly assailed over and over again in books which are well enough written, and have sufficient general interest to appeal to the man of the world, who is often indifferent to the points debated.\(^\text{166}\)

In other words, Protestant writers like Joseph Hocking had for some time been using the medium of the novel to attack Catholicism and promote Protestantism, and it was high time that Catholicism had a man who could beat them at their own game by appealing to the common man through fiction. Therefore, Thorne ought to keep writing in support of Catholicism. As the elderly priest from Brecon wrote to Thorne, “I hope you will give us many more [novels]. We want the Catholic truth placed before people in an attractive dress. We want to break down the great wall of Protestant ignorance and prejudice. Your books are doing this.”\(^\text{167}\)

Thorne was quick to answer his public’s call with the publication of *A Lost Cause* in 1905. He was explicit about his intentions when writing *A Lost Cause*, saying that at present the Catholic Church was suffering inexcusable slander at the hands of Protestants. Protestant fury was so shrill because radical Protestantism was a lost cause appealing

\(^{167}\) Qtd. in Thorne, “An Author’s Post-Bag,” 290.
only to the uneducated and noisy. In any event, Thorne had taken up the pen to give the public access to the Catholic side of the religious controversy.\textsuperscript{168} “The noisiest ‘Protestants’ are hitting the Church as hard as they can. The author has endeavoured to hit back as hard as he can – of course, in that spirit of Christian love in which the ‘Protestants’ themselves tell us these controversies are always conducted.”\textsuperscript{169}

Although Thorne claimed in his preface that his imaginary characters were not in any way meant to represent real Protestants, his tale of an opportunistic publisher turned Protestant brawler and his son was a thinly disguised portrayal of John and J. A. Kensit. Thorne’s admirer in Brecon agreed, writing that the book reminded him of Kensit and Son and Father Dolling.\textsuperscript{170} The story opened with a description of Fr. Blantyre and his Anglo-Catholic parish of St. Elwyn’s. The church contained Stations of the Cross, which the “ignorant and unimaginative” called idolatrous and Roman. Fr. Blantyre wore a flowered chasuble, celebrated the “Mass,” and lit Eucharistic candles on the altar. The congregation knelt in the stone aisle, although “any one who knelt on the uncushioned stone showed an anxiety to worship and a superstitious abasement quite unworthy of a bluff, honest British Christian; and his doing must be displeasing to a Deity Who, the objectors were persuaded was – though they did not say so in actual words – a great English God.”\textsuperscript{171} While the parishioners of St. Elwyn’s worshipped in quiet reverence, a local bye-election was being contested. The Liberal candidate had begun raising the “No-Popery!” cry, which had already led to a few attacks on St. Elwyn’s.\textsuperscript{172} During this particular service at St. Elwyn’s, Samuel Hamlyn and his son, S. Hamlyn, Junior,

\textsuperscript{168} Thorne, \textit{A Lost Cause}, 7.
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., 8.
\textsuperscript{170} Qtd. in Thorne, “An Author’s Post-Bag,” 289.
\textsuperscript{171} Thorne, \textit{A Lost Cause}, 12.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 15.
attended Mass. “Certainly no one in the church realised that in a few short weeks the fat
man with the smile would be notorious all over England, and that they were to be present
at the very first step in the career of one of the shrewdest of vulgar opportunists the
country had even know.”[173] As Fr. Blantyre elevated the Host, Hamlyn stood up and,
like John Kensit during his protest of the adoration of the crucifix at St. Ethelburga’s,
declared, “I, Samuel Hamlyn, a lawful parishioner of St. Elwyn’s parish, Hornham, do
hereby rise and protest against the illegal and blasphemous fable of the Mass as
performed in this church. And as a member of the Protestant Church of England I give
notice---.”[174] Parishioners promptly ejected Hamlyn and his cohort from the building.

The reader soon learned that the Liberal candidate, Mr. Herbert, had put the idea
into Hamlyn’s head. Hamlyn, who like Kensit owned a bookshop, told his rather dull son
that he was doing his patriotic duty by opposing Romanism.[175] Moreover, the anti-
Popery cry would help him to sell more books, and thus make more money:

    It’s a sure draw, all over England, to raise the anti-popery cry. The
wholesale trade tell me that the business done in “Foxe’s Book of
Martyrs” is a perfect knock-out year by year, and there’s a sure sale for the
smaller books about the priests larking with the girls in the confessional
and so forth. Anything with ‘Secret History’ or ‘Jesuit’ on the title page’ll
sell like the Evening News on Derby Day.[176]

This was an obvious reference to Walter Walsh’s Secret History of the Oxford Movement,
and probably also to Dawson Massy’s Secret History of Romanism. Hamlyn soon
discovered that he could make even more money by beginning a “big public movement”
and founded the Luther League (that is, the Protestant Truth Society) as an official-

173 Ibid., 20.
174 Ibid., 25.
175 Ibid., 33.
176 Ibid., 35.
sounding society to collect donations.\textsuperscript{177} Although Hamlyn was being secretly funded by Herbert, he needed more start-up money to begin the League. So he set about converting the dim-witted do-gooder Miss Pritchett to his cause.\textsuperscript{178} Hamlyn began enriching himself through the League, but, of course, he was eventually undone by Fr. Blantyre and other heroes such as the Anglo-Catholic Lord Hudderfield (that is, Lord Halifax). It is worth noting that similar rumors of financial improprieties surround John Kensit and the Protestant Truth Society to this day. According to Thorne, since radical Protestantism was based upon such vile motives as greed, it was doomed to failure as a lost cause.

Although \textit{A Lost Cause} was a predictable book featuring one-dimensional characters, it nonetheless garnered rave reviews in the context of the Church Crisis. According to the \textit{Daily Telegraph}, “‘A Lost Cause’ is decidedly clever. It is a better book, too, than that much-talked-of ‘When it was Dark.’”\textsuperscript{179} \textit{The Standard} noted the book’s polemical intent –

\begin{quote}
‘A Lost Cause’ has all the elements of a great and popular success. In the guise of fiction, we are presented with a graphic picture from the High Church point of view, of that ill-starred campaign which quite seriously disturbed the faith of many. Mr. Thorne has managed to invent his principle characters with a real and sympathetic interest, and his story is keenly interesting and vividly alive.\textsuperscript{180}
\end{quote}

– as did \textit{The Morning Leader}, writing that “This remarkable book succeeds admirably in its object – that is, in beating Protestant fiction on its own ground. This vigorous and piercing polemic will probably create as great a sensation as ‘When it was Dark,’ and be as great a success.”\textsuperscript{181} The book did indeed prove to be popular. After its first
impression on July 5, 1905, a second impression was made on July 17, a third on August 2, a fourth on August 15, a fifth on October 20, and a popular edition appeared in December 1905.

Thorne’s work as an Anglo Catholic apologist/popular novelist was soon supplemented by other early twentieth-century authors. Robert Hugh Benson can be seen in many ways as Thorne’s Roman Catholic counterpart. As we have already seen in Chapter 1, Benson was born in 1871 as the youngest son of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He admired aestheticism and moved in Decadent artistic circles both before and after his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1903. The only novel Hugh Benson wrote before his conversion was *The Light Invisible* (1903). Although Benson did not think very highly of this book after his conversion, it remained popular among Anglicans. After 1903 Benson wrote fourteen more novels, which sold so widely that biographer Janet Grayson writes that he became a “part of national consciousness” due to his “amazing popularity and success as a writer.” Although today few besides Catholic literary scholars like Joseph Pearce have any interest in Benson, during his short lifetime he was one of England’s most popular novelists.

Most of Benson’s novels were works of historical fiction, covering the same times and events as Emily Holt, but from a Catholic perspective. Like Thorne, then, Benson wrote with the explicit goal of teaching and spreading the Catholic faith. His historical novels included *By What Authority?* (1904), which detailed the Elizabethan persecution

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184 Ibid., 184; and Pearce, “R.H. Benson: Unsung Genius.”.
of Catholics and Edmund Campion’s martyrdom. *The King’s Achievement* (1905) was set during Henry VIII’s dissolution of the English monasteries. *The Queen’s Tragedy* (1906) attempted to revive the reputation of Bloody Mary by presenting her as a tragic figure. Benson’s *Come Rack! Come Rope!* (1912) was yet another description of Roman Catholic martyrdom during the reign of Elizabeth I. Like his other historical works, *Come Rack! Come Rope!* featured graphic depictions of torture, especially on the rack. Benson’s most unique work was probably his dystopia *Lord of the World* (1907), which was so bleak he later felt compelled to write the cheerier *Dawn of All* (1911). *Lord of the World* was set in London around 2000. By this time Protestantism had entirely disappeared, having dissolved into rationalism, so that only Catholicism and secular humanism remained as conflicting ideologies.

Like Guy Thorne, Hugh Benson was a major literary figure during his own lifetime, although he is largely forgotten today. Even his contemporaries recognized that he did not write great literature. According to Patrick Braybrooke, “as a novelist Benson perhaps deserved to stand higher than he is sometimes placed. He risked his literary reputation by always writing a good story! He wrote for the masses and the masses enjoyed him.”186 The masses enjoyed Thorne and Benson, who obviously wrote with polemical intent. Their stories dramatized the clash between Catholicism and (usually) Protestantism, spiritualism, or secularism. Thorne and Benson’s popularity, even among Protestants, illustrated widespread interest in religious conflict during the early years of the twentieth century.

- **Conclusion**

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The popularity of authors such as Benson, Thorne, Hocking, and Holt needs to be seen in the context of the fin-de-siècle Great Church Crisis. None of the above authors wrote great literature, yet their popularity demonstrates the existence of a sizeable market eager for their brand of polemical religious fiction. Although it is always difficult for historians to establish how literature was received, the response of both reviewers and ordinary readers demonstrates that the works of these authors were read in the context of the contemporary conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism within the Established Church and England more generally. Indeed, the melodramas of these authors resonated so well with audiences because they gave expression to the melodramatic worldview that imbued the Church Crisis and secular phenomena such as the Boer War with cosmic significance. As we have already seen in previous chapters, Protestants saw the Church Crisis as the manifestation of a more fundamental religious conflict between their own religion and Catholicism. Since the nation itself was intimately associated with Protestantism, every secular event could be read as a consequence of this war and nothing less than the fate of Britain itself was at stake. With the material and spiritual wellbeing of an entire nation at risk, the exaggerated genre of melodramatic fiction gave perhaps the most appropriate expression of British anxieties.

If works of popular literature can be said to illuminate the concerns and desires of everyday people, then fin-de-siècle pulp fiction reveals widespread and deep concern over the religious identity and fate of England. Although other turn-of-the-century anxieties are better remembered and studied today, contemporaries, as we have seen, were equally if not more concerned with religious affairs and often saw the other great questions of the day as arising from fundamental religious conflicts. Rather than fading

187 See especially Chapter 3.
from the public scene in the early twentieth century, religion continued to play in society and politics, framing British identity and the worldview of most Britons until World War II.
CHAPTER 6

William Harcourt’s Protestant Erastianism: Church and State, 1898-1900

Between 1898 and 1906 the storm of controversy over Ritualism within the Church of England hit Parliament. As historian G. I. T. Machin notes,

Ritualism became more of a Parliamentary question in the later 1890s than it had been since 1874, and remained an important political concern for several years. As a public controversy it lasted until 1928 and beyond. Parliamentary debates often dealt with Ritualism even when they were ostensibly about something else.¹

While the Church Crisis was certainly about theology, it was also about a relationship between the church and state. Should the secular state closely monitor and legislate the practices of the Church of England, which was, after all, an established church? Or, should the Church be left to work out its own affairs independent of Parliamentary control? In other words, should there be a greater separation between the church and state or not? Protestant Anglicans and Nonconformists tended to believe that as long as the Church was established and endowed, it belonged under the authority of the Parliament. They argued that this Erastian system assured the supremacy of the laity, as represented by an elected House of Commons, over the clergy, thereby preventing the return of pre-Reformation priestly tyranny.² Anglo-Catholics and their supporters, on the other hand, saw Erastianism as a violation of the Church’s spiritual independence. Why, anti-Erastians asked, should the Church be subject to the whims of politicians who were not necessarily communicant members or even Christians?

² According to Protestant politician Samuel Smith, the Protestant laity of the Church of England had no redress against their own priests “except by coming to Parliament.” See Parliamentary Debates, 8 February 1899, 66: 246-7.
Erastianism, the position on church-state relations traditionally associated with the Whig and later the Liberal Party, was by no means extinct in 1898. Rather, the Church Crisis reengendered Erastians as they attempted to pass a Church Discipline Bill designed to curb the spread of Ritualism within the Established Church. In fact, debate over a Church Discipline Bill turned into one of the major issues of the General Election of 1900. Within this debate, Sir William Harcourt emerged as a major supporter of Erastianism and a champion of the Protestant cause. This chapter and the next one explore how the consideration of religion alters the received images of William Harcourt and Arthur Balfour. When religion is moved from the margins to the center of analysis, Harcourt becomes a Protestant crusader rather than an essentially secular political pragmatist. Balfour emerges as a champion of theological moderation and the authority of the episcopacy rather than a religious skeptic indifferent to petty church squabbles.

Despite the supposed increasing marginality of religion in politics during this period, questions touching on religion remained a central concern of British politicians.

- **Disestablishment, Erastianism, and the Great Church Crisis**

  Before describing the way the Great Church Crisis played out in Parliament, it is important to note that the campaign for disestablishment and/or disendowment was caught up in the Church Crisis in complex and significant ways. Support for disestablishment cut through the usual Protestant – Catholic divide, with some Protestants, especially Nonconformists, supporting disestablishment, and some Catholics doing likewise. Anti-Ritualist Protestants who favored disestablishment usually emphasized

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3 For example, J. Guinness Rogers supported disestablishment, while John Kensit opposed it. Among the Anglo-Catholics, G. W. E. Russell supported disestablishment, while the historian G. H. F. Nye opposed it. See The Evening Argus (Brighton), 3 August 1899, p. 4; and G. H. F. Nye, letter to the editor, Church Bells, 6 January 1899, 134.
disendowment – they did not want the state of which they were citizens to support a Catholicized religion in any way. Moreover, many hoped disestablishment would allow the Church of England to rid itself of the Ritualists.4

Erastian Protestants usually supported the establishment of the church. Or, as Adrian Hastings put it, “acceptance of the Establishment principle went with Erastianism and Erastianism with an old-fashioned non-sectarian Protestantism, frequently quite bitterly anti-Roman.”5 As we shall see, Erastianism proved to be a powerful weapon against Ritualism, especially when wielded by capable politicians like William Harcourt. But despite the usual pairing of Erastianism and establishmentarianism, the two were not necessarily linked as closely as Hastings implied. One could be both an Erastian and a disestablishmentarian and this was often true of Nonconformists. Although they opposed the establishment, they strongly believed that as long as there was an established church, it ought to be governed on Erastian principles. Or, to put it another way, although many Nonconformists would have supported disestablishment in an ideal situation, they were more concerned about the growth of Roman and Anglo-Catholicism in Britain than about the church-state relationship.6 As a result, they pragmatically supported the established church during the Church Crisis because they believed a Protestant establishment could serve as a bulwark against Catholicism.

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4 See, for example, FredK. Wood, The Church of England and Ritualism (Bradford: William Byles and Sons, Printers, 1898), 23. See also A. J. Carlyle, Causes and Remedies of the Present Disorder in the Church of England (London: James Parker and Co., 1899), 19. For a more in-depth discussion of the relationship between disestablishmentarianism and anti-Ritualism, see Machin, Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869 to 1921, 223ff.


Most Anglo-Catholics, including many prominent ones, supported some form of disestablishment in order to grant the Church of England more autonomy.\(^7\) While Anglo-Catholics who supported disestablishment usually emphasized the freedom of the Church from government control, many, including Lord Halifax, wanted the Church of England to remain endowed.\(^8\) Protestants rightly pointed out that this was having your cake (state funding) and eating it too (without state control). Those Anglo-Catholics most in favor of disestablishment pointed out that if the Church was cut free from the demands of the largely Protestant Parliament, it would be free to develop in a more Catholic direction. Just as there was a strong correlation between Erastianism and establishmentarianism, so too there was a strong correlation between anti-Erastianism and disestablishmentarianism. Yet, many strongly opposed any form of disestablishment and argued that the real goal of the anti-Ritualists was to create enough agitation to force disestablishment on the country.\(^9\) They supported the Establishment, provided the Church was left free to govern its own affairs.

- **The Onset of the Great Church Crisis**

Historian Jonathan Parry has argued that “the agitation against ritualism and its supposedly Catholicising influence on the Church was at its height in the early 1870s.”\(^10\) Parry’s estimate, however, is thirty years too early. Anti-Ritualist agitation both inside and outside of Parliament did not peak until the years 1898 through 1906. The Great Church Crisis formally began with Samuel Smith and William Harcourt’s intervention in


\(^8\) *The Evening Argus* (Brighton), 3 August 1899, p. 4.


the Benefice Bill debate in the House of Commons in June of 1898. But even before the Benefice Bill came up for its first reading, anti-Ritualist and anti-Catholic sentiment was building among Protestants. Already in 1896 Samuel Smith could write that “there cannot be a doubt that it is the paramount question of the day for the English people.”

“It” in this case referred to the twin-pronged attack of Ritualism and Romanism upon Britain’s Protestant foundation. Samuel Smith was the Liberal MP for the Abercromby division of Liverpool from 1882 until 1885 and the Liberal MP for Flintshire from 1886 until 1905. Prior to serving as an MP Smith had made a name for himself in the cotton industry and as a philanthropist. He was a devout Nonconformist, having been converted as young man after hearing the cricketer William P. Lockhart preach, although he could not bring himself to believe in everlasting damnation.

Although primarily known as a champion of bimetallism and Indian reform, by the late 1890s Smith had shifted his focus from currency and Indian affairs to the encroachment of Anglo-Catholicism within the Church of England and the external threat of Roman Catholicism. As a Nonconformist, why should Smith have been concerned with a development within the Established Church? Nonconformists like Smith felt that they had not only a right, but a duty, to protect the Protestantism of the Church of England, since they believed all citizens had an equal share in the national church, even if they chose not to attend its services. Smith, along with Liberal Parliamentary Leader

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13 See *Parliamentary Debates*, 16 June 1898, 59: 469-470. Arthur Burns notes that the “willingness of Nonconformists to interfere in Anglicanism’s internal affairs also reflected changes in the way in which the Church legitimated its own claim to national authority. In the first third of the century it legitimated its established status by saying it was ‘a guarantor of the social order and providential fortune of the British state...’ ‘By 1880 churchmen increasingly spoke of the Church’s claims in terms of its organic national identity, as an emanation, guarantor, and incarnation of national character and destiny.” See Arthur Burns,
Sir William Harcourt, became one of the most vocal supporters of the creation of new anti-Ritualist legislation, which he felt was necessary to prevent the further erosion of British Protestantism. The political partnership of Smith and Harcourt is representative of the larger anti-Ritualist alliance between Nonconformists and evangelical Anglicans that coalesced in the late 1890s. The unification of Protestants both inside and outside of the Church of England around the cause of Parliamentary action against illegal Ritualism gave the movement its popular political clout.

- The Benefice Bill Debates and Aftermath: To What Extent Should Parliament Legislate Church Patronage?

On June 16, 1898 the Church Crisis, which until then had been safely confined to the church and press, finally exploded onto the scene in the House of Commons. During the debate on the Benefice Bill, which attempted to reform the Church of England’s patronage system, Samuel Smith rose to speak, arguing that it was impossible to conclude discussion without mentioning “the rapid and alarming spread of Roman Catholicism in the Church of England.”14 The actions of John Kensit, Smith contended, represented the beginning of a great religious revolution and had compelled Parliament to take action.15 “There is nothing which the English people detest more than the Confessional,” he said, because it damaged “the very root of family life.”16 Returning to a favorite theme, he reiterated that “the country has become alive to the existence of a widespread conspiracy to Romanise the Church of England. That remarkable book, ‘The Secret History of the

14 Parliamentary Debates, 16 June 1898, 59: 469.
Oxford Movement, has laid bare the conspiracy.”

Thus, in 1898 both the street-brawler John Kensit and sensationalist author Walter Walsh found themselves at least rhetorically present in Parliament.

William Harcourt spoke after Smith, agreeing that a widespread conspiracy did indeed exist to Romanize the Church of England and arguing that Ritualists who had sworn to uphold the Protestant religion, but who nonetheless practiced a form of Catholicism, should be denied a benefice on the grounds of perjury. The debate resumed on June 21, with Smith moving to amend the Benefice Bill in order to prevent priests who were disloyal to the *Book of Common Prayer* and ecclesiastical authority from obtaining a benefice. Harcourt strongly favored the amendment, having previously claimed that there existed a “conspiracy to subvert the true principles of the Church of England” Moreover, Harcourt feared that the children of Protestant parents were being corrupted in quasi-Romanist schools run by Ritualist Anglican priests.

Many members of Parliament, however, perceived the amendment as an attempt to intrude upon ecclesiastical affairs more properly left under the authority of the Episcopate. Thus, despite Harcourt’s support, Smith’s amendment failed to pass by a vote of 215 to 103. Although both parties split on the issue, the Liberal Party and its allies found themselves especially divided, with powerful figures voting on both sides of the issue: Henry Campbell-Bannerman, H. B. Haldane, Herbert Asquith, David Lloyd-George, and Cavell Williams all voted in favor of the amendment, while future party whip Herbert Gladstone, R. B. Haldane, and Liberal ally Michael Davitt opposed the

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17 Ibid., 477.
18 Ibid., 483.
19 Ibid., 484.
20 *Parliamentary Debates*, 21 June 1898, 59: 1008.
amendment.\textsuperscript{21} Liberal civil servant Edward Hamilton noted the divisive nature of the debate in his diary, recording that

William Harcourt was not given satisfaction in the House of Commons. …his latest activity in the direction of a vicious onslaught on ritualism which he is making in connection with the Benefice Bill has not given any satisfaction to his colleagues. They [his colleagues] are certainly no happier with him than they were. John Morley audibly cheers Arthur Balfour the other day when he was [denouncing?] Harcourt’s attack on the Bill.\textsuperscript{22}

Despite the potentially disruptive nature of the issue the Liberal Earl of Kimberley (John Wodehouse) raised the Ritualist question in the House of Lords during the Benefice Bill’s Second Reading on July 7.\textsuperscript{23} On July 16 Harcourt responded to the controversy by beginning to write a series of long letters to the \textit{Times} on the topic of lawlessness in the Church of England.

Why was William Harcourt, the leader of the Liberal Party, willing to devote large amounts of time to newspaper correspondence and to court conflict with both the opposition and powerful members of his own party over ecclesiastical politics? Unlike Arthur Balfour, Harcourt was not an amateur philosopher or theologian. Whereas Balfour seems to have considered giving up politics for philosophy at one point, Harcourt remained a politician first and foremost throughout his life.\textsuperscript{24} Not surprisingly then, biographers and other historians touching on Harcourt’s life have ignored the significant role of religion and religious controversy in his life. Perhaps as a result, they have largely

\textsuperscript{21} Machin, \textit{Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869-1921}, 237.
\textsuperscript{22} Diary entry, 26 June 1898, Sir Edward Hamilton papers, Add. MS 48673, f. 67.
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Parliamentary Debates}, 7 July 1898, 61: 120-123. See also Machin, \textit{Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869-1921}, 237.
\textsuperscript{24} When Balfour’s political colleagues tried to dissuade him from becoming the president of the Society for Psychical Research in 1894, he told his friend Henry Sidgwick that “I do not care a hand for my political reputation.” Qtd. in John David Root, “The Philosophical and Religious Thought of Arthur James Balfour (1848-1930),” \textit{The Journal of British Studies} 19, no. 2 (Spring 1980): 125.
failed to notice the role of Erastian Protestantism, a corollary of Whig politics, in Harcourt’s political life.

**Harcourt in History**

Although it was published in 1923, A. G. Gardiner’s two-volume biography of Harcourt remains the benchmark work in the field. Even current Harcourt scholar Patrick Jackson acknowledged his debt to this octogenarian work in his 2004 biography *Harcourt and Son*. Befitting its two volumes and 1,196 pages, Gardiner’s biography covers Harcourt’s entire political life in great detail. Nevertheless, Gardiner devotes only eight pages to Harcourt’s Protestantism and role in the Ritualist crisis, regarding Harcourt’s participation in the Church Crisis as a “break in the narrative of events.” As a result, anti-Ritualism did “not belong to the main current of Harcourt’s public life.”

Like other historians, Gardiner mistakenly limits the Church Crisis to the years 1898 through 1900. In fact, vigorous Parliamentary debates continued until at least 1904 when the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline was appointed. Although Harcourt died in 1904, he was still speaking in Parliament on the subject in 1903.

Strangely for such a major political figure, William Harcourt has received relatively little scholarly attention. Following Gardiner’s official biography, the next scholarly monograph to touch on Harcourt was Peter Stansky’s *Ambitions and Strategies: The Struggle for the Leadership of the Liberal Party in the 1890s*, which was published in

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28 Ibid., 480.
29 *Parliamentary Debates*, 13 March 1903, 119: 775-786, 794.
Stansky devoted a paragraph to Harcourt’s participation in the Church Crisis in conjunction with his role in the Benefice Bill debates of 1898. Like Gardiner, Stansky saw the episode as an interlude occurring while “Harcourt was in the middle of party struggles over the South African crisis….” Stansky concluded that “The attack on the Bishops reflected Harcourt’s idea of himself as an eighteenth century Whig, but had no effect, apart from consuming time and energy, on other aspects of his political behavior; certainly it did not improve his battered position” within the Liberal party.

The next major scholarly work to directly focus on Harcourt was not published until 1996 when Martin Daunton’s essay, “The Political Economy of Death Duties: Harcourt’s Budget of 1894,” appeared. One hundred years after Harcourt’s death, however, Patrick Jackson finally produced another scholarly biography of Harcourt. Like Harcourt’s other biographers, Jackson devotes few pages to the Ritualist crisis, and he separates the Ritualist crisis from the main narrative of Harcourt’s career, writing that when “forced to refrain from normal political activity during the latter part of 1898, Harcourt avoided stagnation by joining enthusiastically in a campaign against the spread of ritualist forms of service in the church of England.” Again, Jackson limits the Church Crisis to the years 1898 to 1900. Yet, there are slight inconsistencies in Jackson’s account. For example, why would Harcourt participate so “enthusiastically” in the campaign if it was merely a detour from his “normal political activity,” an attempt to

33 Jackson, *Harcourt and Son*, 291.
34 Ibid., 293.
avoid “stagnation”? When describing Harcourt’s central role in the passing of the Public Worship Regulation Act (PWRA) in 1874 during an earlier Ritualist crisis, Jackson writes that “[f]or the next twenty-five years Harcourt fought an unrelenting battle on these issues, culminating in an extended newspaper campaign in 1898-1899.”35 How could Harcourt’s involvement in the Church Crisis in 1898 be a detour from his normal activity if, as Jackson notes, Harcourt had “fought an unrelenting battle” on the issue of Ritualism for twenty-five years?

- **Anti-Ritualism in the Context of Harcourt’s Erastianism and Liberalism**

  Contrary to the assumptions of Gardiner, Stansky, Jackson and others, Harcourt’s involvement in the Church Crisis was not a detour from his normal political activity. Rather, as Jackson writes, it was the culmination of a decades-long battle against Ritualists within the established church. Harcourt’s public battle against Ritualism began when the steady growth of Catholic ceremonial within the Church of England had led Archbishop Archibald Tait of Canterbury and Conservative Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli to introduce the Public Worship Regulation Act (PWRA) into the Commons in 1874 as a non-party measure.

  The fact that an Archbishop and Tory Prime Minister would push through an Erastian measure is counter-intuitive at first glance. As we have seen, Erastianism was traditionally associated with the Whigs and later the Liberals. The Tories, on the other hand, were already associated with Church interests in the early-nineteenth century and by mid-century often supported Tractarianism.36 But by 1874 the Liberal Party was led by a former Tory who was also a committed Anglo-Catholic and the Conservative Party

35 Ibid., 54-55.
was led by a pragmatic opportunist. Moreover, Archbishop Tait was more concerned with preserving the Protestantism of the established church than with the intricacies of church-state relations. In any case, the PWRA was different than the Church Discipline Bills of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century in that it attempted to eliminate Ritualism by giving more authority to the bishops. According to Disraeli, the intent of the Bill was “to put down Ritualism” by giving bishops more power to prosecute priests acting at variance to ecclesiastical law.37 Thus, supporters of the PWRA were able to disarm many of the anti-Erastian arguments. As a result of these convergences, Disraeli realized that by supporting the PWRA he could please Tait and the staunchly Protestant Queen, appease the largely anti-Catholic electorate, and divide Gladstone from the rest of the Erastian Protestant Liberal party.38

The PWRA wound up dividing both political parties. Within the Conservative Party, for example, Lord Salisbury, a High Churchman, opposed the Bill. But, as Disraeli had hoped, the most vehement falling out occurred within the Liberal Party when Harcourt’s vigorous support of the Bill drew William Gladstone out of his temporary retirement. Gladstone, a devout High Churchman, saw the Bill as an unwarranted attack on the Church’s rights.39 Gardiner correctly notes that Gladstone saw the Church as a divine fellowship that existed independently to the state and therefore could not submit itself to the state.40 Thus, Gladstone’s views were the polar opposite of Harcourt’s, who, as a staunch Whig Erastian, saw the established church as the creation of the state and

38 Parry, The Politics of Patriotism, 318.
therefore subject to state control. As Gardiner aptly put it, “the Church was to [Harcourt] the parliamentary state Church; to Gladstone it was the mystical body of Christ.”

Harcourt’s and Gladstone’s different views of the Church of England led to a titanic clash in and out of Parliament. As an unabashed Protestant Erastian, Harcourt despised Ritualist priests – state employees to Harcourt – who broke ecclesiastical law by introducing Catholic rituals into the established Church. In 1874 Harcourt’s arguments of 1898 made their first appearance: that priests who desired the privileges of establishment had the obligation to adhere to the laws of that establishment. The Church was a creation of Parliament, subject to Parliamentary control, and the bishops were required to enforce the ecclesiastical law as laid down by Parliament. Harcourt dove into the study of ecclesiastical law and history as a result of his argument with Gladstone. In July of 1874 he wrote five long letters to the Times outlining the “Protestant” position in support of the PWRA. In one letter Harcourt complained that the opposite of his Erastianism was Ultramontanism, which no good Protestant could support. His rigorously argued Times letters of 1874 set the precedent for his even more famous anti-Ritualist letters of 1898-99. Of course, most of Harcourt’s activity in support of the PWRA occurred in Parliament, where he intervened thirty-six times over the course of the bill’s progress. Gardiner noted that the debates surrounding the passage of the PWRA were important to Harcourt’s career because they led to conflict with Gladstone

41 Ibid., 275. Gardiner probably did not know how correct he was regarding Gladstone’s views. In his Eucharistic hymn included in the High Church English Hymnal, Gladstone writes, “We, who with one blest food are fed,/ Into one body may we grow,/ And one pure life from thee, the Head/ Informing all the members flow;/ One pulse be felt in every vein,/ One law of pleasure and of pain.” See W. E. Gladstone, “We Who With One Blessed Food,” The English Hymnal with Tunes, Ralph Vaughan Williams, musical ed. (Oxford: University Press, 1906), 454.
42 Jackson, Harcourt and Son, 54.
43 Ibid., 55.
44 Gardiner, William Harcourt, vol 1, 275.
45 Jackson, Harcourt and Son, 55.
and nearly created a break between the two.\textsuperscript{46} After the eventual passage of the PWRA, Harcourt claimed that it was “the largest business which has occupied Parliament…in my life time…a greater question than Free Trade.”\textsuperscript{47} But the question of Ritualism in the church was far from resolved since the PWRA permitted bishops to veto prosecutions and since the public came to see jailed Anglo-Catholic priests as martyred prisoners of conscience, creating a wave of sympathy for Anglo-Catholicism. As Jackson states, the PWRA was only the beginning of Harcourt’s quarter century-long battle against Ritualism and ecclesiastical law-breaking.\textsuperscript{48}

While Harcourt continued to be a staunch opponent of Ritualism after 1874, he remained relatively quiet on the subject until he burst onto the scene again in 1898. Why did Harcourt remain quiet on the issue after 1874? And why did he speak out again in 1898? Following the passage of the PWRA Protestant furor against Ritualists shifted from Parliament, where Protestants had won an important victory, to the courts where they tried to implement the PWRA by prosecuting several Ritualist priests. Additionally, Harcourt’s violent falling out with Gladstone had threatened Liberal unity. Moreover, constant opposition from Gladstone would have severely hindered Harcourt’s political career. Although as a Protestant Anglican Harcourt felt sincerely and strongly about the issues surrounding the Ritualist crisis, he was never a political faddist. In other words, he never let his political career be dominated entirely by one issue, including anti-Ritualism.

By 1898, however, the situation had changed. First, the PWRA had demonstrably failed to end Ritualism. The Church Association’s protracted prosecution of saintly Bishop Edward King of Lincoln between 1888 and 1892 turned into a public relations

\textsuperscript{46} Gardiner, \textit{William Harcourt}, vol. 1, 271.
\textsuperscript{47} Qtd in Jackson, \textit{Harcourt and Son}, 56.
\textsuperscript{48} See ibid., 55.
nightmare, and most Protestants consequently abandoned the policy of prosecution and imprisonment.\(^49\) Adding to the failure of the PWRA was the fact that the bishops’ veto made it difficult for Protestants to prosecute more than a handful of Ritualists, since bishops were often sympathetic toward their hard-working Ritualist priests. Thus, anti-Ritualism was at a low ebb until the publication of Walter Walsh’s 1897 bestselling *Secret History of the Oxford Movement* energized Protestants. In early 1898 Protestant bookseller John Kensit’s well-publicized protests against Ritualism even more forcefully brought the issue to the forefront of the public, and political, mind.

Yet, action would have remained difficult for Harcourt had his old leader and opponent, William Gladstone, not also died in 1898. Although Jackson discounts the theory that Harcourt tactfully waited for Gladstone’s death before commencing on an anti-Ritualist campaign – he notes that tact was never Harcourt’s strong point – it is likely that Gladstone’s death provided Harcourt with the opportunity for action.\(^50\) While Harcourt may not have been a tactful man, he was an experienced politician and knew when the time was right. Harcourt’s contemporaries, such as critic G. E. Russell, argued that with Gladstone dead, Harcourt was free to resume his attack on Ritualism with comparative safety.\(^51\) After Harcourt’s death Russell wrote that “on the subject of Ritualism he kept silence, yea even from good words, though it was pain and grief unto


him, until Mr. Gladstone was safely laid in Westminster Abbey.” In any case, Harcourt exploded back onto the anti-Ritualist scene in 1898.

Harcourt quickly became so deeply involved in the Church Crisis that contemporaries began referring to him as the third member of a trinity of anti-Ritualist activists including Kensit and Walsh. According to the Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine, “the calculated violence of Mr. Kensit, the revelations of Mr. Walsh’s ‘Secret History,’ the letters of Sir William Harcourt, and the protracted correspondence in the columns of the Times have precipitated what has not improperly been called a crisis in the Established Church.” Harcourt’s anti-Ritualist opponents, and even those who attempted to remain neutral on the issue, saw him as the most prominent – or at least the most respectable – spokesman or representative of the so-called Protestant Party. One anonymous author argued that Harcourt had essentially become an English Protestant Pope, while Punch portrayed Harcourt as Parliament’s chief Protestant voice.54

54 The author of “The Fight at Dame Europa’s School,” “Bombastes Religioso or The Protestant Pope of 1899” (London: Simpkin Marshall Hamilton Kent & Co Limited, 1899), 10-11; and “Harcourt’s Pastoral,” Punch, 8 February 1899, p. 67. See Figure 1.
Despite the reservations of some of his colleges, Harcourt was quite earnest in his anti-Ritualism. As we have seen, his beliefs were long-standing and his actions in 1898 were merely an encore of 1874. Harcourt’s anti-Ritualist position was no political aberration; rather, it was of one piece with his Liberalism and Protestant Erastianism. As a Liberal, Harcourt supported gradual progress towards a more democratic polity in order
to give greater expression to the voice of the people. He saw the anti-Ritualist movement as a means to that end, because “it was through the popular voice that Ritualism would be overthrown.” In other words, anti-Ritualism would strengthen the popular voice. For Harcourt, the institution that best represented that voice was Parliament, and specifically the House of Commons. He characterized the history of Parliament as the history of the people’s resistance against executive tyranny and as a result believed Parliament was the “most authentic expression of the English spirit.” Like the executive branch of government, the priesthood had a natural tendency towards authoritarianism. It too needed to be checked by the popular voice as expressed in Parliament.

As Jonathan Parry has recently argued, the mid-century Liberal Party expended great energy to portray itself as the party of patriotism as well as the party of the people. One of the major themes of nineteenth-century elite politics was an attempt to portray Britain as constitutional, law-abiding, inclusive, humanitarian, and independent. Liberal Party policy was judged by how well it promoted the purity and potency of Britishness both at home and abroad. Judged by these standards, anti-Ritualism dovetailed nicely with the rhetoric of patriotic Liberalism. Ritualists were seen as law-breakers who despised the constitutional relationship between church and state. Therefore, opposition to Ritualism became support of the ancient constitution and law and order. As Harcourt put it to Randall Davidson, “I confess I am getting rather sick of the ‘good and earnest

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58 Ibid., 1-2, 4, 14.
men’ who violate the law and break their oaths.”  For Harcourt and other Liberals, lawlessness was simply incompatible with Britishness.

Protestants also traditionally associated Catholicism with narrowness and exclusivity. “Priest-craft” was seen as enslaving and degrading to the human spirit. Ritualism sapped the spiritual independence of the laity. Worse yet, Romanizing clergy looked to the Pope in Rome – an Italian priest! – for guidance in spiritual matters, thereby making the national Church dependent on a foreign power. Thus, opposition to the “Romanizing” of the Church of England aimed to preserve its broad and inclusive character; for its proponents, anti-Ritualism was a humanitarian movement. Parry has argued that because the Erastian Reformation Settlement replaced dependence on a foreign Papacy with national independence, Whigs and Liberals believed it “was one of the greatest symbols of English political culture.”  Opposition to Ritualism therefore supported a spiritually and politically independent British Empire. When he was supporting the PWRA in 1874, for example, Harcourt had argued that the Bill would enable Parliament to protect the nation against Romish innovations and would allow the nation to publicly oppose Roman Catholic interest throughout Europe. Harcourt’s belief that anti-Ritualism was part and parcel with a patriotic Liberalism had not changed by 1898.

As a Liberal, Harcourt was committed to a vision of religious liberty and toleration that at first glance seems at odds with his passionate support of a Church Discipline Bill. Harcourt, however, felt that his position had nothing whatsoever to do

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61 Ibid., 318.
with anti-Catholicism. As he put it in a speech at Tredegar in October 1900, he was not attacking the faith of Roman Catholics, only the illegal practices of Anglo-Catholics within what was legally a “Reformed” and established church body. Harcourt told the crowd that he

would be a very bad Liberal if he attacked the faith of any creed. (Hear, hear.) Every person had a right to his own faith – (Hear, hear) – and no man had a right to attack the creed of other people; he had never done so, and he never would do so. (Cheers.) But what he did say was this. When a man professed to be a clergyman of the Protestant Church and took money and the station of the Church and did not adhere to the doctrines of the Protestant Church, but adopted the practices and doctrines of another Church, that was a thing to be condemned, and ought not to be allowed. (Cheers.) That was not attacking the faith or creed of Catholics; it was only insisting that good faith and honour should be observed by the people who chose to enjoy the emoluments of the Church, whose creed and faith they ought to support. (Cheers.)\(^{62}\)

Harcourt was primarily interested in the legal ramifications of Ritualism, not in its theological implications. Indeed, although he cooperated with the Church Association and offered their Council political and legal advice,\(^ {63}\) he occasionally felt their Protestantism could be as fanatical as the Catholicism of the English Church Union.\(^ {64}\) Unlike the leaders of the Church Association, Harcourt was willing to envisage theological compromise, provided it would ensure that the law was obeyed. According to Harcourt, as long as the Church of England remained a creation of and department of the state, then adhering to all laws remained as incumbent upon priests as it was upon any other government official. As he explained to the openly anti-Catholic Imperial Protestant Federation when it invited him to join its Welsh Executive Council,

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\(^{63}\) Church Association, Council Minutes, 20 July 1899, 16 November 1899, 15 March 1900, C. S. 11, Lambeth Palace Library; and Alex Cobham [Chairman of the Church Association] to Harcourt, 26 October 1899, MS Harcourt, dep. 241, ff. 117-122. See also Alfred Porcelli, letter to the editor, *English Churchman*, 11 October 1900, p. 673. Porcelli instigated several lawsuits and wrote that he had been acting on the advice of Harcourt.

\(^{64}\) Alex Cobham to Harcourt, 20 November 1899, MS Harcourt, dep. 241, ff. 137-139.
I have never wished to embark in any crusade against any religious denomination however much I may differ from their creed. In anything I have written or said I have solely had in view the restraint of illegal practices within the Established Church. I have always held that opinion, and I hold it still, that the existing law, if duly enforced is adequate in that purpose. The only obstacle to that enforcement was the veto of the Bishops. The conduct of the Bishops in the past in employing that veto to obstruct the due course of law was justly to be condemned…. If the Bishops were to persist in the Veto there would be a case for repealing it. There is no proof that they will so persist and therefore there is no probability(?) that Parliament will alter a law which is already sufficient for the purpose.  

For Harcourt, Liberalism and Erastiansim were of one piece. He had come of political age in the mid-nineteenth century and his Liberalism flowed out of the Whig political tradition of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century. One of the features of early Whig politics, as the political ideology coalesced following the Glorious Revolution, was Erastianism. The Whig interpretation of church-state relations received no serious threats from within the Church until July 14, 1833 when John Keble’s “National Apostasy” sermon attacked Parliament’s plan to disestablish the Anglican Church in Ireland. Keble was not attacking disestablishment per se; rather, he criticized the notion that Parliament had any authority over the Church of Ireland. Oxford fellows John Henry Newman and Edward B. Pusey joined Keble in his anti-Erastian crusade, arguing that the state had no right to interfere in the spiritual matters of the Church of England. As we have seen, the Oxford Movement begun by Keble, Newman, and Pusey emphasized the visible church, Apostolic Succession, and the divine authority and autonomy of the Catholic Church, of which the Church of England was a branch. The new exaltation of the spiritual independence of the Church of England constituted a

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65 Harcourt to James Walsh, 10 February 1900, MS Harcourt, dep. 242, ff. 7-12. See also James W. Walsh [organizing secretary for the IPF] to Harcourt, 8 February 1900, MS Harcourt, dep. 242, ff. 1-6.
deliberate challenge to the Erastianism of the Whigs. Thus, Tractarianism established a connection between anti-Erastianism and High Churchmanship, and, consequently, between anti-Erastianism and the Tory Party. As a result, the Whigs clung to their Erastianism even more tenaciously in the face of the Tractarian challenge.

If nothing else, Harcourt’s activity in the Church Crisis represented his enduring commitment to Protestant Whig Erastianism. Following Harcourt’s death, Herbert Paul remembered that “Sir William Harcourt once said of an eminent statesman that he did not understand the British Constitution because he had never been a Protestant or a Whig. He has himself been called the last of the Whigs, and he used himself to say that he and Dean [Arthur] Stanley were the last Erastians.” Historian Paul Nicholls has argued that during the Church Crisis Harcourt exploited “the myth of the Protestant constitution when he likened the bishops’ veto on ritualist prosecutions to the dispensing powers assumed by England’s last Roman Catholic monarch (and aspiring absolutist) James II.” For Harcourt and his supporters, as long as the Church of England was established by law, it ought to remain firmly under the control of Parliament.

However, such views had fallen on hard times as a result of the growing influence of Ritualism in the mid and late-nineteenth century. Ritualism and Anglo-Catholicism grew out of Tractarianism and also emphasized the divine nature and autonomy of the Church catholic, of which the Church of England was a branch. As we have seen, this view was incompatible with Erastianism, which saw the Church of England as a creation

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66 Parry, *Politics and Patriotism*, 166.
of the state. Yet, Protestant backlash to the growth of Anglo-Catholicism within the state church allowed Erastianism to remain a viable religious and political position into the early-twentieth century. Through Harcourt’s vigorous advocacy, Erastianism even experienced something of a renaissance during the Church Crisis. Prominent theologians and Liberal stalwarts, such as J. Llewelyn Davies, began coming out in favor of a revived Erastianism. Others, like Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, simply expressed their continued support for the principles of Erastianism. Although the resolution of the Church Crisis largely favored Anglo-Catholicism in practice and therefore spelled the death knell of Erastianism, in the closing years of the nineteenth century, Erastianism remained very much alive and, thanks to Harcourt, attached to Liberalism.

- **The Popularity of Anti-Ritualism**

While Harcourt may have desired to stamp out Ritualism in the Church of England regardless of the consequences, as a consummate politician, he was eager to support a popular cause; and in 1898 anti-Ritualism was extremely popular, especially in Lancashire, Harcourt’s district. In 1881 more than one third of all Irish-born immigrants were living in Lancashire. The vast majority of these were Roman Catholic. The Irish presence combined with a large population of native English Roman Catholics to make Lancashire the most Roman Catholic county in England. Because anti-Catholicism often fueled anti-Ritualism, the large number of Roman Catholics living in Lancashire

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71 Michael Hicks-Beach to Harcourt, 22 April 1904, MS Harcourt, dep. 245, f. 138.

caused nervous Protestant neighbors to react by embracing anti-Ritualism. Liverpool’s large Irish population made it a hotbed of anti-Catholicism and, as a result, a center of political anti-Ritualism. As the *Quarterly Review* put it,

> It will hardly be uncharitable to infer that the Protestantism of Sir William Harcourt has a political tinge. Lancashire members, who have been so prominent in this crisis, are not generally supposed to be blind to the value of Orange votes at the next election. But let all this be granted. There will remain the solid sub-stratum of fact that the anti-Romish feeling of the ‘staunch Protestant’ has, during the last twelve months, been excited to a degree which, while no prudent statesman need consider it dangerous, neither statesman nor Churchman can wisely disregard…. The English people are long-suffering; but on some points they are fully resolved, and this is one. They will not allow the servants of the English Church to wear any part of the distinctive livery of Rome.73

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Figure 2: The two maps compare the Roman Catholic population of Lancashire in the 1880s with the constituencies that elected candidates pledged to support the Church Association and a Church Discipline Bill in 1900. Constituencies in support of a Church Discipline Bill are colored. Notice especially the correlation between the Catholic population of Parliamentary boroughs and voting results. The only division of Liverpool not to elect a candidate who supported a Discipline Bill was the Scotland division. This is because this was also the only division with an Irish Catholic numerical majority. See Pelling, *Social Geography*, 249. Maps from Pelling, *Social Geography*, maps 17 and 15, pages xxiv, xxii. The second map has been altered to highlight the results of the 1900 General Election relevant to anti-Ritualism.

Harcourt’s position struck a chord in Lancashire and elsewhere. After his Benefice Bill speeches and the publication of his famous Letters to the *Times* in 1898-9, letters of thanks began to roll in. Lord Portsmouth, the president of the Liverpool Laymen’s League, wrote that

you must allow me to express my hearty agreement with all you said last night in core denunciation of the very dishonest attitude which is being taken – and taken unchecked – by the Ritualists. The matter has quite
recently been brought home to me very closely…. They learn nothing but Priest-craft at these ecclesiastical colleges and Priestcraft is the opposite of all that is straight forward.\textsuperscript{74}

Other prominent Protestant leaders such as Lady Cornelia Wimborne\textsuperscript{75} and Walter Walsh\textsuperscript{76} thanked Harcourt, but most letters were from ordinary individuals. One supporter wrote canon Malcolm MacColl a reply and sent a copy to Harcourt. According to “Latimer,”

I am very glad you attribute ‘sincerity’ to Sir W. H. But you egregiously err in saying that ‘his letters have damaged his political interests.’ On the contrary, they have caused him to ride far higher in the esteem of the Nation, for we now see in him a defender of our National Church as it emerged in purity and truth as the glorious Reformation, scattering to the winds Romish falsehoods and superstitions, and we believe he [Harcourt] will overthrow the ‘Secret Society’ and the Ultra-Ritualistic (Popish) priests which would bring England again into darkness and slavery.\textsuperscript{77}

The shear volume of letters Harcourt received from people of all walks of life belies the argument made by historians such as Callum Brown that ordinary people had no idea a crisis in the Church was even occurring, and if they did, they did not have an opinion on the matter.\textsuperscript{78}

Anti-Ritualism also had the political advantage of its cross-party appeal.

Conservative Protestants thanked Harcourt just as heartily as Liberals did. Although

\textsuperscript{74} Lord Portsmouth to Harcourt, 17 June 1898, ff. 276-8, encl. in Harcourt to Balfour, 19 June, 1898, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49788, ff. 274-5.
\textsuperscript{75} Lady Cornelia Wimborne to Harcourt, 29 January 1899, MS Harcourt, dep. 240, ff. 180-181.
\textsuperscript{76} Walter Walsh to Harcourt, 14 November 1898, MS Harcourt, dep. 238, ff. 35-38. Walsh’s book sales increased after Harcourt mentioned \textit{The Secret History of the Oxford Movement} during the Benefice Bill debates.
\textsuperscript{77} “Latimer” to Harcourt, 1899, MS Harcourt, dep. 240, ff. 4-5. Again, notice the influence of Walsh – “Secret Society.”
\textsuperscript{78} Callum Brown writes that “for many ordinary parishioner, unless they traveled to worship in other parishes or dioceses, awareness of the High-Low Church division was often limited, and discussion of it is rare in autobiographies or in oral testimony of the Anglican laity.” Brown’s assessment, however, more likely reflects what his subjects thought was important years later when they wrote their autobiographies or were interviewed. The importance attached to Anglican ritual in the early-twentieth century seemed silly or quaint a half-century later. See Callum Brown, \textit{Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain} (London: Longman, 2006), 52.
William Thwaites wrote to Harcourt that he was “not of your politics, … I thank you from my heart for your sound Protestant speech.” Many of the Conservatives who wrote to thank Harcourt also informed him that at the next General Election, they would be voting for sound Protestant candidates, regardless of party affiliation. “A Protestant and Conservative Churchman” from Romford believed that

the best thanks of all Protestant Churchmen are due to Sir William Harcourt, Mr. S. Smith, and other gentlemen, who, on the second and third reading of the above [Benefice] bill, so vigorously exposed the scandalous Ritualism carried on in our church, and I would urge upon all Protestant [voters], not only Liberals, but also Conservative, to act as I intend to do at any ensuing election, viz., to vote for the Liberal candidate, and so strengthen Sir William Harcourt’s hands. I have abstained from voting at the last two elections, as, although a Conservative, I felt that I could not in any way help my party, they having done their best to drive Protestantism out of the Church by the appointment of extreme men, and they now go from bad to worse by placing more power in the hands of the Bishops when they had already too much.

Even Conservative Members of Parliament, like R. Jasper More of Ludlow, wrote to Harcourt congratulating him on his stance. C. A. Cripps, then the Conservative MP for the Stroud division of Gloucestershire, actually researched the history of the Clergy Discipline Act and the best means of punishing law-breaking clergy for Harcourt. Since anti-Ritualist sympathizers like More and Cripps refused to officially pledge support for a Church Discipline Bill, most likely for party political reasons, the amount of theoretical support existing for anti-Ritualism within Parliament is actually underestimated by only considering the number of MPs who publicly pledged support to

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80 “A Protestant and Conservative Churchman,” letter to the editor, English Churchman, 7 July 1898, p. 436. Emphasis in the original.
81 R. Jasper More to Harcourt, 18 July 1898, MS Harcourt, dep. 236, ff. 140-1. More claimed there were many other men in the House who would like to thank Harcourt. Other Conservatives who did not write Harcourt, like Joseph Chamberlain, nevertheless supported his position.
82 C. A. Cripps to Harcourt, 7 November 1898, MS Harcourt, dep. 238, ff. 4-5. Cripps ends with “I need hardly add that this is a private note.” See also C. A. Cripps to Harcourt, 14 November 1898, MS Harcourt, dep. 238, ff. 25-26.
the Church Association. Given the amount of support for anti-Ritualism both in Parliament and throughout the nation, even Arthur Balfour was forced to admit that Harcourt had secured an advantage for the Liberal Party in the next elections.  

- Political Effects of Anti-Ritualism: Harcourt’s Resignation

But, like any divisive issue, anti-Ritualism was not popular with everyone. In fact, Harcourt’s firm stance had the potential to divide his party, as it had nearly done in 1874. Unionist and Conservative newspapers were quick to point to a potential rift developing within the Liberal party between Harcourt and John Morley, who had openly jeered Harcourt during his Benefice Bill speeches. The London correspondent of The Scotsman, for example, reported that John Morley and Harcourt had quarreled over Harcourt’s anti-Ritualism. Liberal stalwarts quickly disavowed the rumor, with F. A. Channing, the Liberal MP for Northamptonshire East, asking the readers of The Scotsman to “pay no attention to the absurd gossip” about Morley and Harcourt. Channing advised readers that the goal of Unionist gossip was merely to create dissention among the Liberal ranks, as had occurred when Unionists had spread the rumors that first Gladstone and then Morley had converted to Roman Catholicism. He concluded that Everybody in the House knows perfectly well that Sir William Harcourt has no more loyal supporter in his leadership of the Liberal party than Mr. John Morley, and also that the sense of the House generally in every quarter, except among the Irish Nationalists, was in full sympathy with Sir William Harcourt’s point of view, and in condemnation of the proceedings of the extreme Romanising Ritualists who keep the emoluments while they betray the tenets of the Protestant Church of England.

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83 See A. J. Balfour to Evelyn Cecil, 17 August 1898, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, ff. 5-6; and A. J. Balfour to Arthur Elliott, 8 May 1899, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, ff. 83-5.
84 “Mr. Morley and Sir. W. Harcourt,” The Scotsman, f. 129, encl. in F. A. Channing (Lord Channing) to Harcourt, 15 July 1898, MS Harcourt, dep. 236, ff. 126-7. Louis Harcourt marked Channing’s letter “to be read” for Gardiner’s benefit.
85 “Mr. Channing on the Relations of the Liberal Leader,” The Scotsman, f. 128, encl. in F. A. Channing to Harcourt, 15 July 1898, MS Harcourt, dep. 236, ff. 126-7.
86 Ibid.
But despite Channing’s protestations, it is clear that anti-Ritualism did cause a rift
between not only Harcourt and Morley, but also Harcourt and Herbert Gladstone.\textsuperscript{87}

Not surprisingly, Harcourt’s anti-Ritualism tended to assume an anti-Catholic
caste and offended the Irish MPs, as even Channing admitted. Indeed, William Redmond,
the Parnellite MP for Clare East, spoke during the Benefice Bill debates to attack
Harcourt for ridiculing Roman Catholicism. Harcourt’s reply that he had no desire to
offend Roman Catholics failed to placate Redmond, who claimed Harcourt had
completely misrepresented Roman Catholic practices.\textsuperscript{88} Malcolm MacColl later claimed
to have received letters from three Irish MPs, including one Nonconformist, who
complained that Harcourt’s stance was injuring the unity of the Liberal party.\textsuperscript{89}

While the Ritualist controversy swirled around him, William Harcourt resigned
from the leadership of the Liberal party on December 8, consequently throwing his party
into turmoil. A. G. Gardiner attributed Harcourt’s resignation to disagreements within
the Liberal Party over foreign policy, while Patrick Jackson attributed it to Harcourt’s
“understandable desire to relax and spend more time at Malwood.”\textsuperscript{90} Harcourt did not
explicitly reveal his motives and they remained inscrutable even to a party insider such as
Edward Hamilton.\textsuperscript{91} Nevertheless, there were speculations, many of which emphasized
Harcourt’s recent role in the Church Crisis. Harcourt’s public stand for Erastian
Protestantism had caused him to clash with powerful members of his own party, such as
Herbert Gladstone, who had become the chief whip after the untimely death of Thomas

\textsuperscript{87} See Diary entry, 26 June 1898, Sir Edward Hamilton papers, Add. MS 48673, f. 67.
\textsuperscript{88} \textit{Parliamentary Debates}, 23 June 1898, 59: 386-388.
\textsuperscript{89} Malcolm MacColl to Harcourt, 27 November 1898, MS Harcourt, dep. 238, ff. 85-6.
\textsuperscript{90} Gardiner, \textit{The Life of Sir William Harcourt}, vol. 2, 477-479, 488; and Jackson, \textit{Harcourt and Son}, 293,
290.
\textsuperscript{91} Edward Walter Hamilton, \textit{The Diary of Sir Edward Walter Hamilton}, Dudley W. R. Bahlman, ed. (The
University of Hull Press, 1993), 363 [14 December 1898].
Ellis. Moreover, it raised the ire of the large body of High Churchmen represented by the English Church Union.\textsuperscript{92}  

Contemporaries were quick to connect Harcourt’s resignation to anti-Ritualism. Martin Sutton, a Conservative Party supporter and enthusiastic Protestant wrote to the \textit{Times} that “when the history of Sir W. Harcourt’s resignation comes to be known it will doubtless be discovered that his determined Protestant crusade this autumn has had more to do with his retirement than anything else.”\textsuperscript{93} J. Guinness Rogers, a Nonconformist minister who frequently wrote on topics pertaining to the Liberal Party penned an article on the “collapse” of the Liberal Party, arguing that the justification for Sutton’s statement was “to say the least, not manifest.”\textsuperscript{94} Nevertheless, Rogers recognized that Harcourt’s public role in the Church Crisis “seemed to me to make his leadership impossible. For the Liberal party is essentially opposed to sectarianism.”\textsuperscript{95} In another \textit{Nineteenth Century} article detailing the Liberal implosion, Sidney Low went even further than Rogers, stating that “One of the efficient causes of Sir William Harcourt’s relapse into private membership seems to be, as Lord Salisbury wittily said the other day, Mr. Kensit.”\textsuperscript{96} Salisbury happily supposed Harcourt’s resignation would cause the political capital of agitators like John Kensit to fall quickly.\textsuperscript{97} In any case, many contemporary

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\textsuperscript{92} Viscount Halifax, \textit{The Agitation Against the Oxford Movement [An Address read at the {40th} Annual Meeting at the Church House on June 15, 1899]} (London: Office of the English Church Union, 1899), 12, encl. in Church Union Papers, C.U.Dep.5, ff. 151-152.

\textsuperscript{93} Martin J. Sutton, \textit{Times}, 21 December 1898, p. 3, col F.


\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{97} In a speech at the Constitutional Club, Lord Salisbury noted that “now that Sir William Harcourt has retired form the position of leader, I do not think Mr. Kensit’s value in the political market is quite what it was before.” Qtd. in \textit{Protestant Woman}, February 1899, p. 38.
commentators like Salisbury linked Harcourt’s anti-Ritualism with his unexpected resignation.

Although Harcourt’s stand was wildly popular with many, it presented significant political problems. Anti-Ritualism was indeed popular in northern England, but by supporting it the Liberal Party risked alienating Anglo-Catholic and moderately High Church voters. A strong anti-Ritualist stance also offended and alienated the Roman Catholic Irish MPs. Moreover, Liberals representing heavily Catholic constituencies, such as those in Lancashire, depended on a portion of the Catholic vote. As a result, some power brokers in the Liberal Party questioned the wisdom of publicly adhering to the Protestant line. For contemporary commentators, then, Harcourt’s anti-Ritualist stand seemed to be a possible, or even probable, reason for his sudden departure.

Nevertheless, Harcourt’s resignation of Liberal Party leadership came as a surprise to many of his colleagues. Both Liberals and Conservatives wrote to Harcourt expressing their regret.98 But despite their disappointment, some supporters, such as Martin Sutton, expressed hope that Harcourt would be able to devote even more time and energy to Protestant concerns as a private member than he had been able to as the Liberal leader.99 George Augustus Haig believed that only Harcourt possessed the ability and knowledge necessary to unite the Liberal party behind anti-Ritualism. Although he had given up leadership, it would be possible for someone else to assume nominal headship, while Harcourt advocated for Protestantism as an independent member.100 Armchair politicians like Haig were not the only ones who speculated about Harcourt’s post-

98 See, for example, Sir Fred Milner, 19 January 1899, MS Harcourt, dep. 240, ff. 147-148. Sir Frederick Milner was the Conservative MP for Bassetlaw.
99 See, for example, H. G. Few to Harcourt, 11, January 1899, MS Harcourt, dep. 240, ff. 95-6. Few believed Harcourt’s resignation would give him a “free hand.”
100 George Haig to Sir James Blyth, Bart., 14 January 1899, encl. in MS Harcourt, dep. 240, ff. 135-138.
resignation role in the anti-Ritualist crusade. Philip Stanhope, the Liberal MP for Burnley, told Harcourt that there were many who think that a little later on, when you come back in the Spring, a great opportunity will be open to you to take a strong and independent line for Disestablishment, not in the House of Commons, but in the country. My own belief is that the great wave of feeling which is rapidly rising, and which you have been the chief instrument in directing, will come to a head in a few weeks, when it is seen that the Bishops can do nothing, and the government won’t do anything, and that you would practically sweep the country by appealing to its earnest and under your guidance, strong but temperate Protestantism.  

Stanhope assured Harcourt that he would find him “ready” “for the fray” and that he predicted Harcourt’s “triumphant success.”

Stanhope’s hopes would be dashed, since in early 1899 Harcourt, along with Samuel Smith, was busily preparing himself for the upcoming Parliamentary debates surrounding a proposed Church Discipline Bill, not a resumption of party leadership. The most significant points were the abolition of the bishops’ veto on ecclesiastical prosecutions and the punishment of Ritualist clerics who disobeyed the rubrics of the Books of Common Prayer with deprivation rather than imprisonment, as the existing PWRA (1874) had stipulated. Anti-Ritualists deemed a new piece of legislation necessary because bishops generally vetoed the prosecution of Ritualist priests.

101 Philip Stanhope to Harcourt, 12 February 1899, MS Harcourt, dep. 240, ff. 200-1.
102 Ibid. Stanhope actually declined attending Henry Campbell-Bannerman’s election as the Liberal leader because he wanted to associate himself with a movement requesting Harcourt resume his leadership. See Philip Stanhope to Thos. Ellis, “Copy. In answer to a letter of Jan 23, 1899 from Mr. Thos. Ellis, M.P. Chief Whip of the Liberal Party, inviting me to the second election of Campbell-Bannerman. Marked ‘Confidential,’” 5 February 1899, Encl. in MS Harcourt, dep. 240, ff. 202-205.
103 Church Intelligencer 17, no. 10, October 1900, p. 145.
In order to support the bill, the Church Association was happy to assist Samuel Smith when he wrote to the Council asking for statistics on Ritual abuses. The Association complied by arranging for Walter Walsh to provide Smith with the necessary figures.104 The Conservatives, meanwhile, prepared themselves for the Church Discipline Bill battle, and by December, 1898 Balfour and Salisbury decided that the Unionist Government’s

104 Church Association, Council Minutes, 5 January 1899, C. S. 11, Lambeth Palace Library. The Church Association also seems to have provided Harcourt with statistics around this time. See Church Association, Council Minutes, 2 February 1899, C. S. 11, Lambeth Palace Library.
response to the deepening crisis would be to simply ignore it by not bringing in any bill on the topic of Ritualism.\(^{105}\)

On February 8, however, the anti-Ritualist paroxysms broke out again when Smith moved an amendment seeking new legislation to address lawlessness in the church, arguing that “no one can deny that a state of chaos exists” within the Church of England. “The agitation in the public mind has been growing stronger and stronger for the last twelve months; and now it is certain that no question so deeply agitates the nation.”\(^{106}\) Smith went on to again cite *The Secret History of the Oxford Movement* and warn of the existence of a vast conspiracy to “un-Protestantise the Church of England.”\(^{107}\) The following day, Smith moved an amendment to the address in answer to the Queen’s speech that “having regard to the lawlessness prevailing in the Church of England, some legislative steps should be taken to secure obedience to the law.”\(^{108}\) The amendment failed to pass, but the Ritualist question continued to be contested throughout the month of February in connection with a debate regarding the removal of bishops from the House of Lords and a bill regarding the relief of tithe-owing clergy.\(^{109}\)

- **Gedge’s Amendment and the Church Discipline Bill, 1899: Erastianism Ascendant?**

The matter again came to a head on April 11 when Sydney Gedge, a one-term Conservative from Walsall, deplored recent statements made by the Anglo-Catholic English Church Union (ECU) that seemed to indicate disobedience to the law. Gedge

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\(^{108}\) Ibid., 344.

then moved that preferment in the Church of England should be limited to those who would remain obedient to the law and the bishops.\footnote{Parliamentary Debates, 11 April 1899, 69: 788.} Gedge’s Motion, as it came to be called, was amended by the Conservative MP for Islington North, C. G. T. Bartley, to remove any explicit reference to the ECU and passed by a vote of 200 to 14.\footnote{Ibid., 870. See also Nicholls, \textit{Khaki and the Confessional}, 88; and Machin, \textit{Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869-1921}, 245. The fourteen were Viscount Cranborne (U), Sir Horatio D. Davies (U), Sir Alfred Hickman (U), Lionel R. Holland (L), Richard Claverhouse Jebb (U), Arthur Frederick Jeffreys (U), William Lucas-Shadwell, Alfred Lyttelton (U), J. O’Connor, William Edward T. Sharpe (U), Donal Sullivan, J. G. Talbot (U), Viscount Valentia (U), and A. C. E. Welby (U). The tellers for the noes were Lord Hugh Cecil (U) and Earl Percy (U).} Although Balfour was not pleased with the amendment because he believed it applied an arbitrary ecclesiastical test to clergymen, he nonetheless bowed to the pressure and did not vote against it.\footnote{Parliamentary Debates, 11 April 1899, 69: 869-872. See also “Mr. Balfour’s Attitude,” \textit{Church Intelligencer} 16, no. 5, May 1899, 65.} As an anti-Erastian, Balfour would have preferred the government to leave all ecclesiastical matters in the hands of the bishops.

Harcourt was overjoyed that the amendment had passed and the next day wrote to his wife that he had gotten “a denunciation of Halifax [the President of the ECU] and all his works. I think I see my way clear to a good secession [to the Roman Church] of these gentlemen which is what I have always worked for [sic].”\footnote{Harcourt to Lady Harcourt, 12 April 1899, Harcourt MSS. WVH 7/8, qtd in J. E. B. Munson, “The Oxford Movement by the End of the Nineteenth Century,” \textit{Church History} 44, no. 3 (September, 1975): 385.} The \textit{Quarterly Review} regarded the recent controversies as

\ldots the unmistakable evidence of widespread and dangerous unrest in matters of ritual and doctrine. This is seen in Parliament. The session is still in its infancy; but more than one debate on this question has already excited both the Lords and the Commons. Others are promised in the near future, while a day has been fixed for the second reading of [the Church Discipline Bill].\footnote{“Ecclesiastical Courts,” \textit{Quarterly Review} 189 (January-April 1899): 562.}
Having perhaps realized the “anti-Romish” resolve of the English people, Balfour acknowledged that his party was apt to lose seats in the 1899 bye-elections. He also admitted that the upcoming debate on the Discipline Bill filled him with “grave anxiety,” and that although it would be “convenient from the point of view of the politics of the moment (e.g. the Southport Election!), it would be disastrous for me, on behalf of the Government, to sanction the measure.” Later events proved Balfour correct; C. B. Balfour lost his seat to the Liberal George Pilkington and the loss was popularly attributed to C. B. Balfour’s poor record on the Protestant question.

Shortly thereafter, on May 10, the Discipline Bill came up for its Second Reading, but the Government was able to buy time when Attorney-General Sir Richard Webster moved an amendment stating that although the House was not yet ready to override the bishops by introducing new legislation, if the Archbishops’ and bishops’ efforts to control their clergy failed, then new legislation would be necessary. J. W. Mellor, the Liberal MP for the Sowerby division of Yorkshire, attempted to rally Protestant members behind the original bill, asking just exactly when the Attorney-General thought the bishops would become effectual? After all, Mellor reasoned, the ecclesiastical disobedience had begun with Pusey and Newman in the days of the Oxford Movement. The bishops had already had sixty years to act; why should Protestants expect them to suddenly act now? Yet, most MPs remained uncomfortable with the thought of

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115 Ibid.
117 See, for example, “The Southport Victory,” Church Intelligencer 16, no. 7, July 1899, p. 94.
118 Parliamentary Debates, 10 May 1899, 71: 243.
119 Ibid., 264. See also Viscount Halifax, “The Agitation Against the Oxford Movement,” (London: Office of the English Church Union, 1899), 14-15, encl. in Church Union papers, English Church Union Minute Book of General Meetings, C.U.Dep.5, ff. 151-2, Lambeth Palace Library. Mellor was the Gladstonian Liberal MP for the Sowerby division of Yorkshire from 1895 until 1904, when he accepted Chiltern Hundreds.
overriding the bishops’ authority on ecclesiastical affairs and therefore rejected the bill by a vote of 310 to 156.\textsuperscript{120} The minority consisted of 119 Liberals, 33 Conservatives, and 4 Liberal Unionists. Webster’s amendment, however, passed unanimously. In practical terms, the passage of the amendment gave the bishops more time to sort out the Ritualist crisis without state intervention.\textsuperscript{121} Bishop Talbot was so pleased with this result that he wrote Balfour a grateful letter, saying

\begin{quote}
I cannot help sending you a word of affectionate gratitude for your…dignified and rightly sympathetic line…. When I think how much difference it might have made if we had had other Leaders, for either side of the House…. One of my canons…writes to me ‘I think we [ought] to be thankful to Mr. Balfour for what took place in the H of C.’ May God bless you for your service to the Church.\textsuperscript{122}
\end{quote}

The bishops’ need for Balfour’s service, however, was far from over. Anti-Ritualists celebrated the unanimous passing of Webster’s amendment and began preparing for the next major political battle.

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\textsuperscript{120} Parliament\textit{ary Debates}, 10 May 1899, 71: 296.
\textsuperscript{121} See Ibid., 231-300; Machin, \textit{Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869 to 1921}, 246; and Nicholls, \textit{Khaki and the Confessional}, 88.
\textsuperscript{122} Edward S. Talbot to A. J. Balfour, 12 May 1899, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49789, ff. 106-107.
\end{flushend}
Figure 4: In the aftermath of the Second Reading of the Church Discipline Bill, Farmer John Bull tells the bishops to “wake up” the ecclesiastical law. Bull tells the bishop that “if that dog of yours [the current ecclesiastical law] can’t keep the sheep [Ritualist priests] from straying, I must get you another!” From *Punch*, 17 May 1899, p. 235.

- **Preparation for the Next General Election: The Erastian Call for “Protestantism before Politics!”**

  In the aftermath of the Discipline Bill vote, the Church Association began preparing for the next General Election by laying the groundwork for what became its “Protestantism before Politics” campaign, which was designed to secure the return of MPs pledged to support a Church Discipline Bill and other Protestant causes regardless of party affiliation. The centerpiece of the new campaign, which the Association claimed would make all past efforts pale in comparison, was the formation of electoral rolls designed to consolidate the Protestant vote in every constituency. In addition, the Council planned to move ahead with Mellor’s request to prepare a plan for the formation
of a Protestant Party and publish a reply to Canon Malcolm MacColl’s *The Reformation Settlement Examined in the Light of History and Law* (1899), which had been delivered to each MP.\(^{123}\)

In an effort to counteract MacColl’s influence, the Church Association prepared to publish a popular edition of *The Secret History* in a run of 100,000 copies, and Harcourt kept himself busy with Protestant matters, urging the Association to begin new lawsuits against Ritualist priests in order to see whether or not the bishops would veto an ecclesiastical prosecution. Should the bishops veto prosecution, this could be used by Harcourt and others as evidence that new legislation, abolishing the bishops’ veto, was needed.\(^{124}\) Eventually, at Harcourt’s urging, the Council decided to arrange for an agent to make at least six complaints about illegal ritual to the bishops.\(^{125}\)

Balfour, meanwhile, was not in a hurry to address the growing Ritualist controversy. On February 1, 1900 he informed Courtenay T. Warners, the Liberal MP for Lichfield, that the Government would not be introducing any disciplinary legislation that session.\(^{126}\) The next day Liverpool members responded by introducing another Church Discipline Bill.\(^{127}\) In fact, Liverpool members would introduce a new Church Discipline Bill every year until 1911, with the exception of 1902. However, the only bill

\(^{123}\) Church Association, Council Minutes, 18 May 1899, C. S. 11, Lambeth Palace Library.


\(^{124}\) Church Association, Council Minutes, 20 July 1899, C. S. 11, Lambeth Palace Library; and Church Association, Council Minutes, 16 November 1899, C. S. 11, Lambeth Palace Library.

\(^{125}\) Ibid.


\(^{127}\) *Parliamentary Debates*, 2 February 1900, 78: 416.
to advance to its Second Reading was the 1903 bill, which even then progressed no further.\textsuperscript{128} But in early 1900 many Protestants remained confident of ultimate victory and continued to seek methods of spurring the Parliament to action. For example, both Harcourt and Justice Sir Francis Jeune sent letters to the Church Association urging the Council to initiate more prosecutions under the existing Church Discipline Act.\textsuperscript{129}

By the spring and early summer of 1900, with a General Election looming, MPs and candidates from both parties increasingly turned their attention to the Ritualism crisis. Despite his religious agnosticism, David Lloyd George had no trouble telling potential voters that Ritualism was “a movement which Nonconformists had to keep their eye on.”\textsuperscript{130} In fact, in the early 1900s Lloyd George was known primarily for his political Protestantism.\textsuperscript{131} Ritualism, he said, was an “organised and deliberate attempt” to return Britain to “the thralldom of priests.”\textsuperscript{132} Lloyd George began attacking Ritualism as soon as the matter had been brought to light in Commons; already in 1898 he claimed Ritualists were attempting “to substitute for the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith a system of salvation by haberdashery.”\textsuperscript{133} The fact that in late January an estimated ten thousand Protestants congregated inside and around Royal Albert Hall to protest

\textsuperscript{128} Machin, \textit{Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869-1921}, 246.
\textsuperscript{129} Church Association, Council Minutes, 15 March 1900, C. S. 11, Lambeth Palace Library.
\textsuperscript{130} \textit{Leicestershire Daily Post}, 27 March, 1900, encl. in Lloyd George papers, A/9/2/8 House of Lords Record Office), qtd. in Nicholls, \textit{Khaki and the Confessional}, 47.
\textsuperscript{131} Among the Welsh MPs, Lloyd George was known in 1906 for “the brave stand he made in the Committee on the Clergy Discipline Bill, in his skirmishes with the Welsh Bishops, and in his famous plan of campaign and revolt against the Education Act, 1902.” See \textit{General Election 1906 Wales and Monmouthshire: A Souvenir Containing Photographs, Biographical Sketches, &c., of all the Welsh M.P.’s} (Cardiff: Rees’ Electric Press, 1906), 5; ILP 1906/19, London School of Economics Library.
\textsuperscript{132} \textit{Leicestershire Daily Post}, 27 March, 1900, encl. in Lloyd George papers, A/9/2/8 House of Lords Record Office), qtd. in Nicholls, \textit{Khaki and the Confessional}, 47.
\textsuperscript{133} Address at a Congregational church in Nottingham, 29 September 1898, qtd. in John Grigg, \textit{The Young Lloyd George} (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973), 215.
Ritualism, surely helped draw the attention of Liberals like Lloyd George towards the Church question.\textsuperscript{134}

One anonymous High Church Member of Parliament, most likely a Conservative, wrote to the \textit{Church Times} warning of the danger created by the Protestantism before Politics campaign. “Already High Church candidates are being pressed by political wire-pullers to conciliate the Protestant vote, and where a candidate remarks that there is also a high Church vote to be considered, the answer he received is: ‘We have heard nothing from them; the High Churchmen are not organized; it is the Protestants.’”\textsuperscript{135} It is true that Anglo-Catholics were slow to organize politically in the face of Protestant efforts, in part because they had an anti-Erastian aversion to any sort of political involvement in church affairs.\textsuperscript{136} Nevertheless, the Anglo-Catholic \textit{Church Times} agreed that the religious question would “figure prominently” in the election, although luckily less prominently than it otherwise would have due to the war. Despite the distraction provided by the Boers, there was a “real danger,” given the financial resources of the Church Association and its influence upon the supposedly ignorant electorate.\textsuperscript{137} Yet, the High Churchmen never organized politically to the degree the Protestant interest had done.

The Church Association and political Protestantism more generally affected the 1900 General Election primarily by influencing the selection of candidates.\textsuperscript{138} The Conservative Walter Long, for example, decided against seeking re-election for the West

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\textsuperscript{134} “Great Protestant Demonstration,” \textit{Times}, 1 February 1899, p. 10, col. E.
\textsuperscript{135} M.P. from the House of Commons, letter to the editor, \textit{Church Times}, 25 May 1900, p. 600.
\textsuperscript{136} See, for example, John Wakeford, “The Church and Politics,” \textit{The Anglo-Catholic} 2, no. 10 (October 1900): 391.
\textsuperscript{137} “The Church and the General Election,” \textit{Church Times}, 18 May 1900, p. 573.
\textsuperscript{138} The \textit{Record}, for example, argued that the primary affect of the Protestant agitation was on the selection of candidates. See “Parliament and the Church,” \textit{Record}, 5 October 1900, p. 949.
\end{flushright}
Derby division of Liverpool. Long realized that since he had a poor record on the Ritualist question, he would not be able to win re-election in heavily Protestant Liverpool, where the popular Archdeacon W. F. Taylor (the father of Austin Taylor) earnestly implored all Protestant Churchmen to see the gravity of the current crisis in the Church and to “exercise their franchise as in the sight of God.”\textsuperscript{139} The Protestant Observer believed Long’s decision not to run was “a sure sign of the profound conviction of many that the Ritualism of Lord Halifax and his followers must be broken and defeated.”\textsuperscript{140} In another case, the Guardian noted that Conservatives in Hastings determined not to select William Lucas-Shadwell, their former member, as a candidate again due to his High Church proclivities.\textsuperscript{141}

With Liberals beating the “drum ecclesiastic” throughout the country a concerned Sir William Walrond, the Unionist chief whip, wrote to Balfour immediately after receiving a Church Association delegation. He warned that “the Protestant League has agents in 400 constituencies” and that “the question of Church discipline will be brought forward prominently at the next General Election.”\textsuperscript{142} Historian Paul Nicholls argues that the fact that Walrond wrote to Balfour immediately after having received the delegates demonstrates how seriously he took the threat of political Protestantism.\textsuperscript{143} Despite Walrond’s prompt action, there seems to have been some confusion among the Conservatives about the party’s stance on the Ritual question. Lord Hugh Cecil, for

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\textsuperscript{139} W. F. Taylor, letter to the editor, English Churchman, 27 September 1900, p. 632.  \\
\textsuperscript{140} “Mr. Walter Long, M.P.,” Protestant Observer, September 1900, p. 134.  \\
\textsuperscript{141} Protestant Observer, “The General Election,” November 1900, p. 169. Lucas-Shadwell was one of the infamous fourteen who had voted against Gedge’s Motion.  \\
\textsuperscript{142} Qtd in Nicholls, Khaki and the Confessional, 106. Typescript account of meeting between a delegation of the Church Association and Sir William Walrond, 28 June 1900, encl. in Walrond to Salisbury, 6 July 1900, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, General Correspondence, Hatfield House).  \\
\textsuperscript{143} Nicholls, Khaki and the Confessional, 106.
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example, mistakenly believed that Walrond had pledged the party to anti-Ritualism, although Walrond had, in fact, refused to take an official position.\textsuperscript{144}

In order to influence Walrond and others, the Church Association began a fund-raising campaign to raise £20,000 to go towards the election of MPs pledged to support a Church Discipline Bill.\textsuperscript{145} The Association published an appeal to fund their “Protestantism Before Politics” Campaign in the \textit{Times} affixed with the impressively-sounding signatures of Lord Portsmouth (the President of the Liverpool Layman’s League), Lords Wimborne, Grimthorpe, and Kinnaird, Samuel Smith, MP, A. W. Cobham (the Chairman of the Church Association), and Austin Taylor (the Chairman of the Liverpool Layman’s League).\textsuperscript{146} Smith donated £100 to the cause. The Association also began flooding Britain with tracts: at a special Council meeting on September 20, 1900, Henry Miller, the secretary, reported that he was printing five million leaflets.\textsuperscript{147}

• The General Election, October 1900: A Khaki and Orange Election

Despite officially spurning party ties, the Church Association tended to support the Liberal Party over the Conservative Party, not least because two of the biggest players in the controversy – Smith and Harcourt – were both Liberals. Additionally, the Liberal Party, as we have seen, was the historic home of Erastianism. Liberals, then, were more

\textsuperscript{144} Church Times, 13 July, 1900, p. 35; and Nicholls, \textit{Khaki and the Confessional}, 106.

\textsuperscript{145} “Protestantism before Politics. Urgent Appeal for £20,000,” \textit{Times}, 3 August 1900, p. 6, col F. See also 1900 July 19: Church Association Council Minute Book, Vol. 12. Capitals in the original. The “Appeal” sparked the publication of a correspondence between Randall Winton [i.e. Davidson] and Lord Portsmouth and several letters to the editor. See \textit{Times}, 20 August, 1900; p. 6; col B; \textit{Times}, 1 September, 1900; p. 9; col F; and \textit{Times}, 6 October, 1900; p. 10; col C for the Davidson/Portsmouth correspondence. For letters to the editor see John Sarum, \textit{Times}, 30 August, 1900; p. 10; col E; [Lord] Wimborne, \textit{Times}, 30 August, 1900; p. 10; col E; E. A. Ommannay, \textit{Times}, 6 September, 1900; p. 4; col G; Linden Heitland, \textit{Times}, 7 September, 1900; p. 10; col G; J. T. Inskip, \textit{Times}, 8 September, 1900; p. 8; col F; C. W. Croft, \textit{Times}, 10 September, 1900; p. 6; col A; “A Loyal Protestant Churchman,” \textit{Times}, 14 September, 1900; p. 5; col C; Harold Kenworthy Bateson, \textit{Times}, 17 September, 1900; p. 5; col G; E. I. R., \textit{Times}, 17 September, 1900; p. 5; col G; “Veritas,” \textit{Times}, 18 September, 1900; p. 9; col G; C. W. Croft, \textit{Times}, 21 September, 1900; p. 6; col C; and Robert Anderson, \textit{Times}, 25 September, 1900; p. 13; col D.

\textsuperscript{146} Church Association, Council Minutes, 20 September 1900, C. S. 12, Lambeth Palace Library.
likely to support the Church Discipline Bill than Conservatives, and were therefore more likely to cloak themselves in Protestantism while campaigning. For example, the Liberal candidate for Leicester, Henry Broadhurst told his audience that

the Established Church was the Protestant Church by law. Every bishop and clergyman was bound to swear by the xxxix articles and they could not be allowed to swear to forty. (Hear, hear.)...As long as these men enjoyed the emoluments...they ought to be compelled to abide by the conditions under which they took service. (Cheers.)148

At a meeting in Ipswich, Liberal politician R. L. Everett from the South-East division of Suffolk blamed the Conservatives for attempting to convert Nonconformist school children to Catholicism at public expense.149 The same day that Everett spoke in Ipswich, Harcourt addressed a meeting of Liberals at Baina, arguing that it was of “the deepest significant whether the education of the children of England [was] safe in the hands of the clergy in voluntary schools where there was no popular control.” For his part, Harcourt “could not say he thought that religious education in the principles of the English Reformation was safe in the hands of the English clergy.”150

Pandering to the fears of Protestant parents was one strategy of Protestant candidates, while injecting the Church Crisis with an element of class conflict was another. The incorporation of a class-element into the controversy was possible since many of the most outspoken Anglo-Catholics were of middle or upper-class origin. The strategy worked especially well when the Protestant candidate was also a Liberal and could portray both the Conservative party and English Church Union as bastions of privilege. Others, like Sir Joseph Leese, the Liberal candidate for the Accrington division of Lancashire, made a direct appeal to the pocket books of the poor by arguing that

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148 Leicester Daily Post, 28 September,1900, p. 5, col. B.
149 Nicholls, Khaki and the Confessional, 124.
150 Times, 3 October 1900, p. 10, col. D, qtd. in Nicholls, Khaki and the Confessional, 124.
although they paid for a Protestant Established Church, they were actually getting pseudo-Romanism.\textsuperscript{151}

For their part, the Church Association aggressively flooded Britain with tracts emblazoned with their “Protestantism before Politics” slogan. The Church Crisis was “the greatest and most momentous question of modern times,” according to the Association. “Shall the liberties which we have won under Protestantism be handed down as we have received them for our children and our children’s children?” they asked potential voters.\textsuperscript{152} Another tract asked “ARE you prepared to hand over your children to the care of priests, who pollute their minds by the pernicious system of Auricular Confession, which causes them to deceive parents, places the priest between parent and child, and husband and wife, and destroys the confidence of domestic life?”\textsuperscript{153} Church Association supporter Mr. Brabner found himself threatened with a libel suit after he promoted the Liberal candidate for the Hoxton division of Shoreditch by telling readers that “Hoxton Protestant Voters on the … Principle of ‘Protestantism before Politics,’ must Work and Vote for [James] STUART. His opponent favours Romanism, and in Voting for him you will be Voting for Jesuitism with its terrible brood of unmentionable evils and intrigues.”\textsuperscript{154} The aggressive tone of the 1900 General Election campaign led H. H. Asquith to complain that “we have seen the worst fit of vulgar political debauch since 1877-78, with the difference that the orgy was then presided over by a man of genius, whereas now the master of the feast has the manners of a cad and the tongue of a

\textsuperscript{151} One Liberal slogan was “Get what you pay for in the Church.” See Spalding Guardian and Holbeach, Long Sutton and Sutton Bridge Advertiser, 13 October 1900, p. 3, col. G.
\textsuperscript{152} “Protestantism before Politics” Protestantism before Politics Leaflet No. 1 (London: Church Association, c. 1900). Emphasis in the original.
\textsuperscript{153} “Protestant Electors!” Protestantism before Politics Leaflet No. 2 (London: Church Association, c. 1900).
\textsuperscript{154} Qtd. in Church Association, Council Minutes, 1 November 1900, C. S. 12, Lambeth Palace Library. The Church Association prudently advised Mr. Brabner to apologize.
bargee.” Indeed, the sectarian divide between Protestants and self-described Catholics made the General Election of 1900 especially vitriolic.

The Church Association also made active use of political cartoons. Their cartoon “The Effect of Ritualism in the Working Man’s Household” has already been discussed in Chapter 2. Another cartoon (see figure 3 below) showed John Bull wearing a sash reading “Protestant Elector Rolls” and handing a law-breaking Ritualist priest over to the House of Commons. The captured Ritualist carried a suitcase labeled Mass and Confessional, ECU. John Bull, representing the Protestant voter and surrounded by a crowd of supporters, told the House of Commons that with years of labor he had managed to unearth a little lawbreaker. Now it was up to Parliament to bind him according to the Thirty-Nine Articles. This cartoon appeared in both tracts and in the Church Association’s official newspaper, the *Church Intelligencer*.156

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155 H. H. Asquith to H. Gladstone, 7 October 1900, Viscount Gladstone papers Add. MS 45989 ff. 42-3.
156 *Church Intelligencer* 17, no. 8, August 1900, p. 115. See figure 5.
Not surprisingly then, some Conservatives and Unionists were both threatened and annoyed by the political prominence of the Church Crisis. Joseph Chamberlain, for example, complained to the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury about the “disquieting … effort – which in some quarters has been successful – to raise the Church question. Harcourt is … trying to put it in the front. I do not think he will succeed.”

Although

Chamberlain may not have been overly concerned about Harcourt’s efforts, other Conservatives and Unionists were.

A. S. Griffith-Boscawen, the Conservative candidate for the Tunbridge division of Kent, found himself under increasing pressure from Protestant organizations as a result of his failure to vote in favor of the Church Discipline Bill. Charles Stirling, the president of the Calvinistic Protestant Union, wrote that Griffith-Boscawen was a member of the High Church party that had been thwarting Protestant efforts to suppress Romanism for years. Men like Griffith-Boscawen were protecting a Catholicizing movement that sought to again subject Britain to the “Papal Antichrist.”158 Another, less well-known, anti-Ritualist argued in the Tunbridge Wells Advertiser that Protestants should vote for whoever would support a Church Discipline Bill, and that precluded voting for Griffith-Boscawen.159 Learning of the trouble, Balfour informed his colleague that he was

…sorry to hear there is any difficulty in your constituency in connection with the Church Discipline Bill…I hope that no one calling himself a member of the Protestant Church of England will vote for a Radical or a Home Ruler inasmuch as such a course could have no ultimate effect but to encourage those, whether Nonconformists or Ritualists, who desire to disendow the Church of England.160

Griffith-Boscawen’s Liberal opponent was Clifford Cory, who had been hand-picked by the Church Association. Running as a Liberal Imperialist, Cory told supporters that his principles were symbolized by the red, white, and blue of the Union Jack. The red stood for imperialism, the blue stood for temperance, and the white stood for Protestantism and purity. Protestantism was perhaps the most important plank in Cory’s platform, because

158 Charles Stirling, letter to the editor, Tunbridge Wells Advertiser, 5 October 1900, p. 7, col. F.
159 J. Bluett-Duncan, letter to the editor, Tunbridge Wells Advertiser, 5 October 1900, p. 7, col. E.
160 Times, 4 October 1899, p. 9, col. A. See also Nicholls, Khaki and the Confessional, 139.
if Rome seized control of Britain again “it was ‘Good-bye’ to freedom.”\textsuperscript{161} Although Griffith-Boscawen did manage to win the seat – perhaps the blue of temperance was not as appealing to voters as the red of imperialism and the white of Protestantism – the aggressive tactics of Protestant organizations did induce otherwise conservative Anglicans to vote for Liberals in an effort to drive Ritualism from the Church of England. In such an environment, the Conservatives tried to focus the attention of voters on the Boer War, which they regarded as their political “salvation.”\textsuperscript{162}

The General Election finally occurred in October with the Liberal Party still badly divided between the Liberal Imperialists and the pro-Boers. The weakness of the Liberals, however, allowed Conservative Protestants to put “Protestantism before Politics” without worry of damaging the Conservative Government. According to Paul Nicholls, “the weaker the Liberals the less likely that a Tory anti-ritualist protest vote would throw the election into the lap of the Pro-Boer.”\textsuperscript{163} But despite its division, the Liberal Party realized that Ritualism had become an important local issue and therefore the central organization’s printed propaganda exploited popular Protestantism.\textsuperscript{164} The Liberal Party’s campaign handbook discussed Smith’s amendment, Harcourt’s position, Gedge’s motion, and the Church Discipline Bill in some detail.\textsuperscript{165} In these discussions, the Liberals took their cue from anti-clericalism, focusing on the supposed oppression of the laity by a sacerdotal priesthood and the negative effect of Catholicism upon national progress.\textsuperscript{166} Catholicism corrupted nations, whereas Protestantism, Lady Wimborne

\textsuperscript{161} *Tunbridge Wells Advertiser, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge Observer, etc.*, 5 October 1900, p. 7, col. A.
\textsuperscript{162} *Western Times* (Exeter), 28 October 1899, p. 2 col. D, qtd. in Nicholls, *Khaki and the Confessional*, 141.
\textsuperscript{163} Nicholls, *Khaki and the Confessional*, 120.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., 123.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 123.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., 123.
wrote, “… is synonymous with growth, expansion, and development for the man as for the individual. It is to the character of its religion that the Anglo-Saxon race owes the position it occupies in the world to-day…”\textsuperscript{167}

Anti-Ritualism also gave Liberals a chance to steal the patriotic mantel back from the Conservatives, who had painted the entire Liberal party with a pro-Boer brush. During the pre-General Election campaign in October of 1900, Joseph Chamberlain claimed that unlike the Liberals, the Unionists were patriots before politicians. This motto, of course, subtly tweaked the “Protestantism before Politics” motto that was being employed by many Liberal candidates. Although the Conservatives could claim to be the patriotic party in the context of the South African War, their refusal to sweep Catholicism out of the Established Church could be used to question their Britishness. During his speech in Baina, Harcourt ventured to disagree with Chamberlain’s assessment of Liberal patriotism. Ritualists within the Church of England, Harcourt argued, were openly rebelling against state authority by attempting to undo the Reformation and destroy Protestantism.\textsuperscript{168} Nothing could be more unpatriotic than tolerating open disregard for English law and state authority, unless perhaps it was the Romanizing of the Reformed State Church. Nevertheless, the Liberal chief whip, Herbert Gladstone, in keeping with his father’s policy, opposed the anti-Ritualist movement and refused to see any “tactical advantage” in the issue.\textsuperscript{169}

Liberals in general, and especially anti-Ritualists, complained bitterly that Lord Salisbury’s strategic timing of the election and the Conservative strategy of focusing

\textsuperscript{169} Nicholls, \textit{Khaki and the Confessional}, 120.
exclusively on the South African War prevented the Liberals from effectively asserting their domestic program. In Harcourt’s words, the government had attempted to “shut out, if possible, from the verdict of the electorate all other matters [besides the war] which concern the well-being of this country.”170 Anti-Ritualists were especially incensed. The Conservatives had even “plagiarised” the Church Association’s motto “Protestantism before Politics” by claiming to put “Patriotism before Politics.”171 Although most anti-Ritualist candidates fervently supported the war, some, such as the Liberal candidate for Manchester, attempted to oppose both the war and Ritualism. Such candidates found themselves easily defeated, since they split the anti-Ritualist vote.172

Nevertheless, despite the efforts of Lord Salisbury, Balfour, and William Walrond, imperialism was not the only issue at stake in the election. The *English Churchman* deplored the efforts of Balfour and Joseph Chamberlain to confine the attention of the electors to South Africa, but nonetheless “observe[d] indications that the Protestant question is very much to the front in some constituencies…”173 Although their “experts” were almost certainly biased, the Protestant newspaper, the *Record*, reported that “the experts who analyse election results for the morning papers tell us that the current controversy as to Church affairs has materially influenced the results of several elections.”174 Paul Nicholls argues that the spread of ritualism constituted one of the most important subsidiary issues, and, according to the *Annual Register*, ritualism was

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the second most important issue of the election.\textsuperscript{175} In fact, as we have seen, the Church Crisis was not entirely distinct from the Boer War, since most anti-Ritualists, including those involved in the Church Association, were also fervent supporters of the war in South Africa.

On the whole, Church Association candidates did well, and anti-Ritualism made surprisingly strong showings in some areas. John Kensit, for example, ran as a Protestant candidate for Brighton, which H. H. Asquith colorfully referred to as a “plague spot of Mariolatry.”\textsuperscript{176} Although Brighton had been a Conservative safe seat since 1885, Kensit received 4,693 votes, or 24.47\% of the total. The Church Association declared itself pleased with Kensit’s campaign and the \textit{Times} was equally impressed with the results.\textsuperscript{177} In another case, Sydney Gedge lost his seat for Walsall by 325 votes to the Liberal candidate. Gedge’s loss was attributed to his having voted against the Church Discipline Bill.\textsuperscript{178} Freeman Thomas-Freeman, the Liberal candidate for Hastings, and Francis Layland-Barratt, the Liberal candidate for the Torquay division of Devonshire, were both said to have won due to anti-Ritualist support.\textsuperscript{179} The anti-Church Association \textit{Spectator} also argued that the Liberal candidate Arthur Priestly had defeated his Conservative rival due to his pledge to support a Church Discipline Bill.\textsuperscript{180} Thus, in many locations, Protestantism proved to be a crucial issue, with English voters returning 246 candidates

\textsuperscript{175} Nicholls, \textit{Khaki and the Confessional}, 4; and \textit{Annual Register 1900}, p. 202. See also J. J. Lias’s assessment in “The Outlook for the Church of England,” \textit{Contemporary Review} 79 (January-June, 1901): 413.
\textsuperscript{176} H. H. Asquith to Henry Campbell-Bannerman, 20 September 1907, Campbell-Bannerman papers, Add. MS 52519, no folio.
\textsuperscript{177} \textit{Times}, 4 October 1900, p. 7, col. B; and Nicholls, \textit{Khaki and the Confessional}, 217. See also \textit{English Churchman}, 11 October 1900, p. 671.
\textsuperscript{178} Nicholls, \textit{Khaki and the Confessional}, 260-1.
\textsuperscript{179} See \textit{English Churchman}, 11 October 1900, p. 677; and Machin, \textit{Politics and the Church in Great Britain, 1869-1921}, 250.
who had pledged to support a Church Discipline Bill. When Wales and Scotland were considered, the Church Association counted 294 supporters in Commons.  

- **Harcourt’s Legacy**

  William Harcourt did not live very long following the General Election of 1900; he died in 1904 although he remained active in the anti-Ritualist cause until his death. After his passing, contemporaries remembered him for his Protestant and Erastian activism. W. J. Sparrow Simpson remembered him as a “redoubtable champion of Protestantism.”  

  George W. E. Russell’s unsympathetic tribute in the *North American Review* noted Harcourt’s “peculiar fascination” with religious controversy. Russell believed that as the “last of the Erastians,” Harcourt hated Ritualism, because it stood “for the spiritual independence of the Church.” To Russell, Harcourt’s anti-Ritualist crusade was “the expression of a passionate desire to crush the spiritual life of the English Church, by binding her, in spite of her struggles and protestations, to the chariot-wheels of the English state.” Although Russell obviously resented Harcourt’s Protestant beliefs and Erastian politics, he was correct that Harcourt opposed freeing the established Church of England from Parliamentary control. To Harcourt, this would have been tantamount to eliminating the laity’s control of the church.

  Liberal politician Herbert Paul’s much more sympathetic sketch of Harcourt was published in the *Contemporary Review* and reprinted in W. T. Stead’s *Review of Reviews.* “Peace, economy, free trade, and the maintenance of the Protestant religion” were the

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181 *The Record*, 29 October 1900, p. 1022-1023. See Appendix.
184 Ibid., 715. Harcourt had called himself and Dean Arthur Stanley the “last of the Erastians”; Russell did not coin the phrase.
185 Ibid., 715.
pillars of Harcourt’s politics. Like Russell, Paul recalled Harcourt’s self-described status as the “last of the Erastians” and his battle against Ritualism in 1874 in conjunction with the PWRA and during the Church Crisis. Despite Harcourt’s long association with political Radicals, he remained a staunch Whig and conspicuously Protestant throughout his political career.

If contemporaries often associated Harcourt with conspicuous Protestantism, why have more recent historians failed to devote more study to this aspect of Harcourt’s career? The answer, almost certainly, lies in the instructions given to A. G. Gardiner, Harcourt’s official biographer, by his son Louis. Many of Harcourt’s papers were deposited at the New Bodleian Library in Oxford. The Bodleian collection of Harcourt’s correspondence is generally organized by year. Harcourt’s preserved correspondence for the second half of 1898 through 1901 was overwhelmingly related to the Church Crisis. By the time Gardiner had begun work on Harcourt’s biography, however, Erastianism and anti-Ritualism were already badly outdated. The “lesson” that Gardiner gleaned from Harcourt’s anti-Ritualist crusade between 1898 and 1900 was “the necessity of releasing the Church from parliamentary control and leaving it to function, free and unencumbered, in the realm of spiritual ideas.” Obviously Harcourt’s Erastianism failed to make an impression even on his official biographer. There was more than a little truth in Harcourt’s comment that he was the last Erastian. Although Erastianism flourished during his lifetime, it withered shortly after his passing.

188 Ibid., 614.
Perhaps as a result, Lewis Harcourt attached a note for Gardiner to his father’s 1899 correspondence, telling him that “these need not be read by Gardiner, but should be glanced at to realise the wide spread of passionate support of W. V. H. on the subject. They are only a tithe of more received and destroyed.”\textsuperscript{190} A few obviously significant items, such as the original drafts of Harcourt’s letters to the \textit{Times}, were marked “to be seen by Gardiner,” but otherwise the material could be effectively disregarded.\textsuperscript{191} However, correspondence not related to the Church Crisis, but bundled among the correspondence pertaining to Ritualism, was often specifically marked to be read by Gardiner, so that he would not discard it along with the rest of the chaff.\textsuperscript{192} As a result of Lou Lou’s instructions, it is likely that Gardiner only briefly glanced at Harcourt’s correspondence related to the Church Crisis and relegated it to lesser importance than Harcourt’s other political activities. Gardiner’s monumental biography continues to exert such influence over Harcourt historiography that historians have yet to stray far from his account.\textsuperscript{193}

- **Conclusion:**

This chapter has examined the Parliamentary activity that grew out of the Great Church Crisis between 1898 and 1900 and explored how the consideration of religion alters the received image of William Harcourt. In fact, when religion is moved from the margins to the center of analysis, Harcourt emerges as a Protestant crusader. Yet, biographers and other historians touching on Harcourt’s life have generally ignored the

\textsuperscript{190} Harcourt papers, MS dep. 240, f. 1, Oxford University, New Bodleian Library, Modern Papers.
\textsuperscript{191} For example: MS Harcourt, dep. 236, ff. 94-103.
\textsuperscript{192} See, for example, Andrew Cornpre(?) to Harcourt, 28 July 1898, MS Harcourt, dep. 236, ff. 142-44. This is one of the few letters in dep. 236 not addressing Ritualism, and it was specially labeled “to be read” for Gardiner’s benefit.
\textsuperscript{193} See Jackson, \textit{Harcourt and Son}, 10.
impact of religious beliefs on Harcourt politics and his political career. That the role of
religion in Harcourt’s political life has gone unaddressed is more a symptom of lack of
scholarly interest in Harcourt himself than in intersections between political and religion
more generally. In fact, over the course of the past thirty years, historians have delved
deeply into the relationship between William Gladstone’s political liberalism and his
religious beliefs. Perry Butler and Peter Stansky have both argued that Gladstone’s
Anglo-Catholicism fostered his concern for religious liberty and tolerance, leading to his
conversion to political liberalism.\textsuperscript{194} In a series of monographs beginning in the 1980s, J.
P. Parry has attempted to rework high-political history by examining the political role of
contemporary ideas and values.\textsuperscript{195} His \textit{Democracy and Religion: Gladstone and the
Liberal Party} (1986) highlighted the contribution of religious beliefs to the formation and
functioning of the Liberal Party. More recently, J. P. Ellens has argued that although in
terms of religious temperament Gladstone and his Nonconformist supporters could not
have been more different, “Religion was the route by which both Gladstone and the
Nonconformists became liberals.”\textsuperscript{196} Gladstone has also been one of the few British
politicians to receive a full-length religious biography.\textsuperscript{197} Despite the supposed

\textsuperscript{194} See Perry Butler, \textit{Gladstone: Church, State, and Tractarianism – A Study of His Religious Ideas and

\textsuperscript{195} Parry, \textit{The Politics of Patriotism}, 32.


increasing marginality of religion in politics during this period, questions touching on religion remained a central concern of British politicians.198

198 José Harris notes in passing that the “partial reunion of the Scots Presbyterian churches in 1902-04 took up far more administrative and parliamentary time than other better remembered issues of the post-Boer War era, such as physical deterioration, unemployment and the restructuring of national defence.” See Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: A Social History of Britain, 1870-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 152.
Appendix to Chapter 6*

The Church Association printed 4,000,000 leaflets for the General Election and distributed 3,000,000 of those.

The Church Association’s Account of the Election Results:
County of London and the Constituencies of Ealing, Brentford, Harrow, Hornsey, and Tottenham:
No. of Constituencies (represented by 67 Members): 66
No. in which there were no contests: 17
No. of candidates pledged to support Church Discipline Bill or in sympathy: 47
No. of elected Members pledged to Church Discipline Bill or in sympathy: 26
No. of elected Members who voted for the Bill last session, not included in the above: 2
Total number of elected Members upon whose support we may reckon in the new Parliament: 28
Total number of Members who voted for the Church Discipline Bill in 1899: 6
Net Gain for the Protestant cause: 22

Eastern Counties
No. of Constituencies (represented by 71 Members): 68
No. in which there were no contests: 26
No. of candidates pledged to support Church Discipline Bill or in sympathy: 67
No. of elected Members pledged to Church Discipline Bill or in sympathy: 35
No. of elected Members who voted for the Bill last session, not included in the above: 0
Total number of elected Members upon whose support we may reckon in the new Parliament: 35
Total number of Members who voted for the Church Discipline Bill in 1899: 5
Net Gain for the Protestant cause: 30

Southern Counties comprising Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Berks, Bucks, Oxford, Gloucester, Monmouth, Somerset, Wilts, Dorset, Devon, and Cornwall:
No. of Constituencies (represented by 97 Members): 90
No. in which there were no contests: 39
No. of candidates pledged to support Church Discipline Bill or in sympathy: 81
No. of elected Members pledged to Church Discipline Bill or in sympathy: 40
No. of elected Members who voted for the Bill last session, not included in the above: 3
Total number of elected Members upon whose support we may reckon in the new Parliament: 43
Total number of Members who voted for the Church Discipline Bill in 1899: 14
Net Gain for the Protestant cause: 29

Midland Counties:
No. of Constituencies (represented by 76 Members): 73

* Taken from “Protestantism before Politics. Remarkable Result of the Protestant Vote at the General Election, 1900,” Supplement edition, English Churchman, 25 October 1900, 717-720; and The Record, 29 October 1900, p. 1022-1023. Election results compiled by Henry Miller, Church Association secretary.
No. in which there were no contests: 31
No. of candidates pledged to support Church Discipline Bill or in sympathy: 59
No. of elected Members pledged to Church Discipline Bill or in sympathy: 46
No. of elected Members who voted for the Bill last session, not included in the above: 0
Total number of elected Members upon whose support we may reckon in the new
Parliament: 46
Total number of Members who voted for the Church Discipline Bill in 1899: 17
Net Gain for the Protestant cause: 29

Lancashire and the Wirral Peninsula of Cheshire:
No. of Constituencies (represented by 59 Members): 55
No. in which there were no contests: 18
No. of candidates pledged to support Church Discipline Bill or in sympathy: 54
No. of elected Members pledged to Church Discipline Bill or in sympathy: 43
No. of elected Members who voted for the Bill last session, not included in the above: 0
Total number of elected Members upon whose support we may reckon in the new
Parliament: 43
Total number of Members who voted for the Church Discipline Bill in 1899: 21
Net Gain for the Protestant cause: 22

Totals:
England: Total number of candidates: 761
Total number of candidates pledged or in sympathy: 384
England: Number of elected Members pledged to support CDB or in sympathy: 246
Number of elected Members who voted for Bill last Session, not including the above: 5

Scotland: Number of elected Members pledged or in sympathy, or who voted for the Bill last year: 22

Wales: Number of elected Members pledged or in sympathy, or who voted for the Bill last year: 21

Grand total of Members either pledged or in sympathy, or who having voted for the Bill last year, may be reckoned upon to do so again: 294.

Number of Members who had voted in favor of the Church Discipline Bill last year: 156

Estimation of Protestant Influence:
Total number of constituencies in England: 443
Number of constituencies in which there was no contest: 151
Number of constituencies in which a Protestant test was possible: 292
Number of constituencies in which, both candidates being unfavourable, the Church Association advising abstention from the poll: 46
Number of constituencies in which all the candidates were favourable, Church Association therefore withdrew: 89
Number of constituencies in England in which the Protestant Roll was not able to exercise any apparent influence: 71

**Members Elected in 1900 Publicly Pledged to Support a Church Discipline Bill**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constituency</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Party</th>
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<td>Ayr Burghs</td>
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<td>Bedford</td>
<td>Charles Guy Pym</td>
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<td>Berkshire, North or Abingdon</td>
<td>Archie Kirkman Loyd</td>
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<td>Bethnal Green, North East</td>
<td>Sir Mancherjee M. Bhownaggree</td>
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<td>Birmingham, East</td>
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Flint District                     John Henry Lewis                  L
Flintshire                         Samuel Smith                      L
Gateshead                          William Allan                     L
Glamorganshire, East               Alfred Thomas                      L
Glamorganshire, South              Maj. Windham Henry Wyndham-Quin    C
Glamorganshire, Mid                Samuel T. Evans                   L
Glamorganshire, Rhodda             William Abraham                   L
Glasgow, Tradeston                 Archibald Cameron Corbett        LU
Gloucester                         Russell Rea                        L
Grantham                          Arthur Priestly                   L
Gravesend                          Horatio Gilbert George Parker    C
Grimsby                            George Doughty                     LU
Hackney, Central                   Augustus Henry Eden Allhusen      C
Halifax                            Sir Savile Brinton Crossley, Bart. LU
Halifax                            John Henry Whitley                L
Hampshire, Isle of Wright          Capt. J. E. B. Seely               C
Hampshire, New Forest              Hon. John W. E. D. Scott-Montagu  C
Hanley                             Arthur Howard Heath                C
Hampshire, South                   Lt. Col. Arthur H. Lee             C
Harlepool                          Sir Christopher Furness            L
Hastings                           Freeman Freeman Thomas             L
Hawick Burghs                      Thomas L. Shaw                     L
Hereford                           John Stanhope Arkwright           C
Herefordshire, North or Leominster Sir James Rankin                 C
Hertfordshire, Hertford            Abel Henry Smith                  C
Hertfordshire, St. Alban’s         Hon. Vicary Gibbs                 C
Hertfordshire, Watford             T. F. Halsey                      C
Huddersfield                       Sir James Thomas Woodhouse         L
Hull, East                          Joseph Thomas Firbank            C
Hull, West                         Charles Henry Wilson               L
Ipswich                            Daniel Ford Goddard               L
Islington, North                   George Christopher Trout Bartley    C
Islington, South                   Sir Albert Kaye Rollitt             C
Islington, West                    Thomas Lough                       L
Kent, Dartford                     Rt. Hon. Sir William Hart-Dyke    C
Kent, West                         Henry William Forster             C
Kidderminster                      Sir Augustus Frederick Godson     C
Kilmarnock Burghs                  John McAusland Denny               C
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CHAPTER 7

Arthur Balfour and the Triumph of Ecclesiastical Independence, 1900-1906

This chapter continues the story begun in Chapter 6 by examining the period between the General Election of 1900 and 1906 when the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline released its Report, another general election occurred, and debates again surrounded an Education Bill. Just as the previous chapter emphasized how the consideration of religion, and especially the events of the Church Crisis, alters the received image of William Harcourt, this chapter focuses on Arthur James Balfour. This chapter also highlights the events that caused the Church Crisis to dissipate after 1906. The theoretical compromise laid out by the RCED wound up favoring the Anglo-Catholics in practice and consequently took considerable steam out of political Protestantism. Those still inclined to continue the fight in Parliament quickly found themselves divided when the 1906 Education Bill split the evangelical Anglican and Nonconformist anti-Ritualist alliance. By the end of this period, Anglo-Catholicism continued to gain young adherents, while Anglican Evangelicalism continued to grey.

In the aftermath of the Conservative Party’s strong showing in the October 1900 General Election, Balfour continued to fret about the ongoing efforts of Liberals like Smith and Harcourt to push a Church Discipline Bill through Commons. Balfour’s continued anxiety surrounding the Church Discipline Bill raises the question of why the Leader of Commons should be so concerned about ecclesiastical affairs when there were other, more obvious, concerns – the Boer War! – about which to worry. Actually, Balfour had taken a special interest in theology and church life long before becoming the Leader of Commons. In addition to being a Conservative politician, Arthur Balfour was
a well-known philosopher with interests in theistic theology, science, and psychic phenomena. Principle A. M. Fairbairn of Mansfield College considered Balfour a “brilliant amateur” whose works were remarkable for a statesman.\(^1\) Indeed, Balfour was so devoted to his philosophical, theological, and scientific research that it often took precedence over his work as a statesman.\(^2\) Yet, later historians and biographers have largely ignored this facet of Balfour’s life along with his involvement in the turn-of-the-century Church Crisis, which gave him opportunity for the practical application of his philosophical principles. Instead, most scholars have seen Balfour as a secular politician and therefore have failed to illuminate the connections between his politics and philosophy or his role in ecclesiastical affairs. Since philosophy, psychic research, and religion are generally seen as outside the realm of pure politics, they are usually dismissed by Balfour scholars.

- **Balfour Historiography**

One of the earliest scholarly biographies of Balfour – Sydney Zebel’s *Balfour: A Political Biography* (1973) – gives the most coverage (one page!) to Balfour’s interactions with the established church during the Church Crisis.\(^3\) Although Zebel fails to list “Ritualism” or a related word in his index, he does write that “Balfour was faced with a dangerous controversy when Parliament met in 1899,” and goes on to describe the anti-Ritualist crisis.\(^4\) Unfortunately, Zebel’s description blurs over crucial distinctions.

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among anti-Ritualists and appears to lump them all together with John Kensit. Zebel seems equally confused regarding the practices anti-Ritualists opposed, describing one such practice as “reserv[ing] the Sacrament to the clergy,” which seems to conflate the practices of reservation and non-communicant celebration. In any case, Zebel concludes by noting that

The Anti-Ritualist controversy, which dragged on for years, complicated the Cabinet’s efforts in dealing with still-unresolved educational problems. Direct public aid to the voluntary schools, it was argued by Lloyd George and other advanced Liberals, was hardly justified if the Church authorities who controlled them were guilty of ‘lawlessness’ and inculcated English children with beliefs hardly different from those entertained by Roman Catholics. Criticisms of this sort were to be a serious source of difficulty when in 1902 Balfour undertook a fundamental reorganization of English education.

Despite noting the seriousness of the difficulty, Zebel refrains from further mention of the Church Crisis.


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5 Ibid. The practice of reservation of the Blessed Sacrament involved leaving consecrated bread and wine in a tabernacle near or on the high altar for purposes of adoration and/or the consumption of the sick and homebound. The practice was controversial, especially when adoration was involved, because it generally presupposed the doctrine of transubstantiation. Non-communicating celebrations involved celebrations of the Eucharist in which only the presiding priest consumed the consecrated elements. This practice was controversial since it emphasized the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist while deemphasizing its importance as a communal celebration.

6 Ibid., 88.

role in education reform and greater emphasis on Balfour as a philosopher. Considering the content of books such as Zebel’s, Egremont’s, and Mackay’s, Eugene Rasor argued that “…there is need for a solid, scholarly, comprehensive, i.e., political, personal, and intellectual, biography which incorporates all the variety of aspects of the life of Balfour…” because “[t]he factors of Balfour as philosopher and Balfour as psychic have never been sufficiently or appropriately integrated into the literature about Balfour.”

Neither, we might add, has the Church Crisis been adequately addressed by Balfour scholars. Scholarly works focusing on Balfour’s philosophy and theology do exist, such as John David Root’s “The Philosophical and Religious thought of Arthur James Balfour” (1980). But while Root rehabilitated Balfour’s image as a philosopher, he made virtually no mention of Balfour’s political career other than to mention that his philosophy often took precedence.

- **Balfour the Philosophical Theist**

  Today historians primarily remember Balfour in connection with tariff policy, Ireland, imperial policy, and the Balfour Declaration, but his contemporaries saw him as a notable Theist who sought to reconcile science and religion through philosophical

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skepticism. In his *A Defence of Philosophic Doubt* (1879), Balfour extended his skepticism to science, arguing that it was based upon “a futile attempt to comprehend an unimaginably complex universe” and therefore as “irrational” as religion. This conclusion did not lead Balfour to abandon both science and religion, but rather to embrace them both on the basis of belief and authority: Balfour considered himself a religious man since he respected reason enough to know its limits. In his next major work, *The Foundations of Belief* (1895), Balfour wrote that authority, rather than reason, supplied the essential premises of science, social life, and religion. *The Foundations of Belief* was heralded by contemporaries as a defense of Christianity against agnosticism and as a vindication of faith against scientific materialism. Perhaps not surprisingly, *Foundations* garnered high praise from Catholic thinkers such as George Tyrell and Wilfrid Ward. Balfour’s philosophical skepticism endowed him (ironically) with devotion to God and non-dogmatic science, respect for authority, and a consequent belief that established institutions such as the state church should be changed only very slowly after much consideration.

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11 Naamani, “The Theism of Lord Balfour,” 660, 662. Some scholars such as David John Root have argued that Balfour makes no attempt to “reconcile” science and religion (“Philosophical and Religious Thought of Balfour,” 123). Rather, Root argues that Balfour tried to show how both were equally valid on the same basis. Root is technically correct. I am using “reconcile” non-technically only to indicate that Balfour sought to show that there could be no true antagonism between science and religion and that being a scientist should not preclude one from being a Christian and vice versa. He wanted to bring the science and religion together but was not interested in solving every possible point of difference between the two such as the word “reconcile” may technically imply.


Balfour was not a politician who compartmentalized his faith from his politics. For Balfour, faith in God provided the necessary intellectual support for all areas of human endeavor. What, then, were the main tenets of Balfour’s theism and how could these have influenced him as a politician? Intellectual historian Jonathan Rose has argued that Edwardian thought was characterized by a desire for synthesis or the reconciliation of seeming opposites. If this is true, then Arthur Balfour must be considered the quintessential Edwardian thinker. Balfour’s entire philosophical and theological career was dominated by the attempt to reconcile seeming opposites, especially religion and science. To Balfour this mission was of the utmost importance since “immutable and perpetual antagonism” between religion and science would surely drive him to despair. As a result, Balfour expended a great deal of intellectual energy in the search for a synthesis.

Balfour’s primary strategy for alleviating tension between antagonistic ideas or groups was to minimize differences and emphasize common ground. Thus, Balfour’s thinking focused on theism – as opposed to revealed Christianity – based on a “common-sense” natural religion that he believed was accessible to all reasonable men. Balfour’s desire to synthesize differences and bring together opposite factions can be seen in his handling of the Church Crisis. Above all else, Balfour abhorred schism and prized

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16 See, for example, Arthur James Balfour, *Theism and Humanism: The Gifford Lectures* delivered in 1914 (New York: Hodder and Stoughton and George H. Doran Company, 1915), 248. The Gifford Lectures are a prestigious lectureship on the topic of natural religion. In 1923 Balfour again delivered the Gifford Lectures, this time under the title “Theism and Thought.”
19 This quotation is taken from an 1908 speech before the Pan-Anglican Congress and is cited in Wilfrid Short, ed., *Arthur James Balfour as Philosopher and Thinker* (London: 1912), 502-4.
Thus, his greatest fear in the Church Crisis was that the unity of the Anglican Communion would be undermined. He claimed to be “really afraid of the folly of the extremists on both sides producing some kind of schism which would be disastrous to the Church.”

Although the promotion of unity is surely a commendable goal, Balfour’s belief in the possibility and absolute desirability of unity left him unable to understand the conviction with which differing factions held opposing theological convictions. Balfour tended to attribute the failure of opponents to reconcile to the effect of irrational emotion, which clouded their better judgment. “The real danger” of the Church Crisis, he wrote, “is that divisions occur upon what are in substance small points, but which are erected by the combatants into matter of what they call ‘principle’ and ‘conscience’.” The irrational elevation of small points, such as whether or not one made the sign of the cross, into matters of principle had clouded out moderate rationality. To him, such conflicts over points of “principle” were merely “the noise of unprofitable controversy.” Rather than obsess over small matters of conscience, Balfour preferred to emphasize areas of agreement, such as the importance of the law, and seek a compromise on that basis. Balfour’s desire to maintain unity and refusal to support radicals on either side of the Church Crisis probably helped ameliorate the situation and may have prevented a schism in the Church of England.

- **Balfour and the Church Crisis**

Balfour’s intellectual and theological skepticism in religious matters has been taken as evidence that he acted as a disinterested party in church-state controversies. G. I.

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21 Balfour to W. Percy Thorton [?], 2 December 1898, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, ff. 11-12.
22 Balfour to Dean, 3 February 1899, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, f. 35.
23 Balfour to J. W. Adams, 22 June 1900, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, ff. 210-211.
T. Machin, for example, writes that Balfour “was personally very remote from … violent liturgical quarrels.” R. J. Q. Adams argues that Balfour “refused to become embroiled in sectarian battles.” It is certainly true that Balfour’s skeptical philosophy led him to abhor any type of fanaticism, including the type that produced “violent liturgical quarrels” and “sectarian battles,” but it is not true that he was “personally very remote” from them. Unlike Machin and Adams, earlier chroniclers of Balfour’s life placed greater emphasis on his role in ecclesiastical affairs. In 1903 biographer Bernard Alderson wrote that

On the vexed question of ritualism in the Church, Mr Balfour has expressed his views on several occasions. Probably more than other living statesmen he has closely identified himself with Church work, and religious and philosophical subjects, and, consequently, he has taken a leading part in the ritualistic controversy, or at least his views of the crisis have been brought into prominent notice.

Although not a professional historian, Balfour’s niece and biographer, Blanche E. C. Dugdale, argued that the Church Crisis was “both too important and too illuminating of Balfour’s point of view to be passed over,” given the fact that it touched so heavily on the relationship between church and state. Indeed, Balfour’s letters especially demonstrate that he could not avoid or remain aloof from the controversy. The dispute deeply affected him. As late as 1903 Balfour confessed to his friend E. S. Talbot that he

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25 Adams, *Balfour*, 169. As evidence, Adams cites two letters Balfour wrote to T. Myles Sandys. Sandys, Conservative MP for the Bootle Division of Lancashire after 1885, served as the President of the Protestant Reformation Society, a Vice President of the National Protestant Church Union, the Chairman of the National Club, and the Council Chairman of the Imperial Protestant Federation. That Balfour would rebuff Sandys, one of the most radical anti-Ritualists in the Commons, is not surprising. Balfour’s 1898 note was a response to Sandy’s outrage that Balfour had not supported Harcourt and Smith during the Benefice Bill debate. Balfour agreed with Sandys about the importance of maintaining ecclesiastical law, but he also argued that this should be “combined with the firm maintenance of the comprehensive spirit” of the Church of England. See A. J. Balfour to Thomas Myles Sandys, 5 August 1898, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, ff. 1-2.
entertained “the gloomiest apprehensions as to the future of the Church of England. I can hardly think of anything else.” Far from being disengaged from the controversy, Balfour concluded by telling Talbot that “…my sheet of paper is finished and I should weep for very soreness of spirit if I went on!”28

Given his position as the Leader of the House of Commons, Balfour found himself completely embroiled in, what was to him, a highly distasteful ecclesiastical controversy. He did his best to deflect or ignore the issue in Parliament in order to preserve established episcopal authority and because he disliked what he saw as the persecuting fanaticism bred by the religious certainty of many Protestants. Although Balfour disliked extreme theological positions, his stance on the Church Crisis was complicated by his friendship with several clergymen who were at least sympathetic to Anglo-Catholicism. Balfour was a close friend and confident of at least two high-ranking Anglican bishops and was personally invested in maintaining the unity of the Establish Church of England, which he felt the anti-Ritualists were destroying. Of all the bishops, Balfour was the closest to Edward Stuart Talbot, who had succeeded Randall Davidson as Bishop of Rochester in 1895 and remained in that office until 1905 when he became the first Bishop of Southwark.

In addition to being Balfour’s “intimate friend,” Talbot was known for his refusal to prosecute law-breaking Ritualist priests and for his association with Tractarianism.29 Talbot, along with Bishop of London Mandell Creighton (and later Arthur Winnington-Ingram) and Archbishop Frederick Temple, was among the bishops most reviled by anti-Ritualists. Additionally, Edward’s brother, John G. Talbot, was one of the leading high-

28 Balfour to E. S. Talbot, 6 February 1903, qtd. in Dugdale, *Arthur James Balfour*, 209.
29 Randall Davidson to F. S. Parry, 19 December 1900, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49788, ff. 84-86.
Churchmen in the House of Commons.30 Talbot encouraged Balfour both to accept the place of High Churchmanship within the established Church and to prevent Harcourt and others from enacting new anti-Ritualist legislation. Following Balfour’s speech in Manchester on the topic of Church discipline, Talbot praised his friend’s “respect for reasonable High Churchmanship and perfect understanding that the future of the Church of England depends on such Churchmanship being guaranteed its place…” Moreover, Balfour’s “generous heart exemplified Protestantism in its genuine as opposed to its narrowly fanatical sense.” Fanatical Protestants, Talbot continued,

stigmatize[d] a Churchmanship which cannot be attacked without the Church’s ruin, and which is perhaps the … most loyal, and most fertile, of the forms of life within the Church. …there are of course a quantity of people who are keen, now a row is up, to put back the clock and say that a great deal which is thoroughly and rightly Established among us is disloyal. 31

Following the battle over the Second Reading of the Church Discipline Bill of 1899, Talbot wrote to Balfour that he could not “help sending you a word of affectionate gratitude for your…dignified and rightly sympathetic line…. When I think how much difference it might have made if we had had other Leaders, for either side of the House I [realize] the amount of our debt to you.” Talbot was nevertheless not pleased with the amendment that passed in place of the Church Discipline Bill. But he took “it in context with the very difficult position in which you were placed” and “blessed” Balfour for his service to the Church.32 On the whole, Balfour deserved Talbot’s praise, since he was able to block new Church Discipline legislation.

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30 Nigel Yates, Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 318, 321n115. Sir George John Talbot, a Member of Parliament and noted judge, was Edward Talbot’s nephew.
31 Edward S. Talbot to Balfour, 5 February 1898, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49789, ff. 98-100. Emphasis in the original.
Balfour also corresponded extensively with his “close friend” Randall Davidson, who served as Bishop of Winchester from 1895 until 1903 when Balfour elevated him to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, possibly partially in recognition of Davidson’s support during the Ritualist crisis. Like Balfour, Davidson disliked religious extremism and law-breaking. However, also like Balfour, he wanted the Church, not Parliament, to determine how to resolve the crisis. To prevent Parliamentary interference, both Davidson and Archbishop Frederick Temple provided Balfour with the statistics and theological information necessary to rebut the charges of anti-Ritualist MPs. Davidson even wrote to Balfour from the Episcopal Convocation in order to forward him two memoranda detailing inaccuracies in Samuel Smith’s speeches against Ritualism.

Balfour’s uncle, the Prime Minister Lord Salisbury, was known as a High Churchman who used his patronage to appoint Anglo-Catholics to the Episcopal bench. Even before becoming Prime Minister in 1902, Balfour used his patronage to support Anglo-Catholic candidates similar to those Salisbury would choose. Protestant organs such as the English Churchmen complained that Balfour would be less open to charges of hypocrisy when he stated his dislike of Ritualism if he did not at the same time use his patronage to favor extreme Ritualists. In any case, the record of ecclesiastical appointments established by both Balfour and his uncle cemented the association.


35 See, for example, Frederick Temple to Balfour, n.d. [c. January – 28 February 1901], Balfour papers, Add. MS 49788, ff. 52-3; and Randall Davidson to Balfour, 11 March 1901, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49788, ff.108-110.

36 Randall Davidson to Balfour, c. 17 January 1901, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49788, f. 96.

37 See, for example, Frederick Wood, The Church of England and Ritualism (Bradford: William Byles and Sons, Printers, 1898), 9; and Vox Populi, letter to the editor, English Churchman, 22 December 1898, p. 848.

38 English Churchman, 23 June 1898, p. 403. The English Churchman speculated that perhaps Balfour had some Ritualist friend who advised him in his Episcopal appointments.
between the Cecil family, including Balfour, and Anglo-Catholicism in the mind of most Britons. Furthermore, Balfour often consulted with family members, especially his cousin Lord Cranborne, throughout the Church Crisis.39 Balfour’s correspondence with influential High-Church clergymen, such as Talbot and Davidson, and Cecil family connections ensured that he was drawn into the Church Crisis and had ample ammunition when it came time to argue his case.

Given his beliefs on the primacy of authority and his many friendships with High-Churchmen, it is understandable that Balfour opposed the effort of Protestant MPs to create new Church Discipline legislation. Both publicly and privately Balfour stressed that regardless of the political problems created by the Church Crisis his primary concern was for the unity of the Church of England. Indeed, the warring factions within the Church caused him no small amount of anxiety. For example, Balfour wrote that

I am very anxious about this Church business, not on political grounds, though of course these are bound to have their weight, but because I am really afraid of the folly of the extremists on both sides producing some kind of schism which would be disastrous to the Church. The disloyal parsons I believe to be very few: the foolish ones, however, are not difficult to find.40

Later, Balfour complained that the upcoming debate on the Second Reading of the 1899 Church Discipline Bill “is undoubtedly a cause of grave anxiety, and certainly the London Government Bill had given me, so far, nothing like as much trouble.”41 By late 1900 Balfour was describing the Church Crisis as a “dangerous position of affairs….”42

Balfour, however, did not heap all the blame for the Church Crisis on the heads of the anti-Ritualists. He equally disapproved of the actions of (what he believed to be) the

40 Balfour to W. Percy Thorton [?], 2 December 1898, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, ff. 11-12.
41 Balfour to Arthur Elliott, 8 May 1899, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, ff. 83-5.
42 Balfour to Frederick Temple, 15 December 1900, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49788, ff. 28-40.
few foolish Anglo-Catholics who were needlessly aggravating Protestants within the established Church. Before the vote on Gedge’s amended motion on April 11, 1899, Balfour attacked men like Lord Halifax and his followers who failed to see the significance of the Protestant Reformation and

who frankly admit that they would like to see the ritual of the Church modified in a sense which would bring it, if not actual conformity, at any rate, into very close agreement, with the ritual existing in the Church of Rome in immediate pre-Reformation days.  

The men who held such views might be sincere, but they were not loyal members of the Church of England. Although Balfour sympathized with most High-Churchmen, he had no sympathy for the most advanced or “spiky” Anglo-Catholics who seemed to imitate Roman ceremonies primarily for their shock value. Balfour had these “foolish parsons” in mind when he wrote an article entitled “How Ritualists Harm the Church” for publication in the North American Review. Both Balfour and his “Chief,” the Prime Minister, disliked lawlessness. Salisbury, echoing Harcourt’s arguments during the Benefice Bill debate, argued that “no one ought to have any office in the Church who is not prepared to stand by the Prayer Book as it is.” While supporting High Churchmanship within the bounds of ecclesiastical law, Salisbury complained that “the Ritualists are a great evil … on account of the anarchy they have introduced into the Church.” Balfour agreed with his uncle that “Ritualistic practices which are illegal should be stopped.” Moreover, he “would like to see machinery devised which would

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43 Parliamentary Debates, 11 April 1899, 69: 825-826.
44 Ibid., 827.
47 Qtd. in Machin, Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869-1921, 244.
48 Balfour to Evelyn Cecil, 17 August 1898, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, ff. 5-6.
enable congregations who preferred a simple service to prevent the introduction against their will of a more elaborate ritual, even though the latter might be not illegal.”

Despite his dislike of “Extreme Ritualism,” Balfour believed that in order for the Church of England to maintain its established and tolerant comprehensiveness, Protestant Anglicans had to come to terms with moderate High-Churchmanship and Anglo-Catholicism. During an 1898 speech at Bristol Balfour reminded the crowd that

> We are Protestants, and the name is connected with noble associations in the past. It is associated with the reform of doctrine, with the reform of ritual, with the reform of morals. There is little real danger, he continued, to Protestantism, but there may be danger to the Church if Protestants forget in their zeal the character for charity, toleration, and comprehension which ought always to distinguish the National Church. In the meantime the Bishops are the constituted authorities, to whom law-abiding men must look.

In short, Balfour desired to maintain the unity and comprehensiveness of the Church of England. When the anti-Ritualist and Conservative MP Col. T. Myles Sandys complained to Balfour about ecclesiastical lawlessness, Balfour replied that he agreed that the law must be maintained but that “this should be combined with the firm maintenance of the comprehensive spirit which to day characterizes the Church of England. There are dangers on both sides: let us, if possible, avoid them.” A few days later Balfour summarized his position to Evelyn Cecil (Salisbury’s younger son and therefore Balfour’s cousin):

> My own personal opinion on the subject is as follows: (a) Ritualistic practices which are illegal should be stopped. (b) But a ritual may be

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51 Balfour to Sandys, 5 August 1898, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, ff. 1-2.
perfectly legal and yet inflict considerable hardship on a congregation who prefer a ritual of a simpler character. I should like to see some machinery devised by which, in such cases, no charge should be introduced of which the congregation disapproved. Such a scheme, however, would be extremely difficult to devise, and still more difficult to carry through. -  
(c) Apart from questions of ritual in the church we have to consider the opinions and doctrines believed and taught by its ministers. As regards those I should certainly not be a party to narrowing the comprehensive character which the Church of England has always possessed. – This is not because I have any predilection for High Church doctrine any more than for ritualistic practices, but simply because I am convinced that, if you narrow down the English Church to one particular school of religious thought, you would do it incalculable injury; and I should hold this opinion even if that school of thought happened to be my own.52

As it was, however, extremists sough to narrow the comprehensive character of the church and Britain was filled “with the noise of unprofitable controversy.”53

Moreover, Balfour believed that the anti-Ritualist movement was in fact filled with hypocritical secularists and Nonconformists whose real interest was not maintaining the Protestantism of the Church of England, but rather with tearing the Established Church to shreds and hastening disestablishment. Balfour believed, according to Bernard Alderson, that only three groups of people would profit from the passage of new anti-Ritualist legislation: First, the political Nonconformists, who believed anti-Ritualism was paving the way for disestablishment; second, the secularists, who knew that when non-Christians saw the way that British Christians fought over ceremonial and vestments, they would want no part of Christianity; and finally, the Roman Catholics, who would receive the Anglo-Catholic clergy departing from the Church of England.54

Indeed, Balfour complained that “what provokes me about all these ‘Protestant’ demonstrations is that, in my belief, more than half of those who get them up and take

52 Balfour to Evelyn Cecil, 17 August 1898, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, ff. 5-6.
53 Balfour to J. W. Adams, 22 June 1900, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, ff. 210-211.
54 Qtd in Alderson, Arthur James Balfour, 257-258.
part in them are not the friends, but on all other occasions the avowed enemies, of the Church which at this moment they are so loudly professing their desire to reform.”

Nor was Balfour entirely wrong in his assumptions. In formulating Liberal Party strategy, Lord Tweedmouth wrote to Henry Campbell-Bannerman that “…I think that as individuals we should make it very clear that we look to Disestablishment generously effected as the only and not distant solution to the Church question.”

Many ordinary Nonconformists also believed anti-Ritualism would pave the way to disestablishment.

While talk of loosening the ties between church and state may have sent shivers down the spines of many Anglicans, Balfour was not nearly so concerned. Although he was not a disestablishmentarian, he also described himself as “not only not an Erastian, but” having “a strong dislike of Erastianism.” Therefore, “If it were possible…to give the English Church the full autonomy possessed by the Scottish Church, I should like to do it.” He claimed to have always been in favor of granting the Church of England increased autonomy, although he was not interested in totally severing the bonds between church and state.

Rather, Balfour supported a form of ecclesiastical self-government respecting the historic rights of both church and state along the lines of the Church of Scotland’s relationship to the state. Although Balfour claimed to have seen the church-

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55 Balfour to Dean, 3 February 1899, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, f. 35. ECU President Lord Halifax agreed with Balfour that the “Protestant element” was really out to damage the Church through disestablishment. See Viscount Halifax, “The Agitation Against the Oxford Movement,” (London: Office of the English Church Union, 1899), encl. Fortieth Annual Meeting, 15 June 1899, Church Union Papers, C.U.Dep.5, ff. 151-152.

56 Lord Tweedmouth to Henry Campbell-Bannerman, 22 June 1899, Campbell-Bannerman papers, Add. MS 41231, f. 59.

57 Balfour to George Talbot, 16 February 1899, Balfour Papers, Add. MS 49853, ff. 43-50.

58 Ibid.


60 Balfour to W. E. Torr, 18 December 1899, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, ff. 151-152; and Parliamentary Debates, 11 April 1899, 69: 825. Arguing to the House of Commons that to support
state dynamic work excellently in Scotland, he understood that the unique tensions existing in the polarized Church of England would make the Scottish system difficult to transplant. Nevertheless, in a note written to F. S. Parry the day after a successful meeting with Davidson, Balfour claimed to be

more than ever convinced that the only true solution of our present perplexities lies in the direction of ecclesiastical autonomy, subject of course to Parliament, and I am seriously reflecting whether I cannot induce my colleagues to allow me to prepare the way for legislative action next year.

Balfour did not introduce legislation designed to give the Church of England more autonomy along the lines of the Church of Scotland, but his interest in Scottish ecclesiastical affairs remained piqued.

Restructuring the relationship between the Church of England and Parliament so that it more closely resembled the relationship between the Church of Scotland and Parliament was not politically possible. Practically speaking, then, Balfour opposed changes in the relationship between the Church of England and the state. Obviously, this caused him to clash with Harcourt, Samuel Smith, and others who sought new legislation to prosecute Ritualist lawbreakers by abolishing the Episcopal veto. This course of action was abhorrent to Balfour on multiple levels. Not only was it a radical change to the governance of an established institution, but it also seemed to endorse Protestant fanaticism and militate against the comprehensive nature of the Church of England.

Erastianism was “to abandon all hope of spiritual growth” and to expose the church to “unspiritual influences,” Balfour declared his desire “to see greater spiritual autonomy given to the Church of England” so that it would possess the same liberties as the established Church of Scotland.

61 Balfour to W. E. Torr, 18 December 1899, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, ff. 151-152.
62 Balfour to F. S. Parry, 7 January 1901 qtd. in G. K. A. Bell, Randall Davidson: Archbishop of Canterbury, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), 349-50. Parry was Balfour’s amanuensis.
Moreover, it directly contradicted the wishes of powerful friends like Davidson, Talbot, and Gore and ran against his own anti-Erastian principles.

In practice, Balfour sought to manage the Parliamentary crisis by expressing (sincere) sympathy with the Protestant goal of ending lawbreaking, while arguing that a new Church Discipline Bill was unwise because it would circumvent the bishops’ traditional authority. Writing to Arthur Elliott shortly before the Second Reading of the Church Discipline Bill in 1899, Balfour noted that “I need not say however, that if I speak, while I shall condemn the Bill strongly from the practical point of view, I shall express sympathy with the object which its promoters profess to desire, namely the maintenance of the Protestant Anglican Church.” Balfour’s Conservative Party also made it clear that they could not pass a bill that would diminish or disregard the bishops’ authority. For Balfour, who believed that even reason itself was subordinate to authority, any bill seeking to run rough-shod over established authority was bound to be unwelcome. Erastian legislation might come, but Balfour would personally have no part in it. Balfour’s involvement in the Church Crisis then, was in harmony with the philosophical presuppositions that guided his other policies. Balfour’s skepticism did not cause him to become intellectually and emotionally detached from the controversies roiling the Church of England. Rather, it caused him to become deeply involved.

- A New Front in the Church Crisis: The 1902 Education Act

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63 Balfour to Arthur Elliott, 8 May 1899, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49853, ff. 83-5.
The political impact of Balfour’s anti-Erastian theism and of the Church Crisis can be seen especially well in the controversy surrounding the Education Act of 1902. Although historians have paid little attention to anti-Ritualism in Parliament, they have paid considerable attention to the Nonconformist campaign against the 1902 Education Act, which offered state support to schools controlled by the Church of England. While historians have generally examined the 1902 bill in the context of Nonconformist anger at having to support Anglican voluntary schools through the rates, few have analyzed it in relation to the Church Crisis or Balfour’s religious beliefs. In fact, contemporaries often saw the 1902 bill as an open attack on Protestantism orchestrated by Balfour and the “Hotel Cecil.” Although Balfour was certainly not an Anglo-Catholic, as we have seen he nonetheless moved in those High Church circles and shared their distaste for anti-Ritualism and Erastianism.

According to bibliographer Eugene Rasor, Balfour always had a deep commitment to education and educational reform, especially regarding secondary schooling. The existing schools boards were small, inefficient, and ineffective. Balfour and others recognized the need to reform the British educational system in order to

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compete with the Americans and Germans.\textsuperscript{67} As a result, Balfour became involved with the movement to create a national system of primary and secondary education that would be financed through local rates.\textsuperscript{68} Along with Sir John Gorst and Sir Robert Morant, Balfour was one of the three individuals most responsible for drafting the 1902 Education Act. Although the bill itself was primarily the work of Morant, Balfour took an active interest in the work from the beginning of the process.\textsuperscript{69} In essence, the 1902 act aimed to simplify the current system by making it more efficient and national. In order to do this, the existing school boards would be abolished, secondary education would be instead placed under the local authorities, and the financially-strapped voluntary schools would be funded by local rates.\textsuperscript{70} Religious instruction in the board schools would continue to be undenominational (under the provisions of the Cowper-Temple clause), while religious instruction in the voluntary schools would continue to be denominational.

Balfour was a strong supporter of the Anglican voluntary schools and believed that as long as the Cowper-Temple clause prevented the teaching of distinctively Anglican doctrines in the board schools, it was “absolutely necessary that there should be a place for voluntary schools in our system, and that these schools should be properly equipped.”\textsuperscript{71} He thought that under the current system, the voluntary schools were ill-equipped and in “imminent danger” of vanishing due to financial difficulties.\textsuperscript{72} Because Balfour strongly believed British children needed religious instruction in school, he

\textsuperscript{67} Adams, \textit{Balfour}, 167. The poor quality of technical education in Britain was a major area of concern. \\
\textsuperscript{68} Rasor, \textit{Arthur James Balfour, 1848-1930}, 20. \\
\textsuperscript{69} Eric Eaglesham, “Planning the Education Bill of 1902,” \textit{British Journal of Educational Studies} 9, no. 1 (November 1960): 3. \\
\textsuperscript{70} Alan Rogers, “Church and Children – A Study in the Controversy Over the 1902 Education Act,” \textit{British Journal of Educational Studies} 8, no. 1 (November 1959), 38. \\
\textsuperscript{71} Balfour to G. T. Sadler, re-printed in \textit{The Times}, 25 October 1902, p. 12, col. D. \\
\textsuperscript{72} Balfour to Plummer, MP for Newcastle, re-printed in “Mr. Balfour on the Education Bill,” \textit{Times}, 1 April 1902, p. 3, col. F.
supported a bill to strengthen the failing voluntary schools.\textsuperscript{73} Despite Balfour’s avowed commitment to every child receiving the type of religious instruction desired by his or her parents, difficulties quickly arose because the government’s proposed reform became entangled in the Church Crisis.\textsuperscript{74}

The vast majority of England’s voluntary schools were operated by the Church of England. Moreover, in many rural areas, Anglican voluntary schools were the only schools available to children regardless of their religious background. Nonconformists and evangelical Anglicans chafed at the thought of sending their children to schools controlled by Anglo-Catholic priests where they might be taught “Roman” doctrines. Already in 1898 the chairman of the Church Association inveighed that “…little children are being marched in…from the schools to the churches to ‘hear Mass,’ and are taught to lisp the praises of an idol of bread under the pretence of providing them out of your rates and taxes with ‘religious education.’”\textsuperscript{75} One concerned Protestant believed the most shameful aspect of “modern ritualism” was “the deliberate Romanizing of the children of our country” through education in voluntary schools.\textsuperscript{76} By 1902 an editorial in the \textit{Contemporary Review} could bemoan the fact that an education bill was being proposed “at a time when … the dogmatic teaching of a large portion of the rectors and curates has become increasingly offensive to the general mass of English people….”\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{73} See “Sir W. Walrond and the Education Bill,” \textit{Times}, 23 September 1902, p. 4, col. F.
\textsuperscript{74} See \textit{Times}, 29 April 1902, p. 9, col. E.
\textsuperscript{75} A. W. Cobham, “Lawlessness in the Church: Church Association Manifesto,” \textit{Times}, 30 June 1898, p. 12, col. A.
\textsuperscript{76} Millicent Lindsey, “Ritualism,” \textit{Times}, 27 November 1902, p. 12, col. E. See also Felix Higgs, letter to the editor, \textit{English Churchman}, 12 December 1901, p. 812. Higgs believed that if the “Romanizers” succeeded in passing the Education Bill “it will be a farewell to the Protestant religion being taught in Church schools. We shall have only Mass and the Confessional.”
\textsuperscript{77} “The Nonconformists and the Education Bill,” \textit{Contemporary Review} 82 (July-December, 1902), 431.
Politicians were quick to acknowledge popular anxiety about the state of religious education. In 1898 Harcourt had complained to Parliament that there were eight thousand parishes in the country with only one available school. Many of these schools were under the control of priests who taught Roman doctrines repugnant to the laity. Yet, Protestants were nevertheless forced to send their children to the voluntary school because there was no other option. Samuel Smith warned his Protestant listeners against sending their children to voluntary schools, such as those in the unfortunate Yorkshire district, where “idolatrous worship of the consecrated wafer” took place and where “children were marched in precession from school to hear the Mass, and were taught to lisp the praises of the idol of bread.” Protestant parents feared that their children would be “gradually proselytized into a faith which they abominated” as a result of Anglo-Catholic religious instruction. The “member for Nonconformity,” R. W. Perks, also consistently spoke about the dangers of sending Nonconformist children to Romanizing schools. According to Austin Taylor, then the chairman of the Laymen’s League, there was a district in Yorkshire where a single priest had turned the Church in that district into “a bastard type of Roman Catholicism.” Many wondered how Protestant parents could feel safe about sending their children to the voluntary schools in that district?

Instead of voluntary Anglican schools, such as the ones so vividly described by Taylor, Nonconformist and evangelical Anglican parents often chose to send their

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78 Parliamentary Debates, 16 June 1898, 59: 484. See also English Churchman, 23 June 1898, 411.
80 Times, 3 September 1902, p. 4, col. F. See also Lady Cornelia Wimborne, “Rome in our Midst: Ritualism and Children,” Ladies’ League Gazette 1, no. 7 (October 1900): 133-136.
81 Times, 3 September 1902, p. 4, col. F.
children to state schools run by newly-established school boards created by the Elementary Education Act of 1870 (Forster’s Act). These so-called board schools were not secular. Rather, they offered what was called “undenominational” religious teaching from the Bible, in accordance with the Cowper-Temple clause to the 1870 act. The primary concern of many Protestant parents prior to 1902 was keeping their children out of voluntary schools where denominational, and often Anglo-Catholic, teaching occurred.

Thus, when the Education Act came before the Commons in 1902, many Protestants were already unhappy with the state of education. Nevertheless, many felt that the voluntary schools would eventually die out, since they did not receive the same level of funding as the board schools and were, therefore, unable to compete. The Education Act of 1902, however, would ensure the continued existence of the voluntary schools by funding them through the rates. In addition, the school boards, seen by Protestants as a guarantee of lay control over education, were to be abolished. Protestants were outraged at the thought of not only having to send their children to voluntary schools, but also of having to fund Anglo-Catholic teaching out of their taxes. In essence, they argued that Protestants would be funding Catholicism; denominational teaching would be offered at public expense without a “corresponding amount of public control.”82 Many immediately charged that the act was a priestly and High Church attack upon the Protestant laity instigated by Balfour and the bishops.

There was a kernel of truth in this accusation. Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister until July 11, 1902, had been initially voted into office partially due to an alliance between Anglo and Roman Catholics who wanted voluntary schools to receive more

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funds.\textsuperscript{83} During Balfour’s years as the leader of the House of Commons, Anglican bishops consistently lobbied the Salisbury cabinet for state aid to voluntary schools and the introduction of denominational teaching into board schools. The bishops did not need to lobby very hard, however, as the Cecil family was sympathetic to Church interests generally and High Church interests more specifically. Hugh Cecil in particular was known as the leader of the High Church party in Parliament. As historian of education Eric Eaglesham notes, “the very composition of the Cabinet (sometimes described as ‘Hotel Cecil’) implied strong Church influence on the Bill.”\textsuperscript{84} Protestant Liberal politician Herbert Paul’s jibe that the only laymen in England who rejected Protestantism were members of the Cecil family illustrates the degree to which all the Cecils, including Balfour, were linked with Catholicism.\textsuperscript{85} John Clifford even referred to the act as “a Bill for Cecilizing education and clericalizing it,” as though the two were synonymous.\textsuperscript{86} Conservative MP Jesse Collings complained that the intemperate actions of his Anglo-Catholic colleague Lord Hugh Cecil had only furthered the association between Anglo-Catholicism and the Conservative Party in the minds of average Britons.\textsuperscript{87}

Moreover, as we have seen, Balfour himself was close to the Anglo-Catholic party, and historians of education have argued that High Churchmen played a key role in

\textsuperscript{83} Rogers, “Church and Children,” 37.
\textsuperscript{84} Eaglesham, “Planning the Education Bill of 1902,” 17; and Gullifer, “Opposition to the 1902 Education Act,” 84.
\textsuperscript{86} “Free Churchmen and the Education Bill,” Times, 16 April 1902, p. 4, col. A. Clifford was speaking at the April 15, 1902 national conference of Evangelical Free Church Councils. Several Liberal MPs were present at the meeting, including R. W. Perks, David Lloyd George, Carvell Williams, R. W. Cremer, Henry Broadhurst, H. J. Wilson, H. R. Mansfield, W. S. Caine, George Lambert, Herbert Lewis, and George White.
\textsuperscript{87} Jesse Collings to Walter Long, 25 September 1902, encl. in Balfour papers, Add. 49776, ff. 27-30. Liberal MP Joseph Pease equated the “Hugh Cecils and the High Church party.” See Times, 1 September 1902, p. 8, col. A.
drafting of the Education Act. Indeed, Balfour apparently first came into contact with Robert Morant, the man the most responsible for the finished bill, through his Church contacts.\textsuperscript{88} Historian of education Alan Rogers has argued that “it seems impossible to deny that the Conservative party introduced the 1902 Bill at the instigation of the Church of England.”\textsuperscript{89} Contemporaries agreed. Herbert Paul believed the 1902 act came about because the Salisbury and Balfour governments consulted the bishops before introducing bills.\textsuperscript{90} Balfour simply “listened to the voice of Convocation, and put the Church on the rates.”\textsuperscript{91}

Several High Church bishops did advise Balfour on the Education Act, which Frederick Temple, the Archbishop of Canterbury, urged Balfour to push through Parliament.\textsuperscript{92} Edward Talbot also encouraged Balfour’s work, although he acknowledged its difficulty in light of the “very widespread dislike of what is commonly, though improperly, called ritualistic teaching in ordinary Church of England Schools.”\textsuperscript{93} But he could think of no way to ameliorate the situation, except to add a clause to the bill that would bring in the Bishop to arbitrate any dispute that arose between the priests and the (elected and therefore usually Protestant) school managers. But even this “would give but small comfort to those red-hot politicians who regard the Bishops as little better than traitors to the Church.”\textsuperscript{94} Although the bishops offered little in the way of concrete

\textsuperscript{88} Eaglesham, “Planning the Education Bill of 1902,” 17.
\textsuperscript{89} Rogers, “Church and Children,” 31.
\textsuperscript{91} Paul, “The Government and Convocations,” 856.
\textsuperscript{92} Frederick Temple to Balfour, 28 September 1902, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49788, ff. 54-55.
\textsuperscript{93} Edward Talbot to Balfour, 25 June 1902, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49789, f. 157.
\textsuperscript{94} Edward Talbot to Balfour, 25 June 1902, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49789, ff. 161-163.
policy suggestions, Rev. Arthur Talbot’s education proposal for the 1899 Lichfield Diocesan Conference may have influenced the final version of the bill.  

Outraged Nonconformists and evangelical Anglicans found political allies in the Liberal Party. Harcourt opposed the bill because it aimed to “give the clergy the exclusive possession of the schools of the country.” As usual, David Lloyd George was more colorful: the bill would “rivet the clerical chain around the necks of the people.”

“The clergymen would come down to the school like a roaring lion, seeking what little Nonconformist he could devour at the expense of the ratepayer.” The Education Act would wreck the ship of English education, thereby threatening the well-being of the whole nation: “Menacing rivals stand in our industrial path, and education is the best means of keeping abreast or of keeping ahead of them. The ship of the state is making its way through the midst of rocks and what is the Government’s proposal? To put the chaplain on the bridge.” As is well known, Lloyd George first rose to prominence among the Liberal Nonconformist base due to his fiery opposition to the 1902 Act. Eaglesham has argued that Lloyd George used the political opportunity provided by the act to revive and unify the Liberal Party, which had been splintered by the Boer War.

Protestants and Liberal politicians worked together through the National Education Association (NEA, founded 1889) to prevent the bill’s passage. In 1903 the NEA’s President was Liberal politician A. H. D. Acland, and its Vice Presidents included

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95 Eaglesham, “Planning the Education Bill of 1902,” 17. Talbot was the rector of Church Eaton and Provost of Denstone College in Uttoxeter after 1896.
96 Qtd. in Rogers, “Church and Children,” 39. See also W. V. Harcourt, letter to the editor, *Times*, 12 May 1902, p. 10, col. E.
97 Qtd. in Rogers, Church and Children,” 39.
99 Qtd. in Rogers, “Church and Children,” 30n.5.
Sir John Brunner, John Clifford, A. M. Fairbairn, Sir Edward Grey, and Sir George Kekewich. Although the NEA’s stated goal was to “promote a system of national education which shall be efficient, progressive, unsectarian and under popular control,” in practice, the NEA worked to further Protestant and Erastian agendas. The NEA’s pamphlet series about the 1902 act included the tract *Shall the Clergy Control Education?*, which argued that “religious teaching in the Church Schools is not confined to the Anglican formularies. Many of the clergy have introduced catechisms abounding in Romish doctrines.”

The Baptist minister P. T. Thomson’s NEA pamphlet *Some Religious Aspects of the Education Bill* simply degenerated into an anti-Anglo-Catholic screed.

Such was the outcry that Balfour realized the need to conciliate his Nonconformist opponents. In this spirit, he supported the Kenyon-Slaney amendment to the act that limited religious instruction in voluntary schools to the terms outlined in their original trust deeds. In theory, then, the Kenyon-Slaney amendment could be used to declare various Anglo-Catholic practices and teachings illegal, since they were not enumerated in the original, usually pre-Oxford Movement, trust deeds. The trust deeds also usually put religious teaching under clergymen and the elected, and therefore likely Protestant, school managers. Anglo-Catholic author and canon Malcolm MacColl in particular objected to the amendment because he felt it permitted too much state intervention in the Church’s realm. Balfour, however, was not convinced by MacColl and wrote that

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101 Qtd. in Rogers, “Church and Children,” 40.
…frankly, I do think it a most excessive statement to say that the Kenyon-Slaney Clause “has established the worst form of Erastianism in the very sanctuary”. The system remember already prevails in a very large number of Church schools without the accusation of “Erastianism” having ever been alleged against it, while to describe the parish schools of this country as the “sanctuary” seems to me to be introducing a terminology very injurious to Church interests.  

The Education Bill, then, received criticism from all quarters, but especially from Nonconformists and Protestant Anglicans. Because historians have generally overlooked the context of the Church Crisis they have failed to notice the extent of Anglican opposition to the bill. As a result of such widespread opposition – one protest meeting in Leeds drew at least 100,000 people – the bill occupied more “time [in Parliament] than almost any other Bill in all the history of Parliament.” Given the resistance Balfour faced, historians have asked what led him to support the Education Bill so strongly. Contemporaries like Joseph Chamberlain felt that Balfour’s education policy had the potential to ruin the Conservative Party. These sentiments led some to assume that Balfour’s close connection to the Church of England had clouded his political judgment.  

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104 Balfour to Malcolm MacColl, 16 December 1902, Balfour papers Add. MS 49790 ff. 67-68. The actual text of the Kenyon-Slaney Clause runs as follows: “Religious instruction given in a public elementary school not provided by the local education authority shall, as regards its character, be in accordance with the provisions (if any) of the trust deed relating thereto, and shall be under the control of the managers: Provided that nothing in this sub-section shall affect any provision in a trust deed for reference to the Bishop or superior or other denominational authority so far as such provision gives to the Bishop or authority the power of deciding whether the character of the religious instruction is or is not in accordance with the provisions of the trust deed.” See J. M. Lely, S. Stevenson Moore, and Edmund T. Nicolle, *Journal of the Society of Comparative Legislation*, New Ser., Vol. 5, No. 2. (1904): 326-327. While some extreme Anglo-Catholics like MacColl feared that the clause took authority away from clergymen, anti-Ritualist Protestants feared that it put religious instruction under the control of Anglo-Catholics and gave no assurance of sound doctrinal teaching since the Bishops could not be trusted.  


asked “how did this great politician [Balfour], this alleged sceptic, come to throw away the immediate future of his party for the sake of a Bill whose major, immediate objective was to preserve the voluntary schools for the Church?” Was Balfour simply an “enigma” as many have argued? \footnote{108} In order to understand Balfour’s motivations, Eaglesham did something few political historians have done – he turned to Balfour’s religious and philosophical thought. He concluded that Balfour’s deep religious convictions and his distrust of the common man led him to believe that “by transferring secondary education to the more conservative councils he would at the same time restrict the spread of dangerous half-truths among ordinary people by the school boards and found a proper system of secondary education for a limited class of leaders.”\footnote{109}

Eaglesham’s analysis of Balfour’s reasons for supporting the act may or may not be correct, but in any case, it is incomplete because it fails to consider the role of the Church Crisis and Balfour’s anti-Erastianism. Balfour’s devotion to state support for voluntary schools under clerical control flowed from his opposition to Erastianism, just as his opponents’ opposition to the bill flowed from their support for Erastianism. In the popular Protestant mind, the English religious settlement had established an Erastian church in which the clergy were always under the ultimate authority of the laity, as represented by the Commons. As Herbert Paul argued, “an Erastian Establishment is best represented in the House of Commons.”\footnote{110} One of the principle beliefs of the Anglo-Catholics was the Church’s autonomy and independence from state control. Thus, priests accused of Ritualist illegalities argued that the ecclesiastical laws passed by Parliament, a secular body, were not binding on them as priests of an autonomous Church. So while

\footnotesize{108} Ibid., 21.
\footnotesize{109} Ibid., 24.
\footnotesize{110} Paul, “The Education Bill,” 713.
Protestants saw the Church Crisis as a case of over-bearing priests attempting to reestablish the tyranny of the priesthood over the laity, Catholics saw it as an attempt by the tyrannical secular state to destroy the spiritual liberty of the Church.

Thus, Erastianism was associated with support for the rights of the laity against the clergy, while anti-Erastianism was associated with support for the independence of the Church from state control. Read in this way, the struggle over the 1902 Education Bill becomes a clash between Protestant Liberal Erastians who were trying to prevent the priestly control of tax-funded schools versus Catholic Conservative anti-Erastians who were attempting to form denominational schools and ensure that they remained free of state control despite being funded by state monies. This is not a novel interpretation of the 1902 Education controversy. Many contemporaries acknowledged that the dispute was merely a symptom of the more fundamental Church Crisis. For example, Jesse Collings, the Unionist MP for Bordesley, wrote to his colleague Walter Long that

> there is a widespread suspicion that the Government is swayed in its policy by the extreme High Church Party…. There is an anti-Romanist feeling among the common people of this country deep strong and unreasoning. It is this feeling that is being invoked in connection with High Church practices. Sometimes the Education Bill is regarded as a visible sign that the government are [sic] favouring the extreme Church Party. Of course all this is not true but it is thought to be so and no logic or argument can for the moment dispel the belief…. I was told of a working man (who cared nothing about the ‘religious difficulty’) who said referring to what he called the ‘tom-foolery’ carried on at one of the ritualistic churches ‘I’m damned if I pay … rates to support that lot.’ … It is this position that Mr. Balfour has to meet.\(^{111}\)

Opponents of the bill also saw it in terms of Erastian Protestantism struggling against anti-Erastian Catholicism. Later, in 1902, John Clifford told his fellow Free Churchmen that the goal of the act was to take the control of education away from the people and

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\(^{111}\) Jesse Collings to Walter Long, 25 September 1902, Balfour papers, Add. MS 49776, ff. 27-30. Collings voted against the discipline bill in 1899 but for it in 1903.
hand it over to the priests. He described the controversy over the bill as “a fight between
the people and the clerical hierarchy.” Of course, this was also how Protestants viewed
the Church Crisis more broadly, as a fight between the people, who were always assumed
to be Protestant, and the Romanizing clerical hierarchy. Thus, Balfour’s support of the
Education Act is consistent with his opposition to a Church Discipline Bill and his efforts
to keep Parliament involvement in Church affairs at a minimum.

Some commentators who were interested in educational reform regretted that the
act had become merely a symbol in the larger struggle between Protestantism and
Catholicism in Britain. Jesse Collings complained that “The Education Bill disappears in
the discussion not one in a hundred knows or cares about its provisions. It is the drum
ecclesiastic that drowns everything.” The editors of the Times also bemoaned the fact
that the “real issues of the Education Bill are being obscured, and are even in danger of
being swept away, by a tempest of sectarian controversy.” Despite the efforts of the
“red-hot polemical orators,” like David Lloyd George, Balfour and the anti-Erastians
succeeded in Parliament and the 1902 bill became law. In response, die-hard Protestants,
led by John Clifford, turned to passive resistance and refused to pay their rates. The
resistance was both widespread and long lasting with around 65,000 having been
prosecuted for non-payment of rates by 1905. This broad-based Protestant
dissatisfaction helped bring the Liberals into power in 1906 and led to the passing of the
1906 Education Act, which ended the state funding of denominational teaching.

112 “Free Churchmen and the Education Bill,” Times, 16 April 1902, p. 4, col. A. Liberal politicians agreed
with this assessment. According to Liberal MP Sir Joseph Pease, the “Bill in its present form [was] an
attempt to bring the elementary education of the villages of England under the dominion of the clergy…”
See Times, 1 September 1902, p. 8, col. A. See also J. Guinness Rogers’s position in “Nonconformists and
the Education Bill,” Times 19 July 1901, p. 8, col. D.
113 Jesse Collings to Long, 25 September 1902, encl. in Balfour papers, Add. 49776, ff. 27-30.
114 Times, 29 April 1902, p. 9, col. E.
115 Davis, A History of Britain, 1885-1939, 71.
• The Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline

Throughout the remainder of 1903 and the early months of 1904, Harcourt, Mellor, McArthur, Taylor and others continued to agitate for new anti-Ritualist legislation.116 Between 1899 and 1904 six bills against Ritualism were introduced into the Commons.117 Under constant pressure from Protestants both inside and outside of Parliament, Balfour eventually decided to employ a classic delaying strategy by holding an official inquiry into lawlessness in the Church of England in the form of a Select Committee.118 The bishops and High Churchmen, however, opposed the use of a Select Committee, which they felt was based upon Erastian principles hostile to Church interests.119 Archbishop Davidson suggested to Balfour that he replace the Select Committee with a more “neutral” Royal Commission. Balfour agreed and in April, 1904, fourteen members representing a broad spectrum of churchmanship ranging from evangelical to high were appointed to the Committee.120 Anti-Ritualist Protestants met Balfour’s decision to form a Royal Commission with skepticism. The Protestant newspaper English Churchman editorialized that the Commission represented Balfour’s

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116 Samuel Smith announced in 1903 that he was too ill to seek another term and Harcourt would die in 1904.
117 Bentley, Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain, 122
119 Machin, Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869-1921, 254.
120 The Committee consisted of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, MP; Randall Davidson, the Archbishop of Canterbury; William George Spencer Scott, the Marquis of Northampton; Francis Paget, the Bishop of Oxford; Sir Francis Jeune; Sir John Kennaway, MP; John G. Talbot, MP; Sir Samuel Hoare, MP; Sir Edward Clarke; Sir Lewis T. Dibdin; Rev. Dr. Edgar Charles Sumner Gibson; Rev. Thomas W. Drury; Dr. George Walter Prothero; and George Harwood, MP.
crafty “tactical scheme to postpone indefinitely any legislative remedy for the evils complained of” within the Church. Many Protestant MPs were equally unhappy.

Despite such criticism, the Commission began its work in May, eventually examining 164 witnesses who provided evidence of ecclesiastical lawbreaking that had occurred since May 1903. Although initially tempted to ignore the whole process, the Church Association eventually decided to cooperate with the proceedings and send “witnesses” to provide evidence on their behalf. The “witnesses” who were interviewed over the course of 118 sessions were primarily undercover agents employed by either the Church Association or the ECU. Both organizations sent supporters disguised as worshippers to churches believed to be of suspect orthopraxy. Rather than worshipping, the agents collected evidence for use against their ecclesiastical opponents. Evangelical spies collected evidence that Anglo-Catholic priests used ceremonial incense or genuflected, while Anglo-Catholic spies collected evidence that evangelical priests failed to wear the surplice in the pulpit or omitted the Athanasian Creed.

- The Scottish Church Crisis

But in 1904 the attention of Parliament shifted from the English Church Crisis to a brewing Scottish Church Crisis. During the late-nineteenth century the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church had begun preparation for an ecclesiastical merger. The union had occurred in 1900 when the two churches became the United Free Church (UFC) under the leadership of Robert Rainy, who had formerly served as the

121 English Churchman, 5 May 1904, encl. in Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline, vol. 24 (1906), Lambeth Palace Library.
122 Machin, Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869-1921, 254.
123 See, for example, Church Association, Council Minutes, 19 May 1904, C. S. 13, Lambeth Palace Library.
moderator of the Free Church. Contemporary biographer Bernard Alderson noted that Balfour avidly supported the creation of the United Free Church.\footnote{Alderson, \textit{Arthur James Balfour}, 308. For Balfour’s position on the Scottish union, see pages 308-312.}

Although the vast majority of Scotsmen welcomed the merger, a handful of Free Churchmen repudiated the action, claiming that since the Free Church supported both the principle of religious establishment and Calvinist double-predestination any union with a church body, such as the United Presbyterian Church, which opposed these principles, was illegitimate. The Free Churchmen who refused to join the merger founded the Free Church Continuing (FCC), which comprised 28 ministers and around 50,000 members located primarily in the Gaelic-speaking Scottish Highlands. Despite its small size, the FCC sued the newly-formed UFC for all its property, arguing that the FCC alone was the true Free Church since the UFC had broken with the Free Church’s original doctrines. The case essentially asked whether a trust for a church body regulated doctrine or whether it was a trust for use by an organization free to change its doctrine over time.\footnote{Dugdale, \textit{Arthur James Balfour}, 210.} The case went to a civil Court of Session in 1900 and then to the House of Lords on appeal. Upon appeal in 1904, the Lords overruled the Court of Session and awarded the FCC all the property of the former Free Church by a majority of 5 to 2, reasoning that a church’s property belonged to the group that remained the closest to the church’s original theology.\footnote{Callum Brown, \textit{Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain} (London: Longman, 2006), 81. See also J. H. S. Burleigh, \textit{A Church History of Scotland} (London, New York, Oxford University Press, 1960).} In other words, the Lords’ had ruled that “trust funds, even of Churches, must be administered with undeviating consistency with the intentions of the donors.”\footnote{A United Free Churchman, “The Effects of the Judgment,” \textit{Letters and Articles by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Worcester, Mr. Samuel Smith, M.P., and Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Fry, and others}} Trusts were able to permanently maintain doctrine.
The Lords’ ruling sparked a flurry of outrage in both Scotland and England. As Callum Brown recently put it, the Scottish Church dispute was “for its time a massive issue.” The fact that the tiny FCC, known as the “Wee Frees,” had gained control of all the former Free Church’s buildings and property seemed outrageous since the Wee Frees lacked the manpower to staff even a tiny fraction of their new properties.

According to a United Free Churchman writing to the *Times*,

> the wildest flight of imagination could scarcely conceive a more extraordinary situation than that now prevailed in Scotland as the result of the judgment of the House of Lords in the Free Church appeal. All the temporalities of the United Free Church, which belonged to the majority before the union of 1900, are now the property of the minority, which consists at the present time of twenty-eight ministers, all save four resident in the Highlands, and most of them ministering to Gaelic-speaking congregations.

Samuel Smith also weighed in on the Scottish Crisis, writing to the *Times* that the Lords’ decision had “fallen like a bomb-shell on Scotland.” It did seem hard, Smith wrote, that the UFC should be called upon to give up all its temporal goods because it used its freedom to merge with another very similar Presbyterian church. Henry Campbell-Bannerman likewise felt that the decision “was a shock to the judgment, aye, and even to the conscience of almost every man outside a court of justice.” That even Erastian stalwarts such as Smith and Campbell-Bannerman were outraged by the Lords’ decision provided a moral victory for anti-Erastianism.

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130 A United Free Churchman, “The Effects of the Judgment,” *Letters and Articles ... The Scotch Church Crisis*, 2.

131 Samuel Smith, *Letters and Articles ... The Scotch Church Crisis*, 9.

Some, however, welcomed the Lords’ ruling. Walter Lancelot Holland, the author of such anti-Catholic works as *Walled up Nuns and Nuns Walled In* (1895), argued that the Lords’ decision was “righteous,” involving as it did the “hand of Divine justice and retribution.” Holland, who fervently opposed Anglo-Catholicism within the Church of England, argued that the union of the two Scottish churches sacrificed doctrinal truth in the name of a superficial unity, by essentially agreeing to disagree. Therefore, the Lords’ judgment represented God’s judgment upon such doctrinal laxity and Parliament ought not to interfere with the decision.\(^{133}\) Holland’s concern with the Scottish case illustrates the way many saw the conflict through the lens of England’s Church Crisis. For Holland, two different theologies could not co-exist within the same ecclesiastical body. Thus, the Protestant Church of England had no room for Anglo-Catholic Ritualists, who properly belonged in communion with Rome. The result of the Church of England’s doctrinal apostasy would surely be divine retribution, as the Scottish example illustrated so well. Moreover, the fact that the “hand of Divine justice” had operated through the House of Lords could be used to legitimate state control of ecclesiastical affairs.

Not all anti-Ritualist crusaders seemed to grasp the significance of the Lords’ ruling. Samuel Smith, for example, opposed the ruling since it would make it impossible for a church to change its doctrines or practices without losing all its temporal goods. Yet, Smith supported anti-Ritualist legislation that would essentially lock the Church of England into a mythical version of sixteenth-century Protestantism and punish those who changed doctrines or practices in a more Catholic direction with the loss of their livings. Others were more consistent than Smith, who in 1904 was suffering from ill health. Charles Gore, a leading liberal Anglo-Catholic bishop joined with Smith in attacking the

\(^{133}\) Ibid., 4-12.
Lords’ ruling since it would make it impossible for any church growth to occur.\textsuperscript{134} Since Gore practiced an innovative brand of Anglo-Catholicism, he supported Parliament’s intervention in the Scottish case to ensure the ability of churches to develop their doctrine and practice.

Because of the uproar caused by the controversial decision, Parliament quickly intervened in the Scottish Ecclesiastical Crisis. Historian Jose Harris has noted that the Scottish case actually took up “far more administrative and parliamentary time than other, better remembered issues of the post-Boer War era….”\textsuperscript{135} On December 13, 1904, Parliament appointed a Royal Commission, which recommended on April 15, 1905 that an Executive Committee be appointed to take control of the UFC’s property and divide it fairly between the FCC and the UFC.\textsuperscript{136} Since Parliament was already considering Scottish Ecclesiastical concerns, the established Church of Scotland took the opportunity to ask Parliament to add an additional clause to the Church (Scotland) Act. Clause 5 of the Church (Scotland) Act altered the terms of subscription to the Presbyterian Westminster Confession for the Church of Scotland in order not to burden ministers with strict Calvinism. In essence, the clause would allow the established Church of Scotland to change its doctrines without resort to Parliament.\textsuperscript{137} This seemingly innocent clause quickly sparked another storm of controversy. Supporters of the clause wanted to release the Church of Scotland from what they saw as anachronistic sixteenth-century dogmas and give it the same doctrinal freedom as the UFC. Opponents argued that the clause

\textsuperscript{134} Charles Gore, \textit{Letters and Articles ... The Scotch Church Crisis}, 25.
\textsuperscript{136} Machin, \textit{Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869-1921}, 258.
\textsuperscript{137} Dugdale, \textit{Arthur James Balfour}, 210.
would change the very nature of church-state relations, since it would give an established church direct control over its doctrines by cutting out the Parliamentary middle-man. Both English and Scottish Nonconformists especially chafed at clause 5 since they argued that the only way a church could have doctrinal freedom was through disestablishment.¹³⁸

Anti-Ritualist MPs, such as Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Austin Taylor, and David Lloyd George, also opposed clause 5 due to what they saw as its implications for England’s established church.¹³⁹ Should the Church of England gain similar control over its doctrines, Parliament would no longer have the authority to legislate against the growth of Catholicism within the established church. It would be the death of Erastian control over the Church of England. Lloyd George argued that if the Church of England received the kind of doctrinal freedom being offered to the Church of Scotland, it “might be turned by Ritualist pressure into a ‘Catholic Church.’”¹⁴⁰ But despite the effort of prominent MPs like Lloyd George, the Church (Scotland) Act, including clause 5, passed Parliament on August 11, 1905. The United Free Church Magazine commented approvingly that the clause had changed “the whole relation of the Church to the State.”¹⁴¹ This was no exaggeration. Clause 5 set the precedent that a Church could remain established, but be free of the type of Parliamentary control promoted by Erastians. Historian Adrian Hastings has argued that at this time establishment necessitated Erastianism.¹⁴² But by demonstrating that the theological independence of a Church did not necessarily entail disestablishment and that Establishment did not

¹³⁸ Machin, Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869-1921, 259.
¹³⁹ Ibid.
¹⁴⁰ Qtd. in ibid.
¹⁴¹ Qtd. in ibid.
necessarily entail Erastianism, the bond between Establishment and Erastianism was legally broken. The passing of the Church (Scotland) Act, including clause 5, due to a wave of sympathy for the UFC provided a major Parliamentary victory for anti-Erastians.

Like most informed Britons, Balfour was shocked by the Lords’ decision of 1904 that gave all the new United Free Church’s property to the remnant of the Free Church. The ruling grated against both Balfour’s anti-Erastianism and his desire to achieve ecclesiastical unity. In order to rectify the situation, Balfour enthusiastically supported the Church (Scotland) Act of 1905, which returned much of the old Free Church of Scotland’s property to the United Free Church. Balfour also supported the controversial anti-Erastian clause 5 and personally ushered it through the committee stage. His niece recalled that it “was an abiding source of pleasure to him that his Government had the opportunity of reaffirming by legislation the autonomy of the Church of Scotland in matters of doctrine.” Not only did the Church (Scotland) Act signal a victory for anti-Erastianism, Balfour believed it also paved the way towards the eventual unity of all the Scottish Presbyterian Churches.

- **The Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline and the Education Act, 1906: The Dissolution of the Anti-Ritualist Erastian Political Alliance**

In 1906, as the Scottish controversy faded, the report of the RCED appeared just following the Liberal victory in the general election. The eighty-page blue book effectively marked the end of serious evangelical attempts to impose liturgical conformity within the Church of England by calling for a compromise. The bishops and

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144 Ibid., 210.
145 Ibid., 211. Balfour claimed that his actions in the Scottish Church Crisis put him on the side of freedom and unity.
courts should order ritual practices that were obviously illegal, such as continuous reservation, to cease immediately. But, on the other hand, the ecclesiastical law pertaining to special services and ceremonies ought to be modified in order to create a greater range of legal rituals.\textsuperscript{146} After examining 164 witnesses about 687 services in 559 churches, the Commissioners determined that many practices not provided for by the rubrics of the\textit{Book of Common Prayer}, such as certain vestments and lit candles, had become too widespread to either suppress or ignore.

Therefore, the Church of England would have to be made more elastic in order to accommodate a greater diversity of practice. In order to accomplish this, the PWRA of 1874 ought to be repealed.\textsuperscript{147} The Commission also recommended that letters of business be issued to the Church of England Convocations so that “the existing law related to the conduct of Divine Worship and to the ornaments and fittings of church may tend to secure the greater elasticity which as reasonable recognition of the comprehensiveness of the Church of England and of its present needs seem to demand.”\textsuperscript{148} Although many anti-Ritualists saw the report as vindication of their belief that Ritualism was very widespread, it also revealed that in some areas Anglican Evangelicalism had become a minority position and that the trend towards Anglo-Catholicism showed no signs of abating. The revelation that Anglo-Catholicism had advanced so extensively led all but the most extreme Protestants to make political peace with the movement. Additionally, the

report’s failure to recommend abolishing the Episcopal veto discouraged those still inclined towards prosecution.

Moreover, by asking the Convocations, not Parliament, to revise the existing law relating to worship, the Royal Commission dealt a serious blow to Erastianism. The report outraged supporters of Erastianism, like Liberal MP Herbert Paul. In an article in *Nineteenth Century*, Paul reminded his readers that the report had called for changes in ecclesiastical law. But, Paul argued, in Britain ecclesiastical law was not separate from secular law! Therefore, the only body constitutionally able to make law was Parliament, not the Church Convocations. Why even bother with the Convocations, Paul complained, since the Parliament was the only body with the authority to represent the “established, Erastian Church of England.” Unfortunately for Paul, the conclusion of the Royal Commission had been precisely that secular bodies like Parliament and the Court of the Judicial Committee lacked the spiritual authority to represent the Church of England. The Report argued that

> a court dealing with matters of conscience and religion must, above all others, rest on moral authority if its judgments are to be effective. As thousands of clergy, with strong lay support, refuse to recognize the jurisdiction of the Judicial Committee, its judgments cannot practically be enforced.

The Report went on to argue that the reason clergymen refused to recognize the jurisdiction of the secular government and courts was because the Erastianism of men like Paul was fast dying out among a priesthood brought up on an Anglo-Catholic conception of the spiritual autonomy of the Church:

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150 Ibid.
In an age which has witnessed an extraordinary revival of spiritual life and activity, the Church has had to work under [Erastian] regulations fitted for a different condition of things, without that power of self-adjustment which is inherent in the conception of a living Church, and is, as a matter of fact, possessed by the Established Church of Scotland. The result has inevitably been that ancient rubrics have been strained in the desire to find in them meaning which it has been judicially held they cannot bear; while, on the other hand, the construction placed on them in accordance with legal rules has sometimes appeared forced and unnatural. With an adequate power of self-adjustment, we might reasonably expect that revision of the strict letter of the law would secure the obedience of many, now dissatisfied, who desire to be loyal, and would justify the Church as a whole, in insisting on the obedience of all.152

The Royal Commission’s report revealed that anti-Erastianism had become so widespread and deep within the Church of England that it would be impossible to overcome. As historian James Bentley has noted, the way individual Ritualists had defied the secular authorities forced Protestants to come “to terms with beliefs which they had previously found intolerable.”153  The government’s recognition of this fact led to the end of serious attempts to legislate Church practice and theology.154

The press had devoted a massive amount of space to covering the creation and work of the RCED. Newspapers as diverse as the Calcutta-based *Englishman, English Churchman, the disestablishmentarian Liberator, Manchester Guardian, Rapiel Review, The Times, and The Westminster Gazette*.155 Not surprisingly then, its final report was a major news item. The *Daily Telegraph* reported on July 4 that the committee’s

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155 The *Guardian* gave especially heavy coverage to the RCED, with articles on May 9th (1904), May 11th, May 25th, June 1st, June 8th, June 15th, June 22nd, June 29th, July 6th, July 18th, etc. See especially *Guardian, 26 July 1905*. For the Church Association’s response to the report, see tract nos. 363-365.
recommendations should benefit the Church and nation at large. Although he initially disapproved of the Commission, Austin Taylor seemed determined to put a positive spin on the outcome and take some of the credit for himself, claiming to have directly contributed to the appointment of the RCED. R. W. Perks, the Liberal MP for the South division of Lincolnshire who was popularly known as the “Member for Nonconformity” was less optimistic about the report than Taylor. He believed that little would ever come of the report and called for the disestablishment of the Church.

Although Perks was correct that little came of the report in terms of Parliamentary action, the report did add more fuel to the controversy surrounding yet another Education Bill. The *Westminster Gazette* reported that

> An intelligent reading of it will reveal one at least of the forces which are behind the present Education Bill; for the Nonconformist objection to Church ascendancy in Education is certainly accentuated by the fear that ‘the school with two doors’ may have one door leading into one of the 559 churches whose practices are analyzed by the Commissioners. There is no doubt that a large number of these practices are repugnant to the mass of Englishmen who believe the Church of England to be a Protestant body.

While the debate surrounding the 1906 Education Bill may seem similar to that surrounding the 1902 Education Bill, there were, in fact, significant differences. Although evangelical Protestants continued to fret about “Rome on the Rates,” that is, paying taxes to send their children to schools under the religious control of Ritualist Anglican priests, by 1906 they were able to find a great deal of common ground with both Anglo and Roman Catholics.

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156 Daily Telegraph, 4 July 1906, encl. in Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline. vol. 24 (1906), Lambeth Palace Library.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
159 Westminster Gazette, 3 July 1906, encl. in Report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline. vol. 24 (1906), Lambeth Palace Library.
The 1906 Education Bill originated in Protestant and Liberal dissatisfaction with the 1902 bill. The Liberal victory of 1906 brought with it an anti-Ritualist mandate to reform education.\textsuperscript{160} Ironically, the Liberals’ desire for education reform would soon unintentionally undermine the evangelical Anglican and Nonconformist alliance that formed the base of the anti-Ritualist political movement. One of the main objectives of the 1906 bill was to satisfy the Protestant voters who had wished to deprive Ritualist voluntary schools of government funding. The government’s solution was to eliminate any denominational teaching from rate-funded schools. Many evangelical Anglicans, such as Henry Wace, the influential dean of Canterbury, saw “undenominational” religious instruction as crass secularism since the Bible would be read as a work of literature and ethical handbook, not as a source of Christian doctrine.\textsuperscript{161} Moreover, Wace and Anglican organizations such as the National Society feared that the bill would take schools out of clerical hands.\textsuperscript{162} Although Wace in part based his influence and popularity upon his outspoken anti-Ritualism, he found himself in agreement with Charles Gore, Lord Halifax, and the ECU regarding the dangers of the new Education Bill.\textsuperscript{163}

\textsuperscript{160} See, for example, George Kekewich \textit{The Education Department and After} (London: Constable & Co., 1920), 266. In 1906, George Kekewich, the Liberal MP from Exeter between 1906 and 1910, garnered the support of the Church Association with his Ecclesiastical Disorders Bill, which banned denominational teaching in voluntary schools receiving state aid, replacing it with nondenominational “Cowper-Temple Teaching,” which was commonly known as “Simple Bible Teaching.” See also Stephen Koss, \textit{Nonconformity in Modern British Politics} (London: Batsford, 1975), chapters 2-4.


\textsuperscript{163} “Church Teaching for Church Children,” 1906, encl. in English Church Union, Minute Book of General Meetings, C.U.Dep.5, f 223-24; Viscount Halifax, “The Education Question,” 20 February 1906, encl. in English Church Union, Minute Book of General Meetings, C.U.Dep.5, 223-4; and “Great Meeting of
The English Roman Catholic hierarchy also publicly opposed the bill on the grounds that it (1) gave local authorities the right to control religious education in public elementary schools, thereby putting children under the control of those with different beliefs than their parents; (2) made no provision for children whose parents regarded “Simple Bible Teaching” as unacceptable; and (3) made it possible to “confiscate, and to divert to uses for which they were never intended, building and fund which owe their origin mainly to the desire of Catholics to provide for the teaching and maintenance of the Catholic faith.”

For these reasons, the Catholic Educational Council unanimously declared the bill to be a violation of “religious equality and justice.” This assessment, shared by many, forced most evangelical Anglicans, Anglo-Catholics, and Roman Catholics together in opposition to the bill.

At the same time, most Nonconformists and some Anglican Evangelicals supported the new measures as the only way to protect children from Romanism and the absolute abolition of all religious instruction in public schools. J. H. Rigg, a prominent Wesleyan leader who had written the popular anti-Ritualist history of the Oxford Movement entitled *Oxford High Anglicanism*, argued that although the introduction of “Simple Bible Teaching” into voluntary schools was not ideal, it was nevertheless the best available bulwark against both secularism and Ritualism. Baptist minister John Clifford more bluntly objected to Anglican doctrines being taught to Nonconformist children at the expense of the ratepayers. Practically speaking, Clifford believed the

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Protest Against the Education Bill, 1906,” Agenda, 19 June 1906, encl. in English Church Union, Minute Book of General Meetings, C.U.Dep.5, ff. 229-230, Lambeth Palace Library.


165 Ibid., 4-5.

Education Bill of 1902 had endowed Romanism by publicly funding Anglo-Catholic voluntary schools. He worried that the Catholicizing of the voluntary schools would lead “to the destruction of Protestant liberty” itself. Thus, John Clifford and Henry Wace, who had been allies in the fight against Ritualism, found themselves on opposite sides of the battle over the 1906 Education Bill.

The reforging of political alliances surrounding the 1906 Education Bill can be seen in the falling out between Wace and Lady Wimborne. In 1899 Lady Wimborne had founded the Ladies League for the Defense of the Reformed Faith of the Church of England, which by 1906 had become simply the Church of England League, with Wace serving as its chairman. The League’s initial purpose was the suppression of “Romanism” within the Church of England until the 1906 Education Bill brought the organization to a crossroads. Henry Wace passionately opposed the bill and claimed that he did not believe the League could remain aloof from the controversy surrounding the bill. Lady Wimborne, however, supported the Education Bill as a means of protection against both absolute Romanism and secularism. As a result, she demanded that the League remain officially neutral on the issue, although the League Gazette did editorialize that

>a great part of the distrust of Church teaching which has provoked the Bill is due to the introduction in too many cases of practically Roman teaching, and it is certain that if the Church is to retain the influential position she has hitherto held in national education, some guarantee must be given to the country that these Romanistic perversions of her teaching shall be excluded.

\[167\] Ibid., 17.
\[168\] Ibid., 24.
\[169\] Henry Wace to Cornelia Wimborne, 22 April 1906, Osborne papers, Add MS 46408, ff. 73-74.
\[170\] Cornelia Wimborne to Henry Wace, 26 April 1906, Osborne papers, Add MS 46408, ff. 76-78; and Cornelia Wimborne to Henry Wace, 4 February 1906, Osborne papers, Add MS 46408, ff. 56-57.
\[171\] Cornelia Wimborne to Henry Wace, 26 April 1906, Osborne papers, Add MS 46408, ff. 76-78
Given Wimborne’s views, Wace felt obliged to resign from the League’s chairmanship and Lady Wimborne likewise declared her intentions to resign from the League. 172 Wace lamented that “If we could have worked together within the Church, and for the Church, the League might have asserted an increasing influence in promoting the ‘reformed faith’ within the Church, and it is a great grief to me to relinquish this hope. I am much grieved moreover that our sympathies in this great crisis in the Church’s life in England should have become so divided.” 173 Indeed, Wace and Wimborne were not only separated by the Education Bill, but found themselves newly allied with – in some cases – former foes.

The case of Wace and Wimborne illustrates the way the 1906 Education Act split evangelical Anglican opinion. But even more significant in the context of political anti-Ritualism was the way in which it split the evangelical Anglican and Nonconformist alliance. The majority of Anglican priests, be they evangelical or Anglo-Catholic, supported denominational teaching in Church schools and therefore opposed the act. 174 However, the vast majority of Nonconformists opposed denominational teaching in any rate-funded schools. As a result, the pan-Protestant alliance necessary for successful political opposition to Ritualism shattered on the rocks of national education. Thus, by 1907 the polarities that had driven the Church Crisis had begun to break down due to both the report of the RCED and the new alliances forged by the 1906 Education Bill. Although Protestants and Catholics frequently still saw each other as ideological

172 Henry Wace to Cornelia Wimborne, 27 April 1906, Osborne papers, Add MS 46408, f. 79; and Henry Wace, memorandum to the members of the Executive Committee of the Church of England League, 1 May 1906, Osborne papers, Add MS 46408, ff. 80-81.
173 Henry Wace to Cornelia Wimborne, 22 April 1906, Osborne papers, Add MS 46408, ff. 73-74.
174 Machin, Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869-1921, 276.
opponents, the religious and political situation was no longer as clear-cut as it had been in 1898.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the role of the Great Church Crisis in Parliamentary politics between October 1900 and 1907 with special attention given to the thought and actions of Arthur Balfour. Although often portrayed as a pragmatic religious seeker or skeptic, Balfour in reality held deep-rooted views on religion and the place of the established Church in national life. At times, especially during the controversy surrounding the 1902 Education Bill, even Balfour’s allies questioned whether his close relationship to the episcopacy of the Church of England had clouded his political instinct.

So great was the Protestant and Liberal opposition to the bill that some wondered if it was worth the Conservative Party’s effort.\(^{175}\) Interestingly, G. I. T. Machin has argued that Nonconformist opposition to the 1902 Education Bill absorbed energy that would have otherwise been used to attack ritualism.\(^{176}\) Rather than “absorb” energy, the education debates energized and refocused anti-Ritualist efforts.

Although opposition to the 1902 bill revitalized anti-Ritualism, the controversy surrounding the 1906 Education Bill enervated the movement. The majority of Anglican priests, whether Protestant or Anglo-Catholic, opposed the bill.\(^{177}\) The majority of Nonconformists, whether clerical or lay, supported the bill.\(^{178}\) As a result, the anti-Ritualist alliance of Protestant Anglicans and Nonconformists was broken. Coincidently,

\(^{175}\) See Eaglesham, “Planning the Education Bill of 1902,” 20.


\(^{177}\) Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869-1921*, 276

\(^{178}\) Pugh, “Wesleyan Methodism and the Education Crisis of 1902,” 233-234. The only Nonconformist church body to be seriously divided on the issue was the Wesleyan Methodists because they were also the only Nonconformist body to own a substantial number of denominational schools.
this occurred at the same time that the anti-Erastian report of the RCED was wooing less radical Protestants into compromise with Anglo-Catholicism. The long term result of the report was to encourage the flourishing of Anglo-Catholicism so that the type of Anglicanism represented by the Protestant anti-Ritualists is almost non-existent in the Church of England today. The implicit authority in spiritual matters ceded to the Convocations by the report also struck a blow at the Erastianism typically supported by anti-Ritualists. Ironically, although the 1906 Education Act was fervently opposed by most anti-Erastians on the grounds that it would not permit “Catholic” teaching in rate-funded voluntary schools, in the long run it also served to support the aims of Catholic anti-Erastians by enforcing the beginnings of a separation between church and state in education. Balfour approved of these later developments in the direction of Church autonomy as heartily as he disapproved of the seeming resurrection of Erastianism in 1927 when the House of Commons rejected a new edition of the Book of Common Prayer as it had been revised by the Church Convocation in fulfillment of the RCED’s request first given in 1906. ¹⁷⁹ This brief revival of fin-de-siècle sensibilities would not last, however, as the movement of the Church of England towards greater autonomy was too engrained to be reversed.

Appendix to Chapter 7

The Church Association continued to heavily promote their “Protestantism before Politics” campaign between 1900 and 1906. The campaign eventually bore fruit in the form of several Liberal bye-election victories, which were attributed to anti-Ritualism.\(^{180}\)

The anti-Ritualists’ chief victory occurred when Liberal candidate E. A. Villiers captured traditionally Conservative Brighton in 1905. Winston Churchill and others attributed Villiers’s success to anti-Ritualism.\(^{181}\)

The Church Association’s positive assessment of bye-elections up until June 1903\(^{182}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Divison or Borough</th>
<th>Elected Candidate (Year of Election)</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Pledged to Support C.D.B.</th>
<th>Pledged to Abolish Bps’ Veto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leeds, North</td>
<td>Rowland H. Barran (1902)</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancashire, Clitheroe</td>
<td>David J. Shackleton (1902)</td>
<td>Lab Independent</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belfast, South</td>
<td>Thomas H. Sloan (1902)</td>
<td>Unionist</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent, Sevenoaks</td>
<td>Henry W. Forster (1902)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devonport</td>
<td>John Lockie (1902)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire, Cleveland</td>
<td>Herbert L. Samuel (1902)</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool, E. Toxteth</td>
<td>Austin Taylor (1902)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridgeshire, Newmarket</td>
<td>Charles Day Rose (1903)</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool, W. Derby</td>
<td>W. W. Rutherford (1903)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolwich</td>
<td>Will Crooks (1903)</td>
<td>Lab</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sussex, Rye</td>
<td>Charles F. Hutchinson (1903)</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey, Chertsey</td>
<td>John Arthur Fyler (1903)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornwall, Camborne</td>
<td>Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bt. (1903)</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>John Kerr (1903)</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{180}\) Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869-1921*, 253-4. For evidence supporting this assertion, see *Annual Register* I (1905), 101; and Winston Churchill to Henry Campbell-Bannerman, 15 May 1905, Campbell-Bannerman papers, Add. MS 41238 ff. 39-40.


\(^{182}\) *The Church of England Almanack For the Year of our Lord 1904*, compiled by Henry Miller (London: Shaw; Kensit; and Thynne, 1904), 7-9. C.D.B. is an abbreviation for Church Discipline Bill.

\(^{183}\) Forster’s margin was victory was cut from 4,812 in 1900 to only 891 in 1902.
Conclusion

Interest in religious belief and practice as a topic of historical inquiry has come alive again today. The study of religious history is especially pertinent given the late twentieth and early twenty-first-century resurgence of religion in the public sphere and especially in the arena of politics in nations as diverse as the United States, India, and Iran. In this environment, scholars have begun to see religion as an important category of analysis. Stanley Fish, for example, wrote that after Jacques Derrida died he “was called by a reporter who wanted know what would succeed high theory and the triumvirate of race, gender, and class as the center of intellectual energy in the academy. I answered like a shot: religion.”¹ Similarly, as Callum Brown has recently declared, “religion is back on the agenda.”²

During the late-nineteenth century, cultural observers had noticed that not the study of religion, but religious belief and practice itself was “back on the agenda.” Recalling the atmosphere of the 1890s, George Bernard Shaw wrote that “Religion was alive again, coming back upon men, even upon clergymen, with such power that not the Church of England itself could keep it out.”³ Interestingly, most contemporary British histories have marginalized the religious revival of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries by focusing instead on the religious culture of the early and mid-Victorian period. Religion in the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods tends to be discussed largely under the rubric of secularization. Yet, as the Great Church Crisis indicates,

religious belief and controversy were very much a part of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century British cultural and political life. In fact, this period witnessed the culmination of anti-Ritualist and anti-Catholic agitation before the expansion of Anglo-Catholicism within the Church of England pushed Anglican Evangelicals into a minority position. The eventual dominance of Anglo-Catholicism within the Church of England also led to the increasing irrelevance and ultimate demise of the Whig Erastianism represented by Protestants like William Harcourt.

The argument that the onset of secularization in Britain as defined by both a decline in religious attendance and personal belief and the increasing privatization of religious life can be pushed back until at least the 1920s or 1930s is not new. Yet, the insight that religious belief and practice remained a constituent part of late-Victorian and Edwardian national identity and public life has thus far failed to penetrate political, social, and cultural histories of the period. The unfortunate separation of religion from the rest of British history may be an unintended consequence of the desire of religious historians to take their subject seriously on its own terms. In order to avoid reductionism, historians such as Simon Green, Sarah Williams, and Callum Brown have tended to view religion as a hermetically-sealed subject. Jeremy Morris notes that as a result they fail to consider

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5 Morris, “The Strange Death of Christian Britain,” 968. 970-971.
“changes in the way religious belief influenced political and social behavior.”6 This dissertation has used the Great Church Crisis to explore the interaction between religious belief and “political and social behavior,” not with the intent of reducing religion to an expression of political and social stimuli, but with the goal of illuminating the ways politics, culture, and social thought functioned as bearers of religious concerns.

Indeed, the Church Crisis catalyzed both a temporary revival of Erastianism and renewed calls for the independence of the Church of England, leading to intense debate about the nature of the church-state relationship in Great Britain. In this sense, the Church Crisis can also be seen in the context of the continental religious conflicts surrounding the nation-building projects of the late 1800s. Historians have had much to say about Bismarck’s *Kulturkampf*, Italy’s battle with the Vatican, and the struggle in the Third Republic between anti-clerical republicans and ultramontanists. Britain is often seen as an exception to these conflicts. For example, historian Michael Burleigh has recently explored the interaction among politics, national identity, and religion in continental Europe, but he has relatively little to say about Britain’s case.7 Yet, Britain was not an exception to late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century religio-political conflict. The Church Crisis of 1898-1906 and the debates about the religious identity of the state and the role of Parliament in church affairs offer an alternative perspective on the history of *fin-de-siècle* Britain by putting it back into the larger context of European nation-states built upon religious conflicts.

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6 Ibid., 968. This quotation refers specially to Green and William, but Morris also believes Brown’s *Death of Christian Britain* falls into a similar trap.

Of course, the debates and anti-Catholicism stoked by the Church Crisis did not fade immediately after 1906. In one significant example, a political crisis erupted around the Liberal government’s handling of a proposed Roman Catholic Eucharistic Procession through London. The Roman Catholic Church decided to hold its 1908 Eucharistic Congress in England, and Francis Cardinal Bourne, the Archbishop of Westminster, had planned a procession of the Blessed Sacrament through the streets of London as the climax of the Congress.⁸ Although Bourne had already received police approval, Protestant groups warned of violence if the procession took place as planned. One unhappy Protestant complained to the *Times* that “the last time the ‘Host’ was carried in procession through the streets of London was when unhappy fanatical Queen Mary marched before it.” Constance Coates added that “we are in serious danger of proving traitors to all those who suffered for England’s reformed faith…I would far sooner die, and see all I care for die, than be thus disloyal to our great past.”⁹ Moreover, Protestants were quick to point out that the Catholic procession was technically illegal, since it violated the Catholic Relief Act of 1829, which forbade outdoor Catholic religious ceremonies and the public wearing of Eucharistic vestments.¹⁰

As a result of such sentiments and the technical illegality of the procession, the London council of fifty-one Protestant societies publicly petitioned Edward VII to cancel

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⁸ 1908 also witnessed major opposition to foundation of the National University of Ireland. Opponents of the act that founded the Catholic University expressed concerns about Catholic “denominationalism.” Another controversy involved the opposition of Protestant groups to the king’s attendance at a requiem mass for the assassinated Portuguese king in 1908. See G. I. T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869 to 1921* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 295; and Ernest Oldmeadow, *Francis, Cardinal Bourne*, vol. 1 (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1940-1), 351.
the procession. After a series of frenzied communications among Edward VII, H. H. Asquith (Chancellor of the Exchequer), Herbert Gladstone (Home Secretary), and Lord Ripon (Lord Privy Seal), the government pressured Bourne into agreeing to process without the Host and vestments in order to appease the Protestant community. The anti-Ritualist MP Robert Perks declared that had the procession occurred with the Host, only an army could have protected the Catholic clergy from the wrath of Protestant England. Nevertheless, the last-minute changes and cancellation of the Eucharistic Procession proved to be a major embarrassment for the government, led to the resignation of Lord Ripon, and harmed the political career of Herbert Gladstone, who wound up shouldering most of the blame for the situation from Protestants and Catholics alike. The government’s mismanagement of the Eucharistic Procession also damaged the relationship between the Liberal Party and Roman Catholics. Historian Carol A. Devlin has argued the procession debacle “illustrates the persistence of religious extremism as a disruptive force in British politics…” and the continued force of anti-Catholicism among Protestants.

Clearly, anti-Catholicism was obviously not extinct by 1906; neither was anti-Ritualism, but as an organized, national movement with recognized leaders it was fading away. Erastianism and English political Protestantism rapidly withered along with it. As we have seen in Chapter 7, the report of the RCED encouraged the more moderate anti-

15 Ibid., 407.
Ritualist Protestants and Evangelicals to make their peace with Anglo-Catholicism.

Moreover, the Education Bill of 1906 had ruptured the anti-Ritualist alliance of evangelical Anglicans and Nonconformists. Additionally, by the end of 1906 several of the major leaders of the anti-Ritualist movement had passed away. William Harcourt died in 1904. Samuel Smith died in late 1906 in Calcutta after attending the Indian National Congress. John Kensit had died in an even more romantic fashion.

Following a speech in Birkenhead Kensit encountered a mob of angry Irish Roman Catholics. Someone in the group threw a two-pound iron file at Kensit, striking him in the head. Kensit was taken to the Liverpool Royal Infirmary, where he contracted pneumonia and meningitis and died on October 8, 1902. Sympathizers immediately hailed him as the “first Protestant martyr of the twentieth century.”16 Kensit’s London funeral drew around 20,000 mourners including Walter Walsh, Henry Miller, the secretary of the Church Association, and Rev. F. S. Webster, the popular evangelical rector of All Souls, Langham Place and a speaker at the Keswick Conventions, who delivered the funeral sermon.17 Kensit’s body was escorted to Hampstead cemetery by his Wickliffe Preachers and two hundred Orangemen dressed in their parade regalia.18


17 Ibid., 67ff; and Martin Wellings, “The Oxford Movement in Late-Nineteenth-Century Retrospect: R. W. Church, J. H. Riggs, and Walter Walsh,” *Studies in Church History* 33 (1997): 348. In 1873 Evangelicals began meeting at Keswick to propagate Holiness Christianity and religious revival. The Keswick tradition combined Wesleyan belief in sanctification by faith with the Calvinist belief in unconditional election. All Souls, Langham Place, London remains a center of Evangelicalism within the Church of England. Prominent Evangelical speaker and author Dr. John Stott was the rector of All Souls from 1950 to 1975, and remains on staff today as the rector emeritus.

Soon after Kensit’s burial the nineteen-year old Irishman John McKeever was prosecuted for murder. Despite a spirited prosecution by F. E. Smith, himself no stranger to the anti-Ritualist cause, McKeever was acquitted.19 Although Kensit’s son John Alfred, who had been confined to the Liverpool jail at the time of his father’s death, took over his father’s

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19 Machin, Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1869-1921, 252; and Philip J. Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism: A Political and Social History of Liverpool 1868-1939 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1981), 192.
position with gusto, the loss of John Kensit was nevertheless a major blow to the anti-Ritualist movement. By 1907 the movement increasingly lacked the personalities and political clout necessary to secure legislation against Ritualism. Concurrently, “respectable” Protestants more and more abandoned the public profession of anti-Ritualism and anti-Catholicism.

Surprisingly, the catastrophe of World War I also accelerated the acceptance of Catholicism within England by firmly entrenching Catholicism – both Anglo and Roman – within the confines of Britishness. Although anti-Catholicism remained a problem in areas like Liverpool until at least World War II, anti-Catholic Protestantism became much less popular following the Great War. The reasons for this development are numerous. First, while living in the trenches among the enlisted men, chaplains discovered the religious ignorance of the English working class, which they might have previously known about abstractly, but until then had not experienced personally. This discovery intensified the threat of secularism for clergymen in a more visceral way than the debates of previous decades had done. Under the threat of a rising tide of secularism Catholic and Protestant clergymen and lay leaders found it possible to work together on the basis of their shared creedal orthodoxy.

Secondly, the First World War further undermined Victorian and Edwardian assumptions about the inherent goodness of progress, capitalism, and science. The war graphically revealed the potential dark side of scientific advancement and capitalism. Since the sixteenth century, conceptions of Englishness and Britishness had tied Protestantism tightly to belief in progress. With the collapse of the dominant

metanarratives of Western and especially British civilization, Protestantism was left in a highly unstable position. The collapse of imperial ideology following World War II also threatened the relationship between the nation and Protestantism. In short, previous to the World War Protestantism was commonly seen as essential to the nation because it was the very foundation of progress, capitalism, and scientific modernity. But when faith in progress dissolved following World War I, it no longer seemed quite so urgent for Britain to remain a Protestant nation.

World War I also served to normalize the vocabulary and forms of Catholicism. As a result of traveling on the Continent, British soldiers became used to seeing wayside crucifixes and Londoners began erecting street shrines around their city.

Figure 2: A wayside shrine set up during World War I outside St. Stephen’s Church in Devonport. Picture from J. A. Kensit, “The Work Continuing from John Kensit’s Death,” 104.

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22 Ibid., 302.
Additionally, the military use of the term “padre” to refer to any type of minister normalized the Catholic title, and returning soldiers continued to call their Protestant ministers “father.” Finally, soldiers became accustomed to using wafer bread for Communion because wafers were easier to transport in combat situations.

The constant prospect of death for either oneself or loved ones during the war also led to an unprecedented demand for the Anglo and Roman Catholic practice of the Reservation of the Sacrament, through which Catholics believed they could draw closer to the presence of God. Sheila Kaye-Smith remembered that “during the war the custom of reserving the Blessed Sacrament, which had been the exception rather than the rule even in churches of the Movement, now became general, and before the Reserved Sacrament thousands learned the art of private prayer as they had never learnt it before in empty churches or in solitude at home.” In 1917 a petition in favor of reservation signed by 1,000 clergymen was presented to the Archbishops, and Anglican priests formed the Federation of Catholic Priests to press for the legalization of reservation.

As Paul Fussell and others have noted, the massive number of deaths during the war led to increased interest in spiritualism and the occult as a means to reach dead loved ones. Not surprisingly, the war also increased demand for prayers for the dead within the Church of England, a practice that Anglo-Catholics had been promoting for decades.

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25 Ibid., 300.
The Guild of All Souls, an Anglo-Catholic society founded to encourage prayers for the dead, witnessed a resurgence of interest in its program. In 1917 the bishops authorized prayer “containing explicit intercession for the departed” for the first time. Jay Winter has noted that rather than causing a break with the past and the advent of modernity, the Great War gave new life to traditional religious practices and languages of mourning, which were able to mediate bereavement more successfully than the irony of modernism. In the French context, Annette Becker also argues that traditional Roman Catholic devotions such as prayer to the saints and devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus enjoyed a resurgence of popularity and even unprecedented popularity among men during World War I.

Catholic dogma, which offered certainty in things unseen, proved more popular with soldiers facing death than the seemingly less authoritative assurances offered by Protestants. Navel Chaplain and later Bishop Walter Carey confessed to the Church Times in 1916 that “ordinary Anglican religion won’t do; it doesn’t save souls in any volume…therefore it must be scrapped; the only forms of religion in the Anglican Communion which have any life in them are the Evangelical and the Sacramental … Dignified Anglicanism has failed.” The objective sacramentalism of Catholicism proved to be especially popular in the trenches. One Roman Catholic later wrote that the war had caused his conversion since “a definite attitude towards life and death

29 Qtd. in Nigel Yates, Anglican Ritualism, 346. Only the Evangelical bishops of Liverpool and Manchester dissented.
32 Qtd in Ivan Clutterbuck, Marginal Catholics: Anglo-Catholicism: A Further Chapter of Modern Church History (Leominster: Gracewing, 1993), 79.
became a necessity. The Catholic Church little by little shone forth upon and through the fog of speculation and doubt which filled by mind and heart. The Catholic Church also provided a spiritual counterpart to the bodily discipline and obedience essential to military service. I became a convert as I became a soldier....”

British soldiers in the trenches and military chaplains began to call for changes in the Book of Common Prayer in a more Catholic direction. When faced with death, soldiers seemingly preferred the certainty of Catholic dogma and the physicality of having bread and wine to taste, saints’ medals to clutch, and crucifixes to gaze upon to the Protestant alternative of intangible Bible verses.

Finally, Catholic chaplains impressed both soldiers and civilians with their performance under fire. Anglo-Catholic monks of the Community of the Resurrection (Mirfield Fathers) and Roman Catholic Benedictines were especially praised for their work as chaplains. Previous to World War I Protestants had derided the Catholic preference for a segregated and specialized education for priests, but after the war seminaries were widely seen as providing better priestly formation than public schools and universities. In short, the Great War paved the way for both the full acceptance of Roman Catholics into British life and for the interwar dominance of the Anglo-Catholic party within the Church of England.

Indeed, following World War I, Anglo-Catholicism rapidly became the dominant party in the national church. In 1920 Anglo-Catholics held their first Congress; the

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34 F. W. Harvey, Conversions to the Catholic Church: A Symposium, Maurice Leahy, ed. (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1933), 48.
36 Pickering, Anglo-Catholicism, 47; and Nicholls, Khaki and the Confessional, 301.
37 Ibid.
38 Pickering, Anglo-Catholicism, 48-49.
second Congress, held in 1923, attracted over 16,000 worshippers and included a triumphant high mass in St. Paul’s Cathedral.\(^3^9\) The long-delayed request of the RCED that the Convocations should produce a revised version of the *Book of Common Prayer* combined with the continued growth of Catholic practice following the war to produce a final major clash of Protestant Erastianism and Catholic anti-Erastianism in the church and Parliament. In 1906 the report of the RCED had recommended that letters of business should be issued to the Church Convocations instructing them to consider revising the ornaments rubric and modification in the existing law governing the conduct of worship services.\(^4^0\) This recommendation was seen as a triumph for anti-Erastians and infuriated their opponents because it seemed to give the church the power to make revisions in its formularies and ecclesiastical laws.\(^4^1\)

The report’s instructions that the church revise its ornaments rubrics began the process of revising the *Book of Common Prayer*.\(^4^2\) By 1908 a sub-committee of the Upper House of Convocations had presented a Historical Report on Ornaments that largely favored the legality of Eucharistic vestments, although it declined to make any specific recommendations. Between 1908 and the beginning of World War I, the Convocations continued to debate the propriety of Eucharistic vestments. As the question of the reservation of the sacrament took on greater importance during the war, the Convocations increasingly debated revisions to the communion service and


\(^4^1\) The actual recommendation, however, is careful to add that the church’s revisions would have to be enacted by Parliament.

permitting some form of reservation. In 1926 the House of Bishops in the new Church Assembly approved revising the Prayer Book to allow continuous reservation, provided the reserved sacrament was only used to communicate the sick. In 1927 the houses of bishops, clergy, and laity each approved a newly revised Prayer Book. The revised book then passed the House of Lords by a vote of 241 to 88. The Prayer Book was largely revised in a Catholic direction, permitting more ceremony surrounding the celebration of the Eucharist and continuous reservation. As a result, many evangelical Protestants opposed the revisions. Protestant Anglican authors poured out a series of books and pamphlets arguing against the revisions. Old veterans of the Church Crisis were again prominent, including Henry Wace and Frederick Meyrick. Meanwhile, the still largely Protestant House of Commons rejected the revised Prayer Book by a vote of 238 to 205. After a slightly modified revised Prayer Book was presented in 1928, the Commons again rejected it, this time by an even larger majority of 266 to 220.

The church responded to the rejection by nevertheless permitting congregations to use the revised book and instructing bishops not to prosecute any clergymen whose actions were legal according to the 1928 revised rubrics, even if they were illegal according to the old 1662 rubrics. Many Protestants within the Church of England argued that the bishops’ actions amounted to defiance of the law and a repudiation of Parliament’s authority over the church. The majority of churchmen, however, remained outraged that Parliament had rejected the church’s own carefully prepared revisions. As

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43 Ibid., 229, 233.
44 Ibid., 233.
45 Ibid., 236.
a result, the Prayer Book revisions, which had originally arisen as a result of the RCED’s report, again sparked debate about the proper nature of the relationship between church and state.47

For most broad to high Anglicans, the Prayer Book fiasco confirmed the conclusions drawn from the experience of the Church Crisis and the report of the RCED: the church needed a greater degree of self-government. The existing relationship between an increasingly secular Parliament and a church that continued to move in a Catholic direction was no longer conducive to spiritual development or ecclesiastical governance.48 The debate over the proper means of providing for the ecclesiastical autonomy of the established church finally culminated in 1970 when the National Assembly, which had been formed in 1919 out of the Representative Church Council, became the General Synod, whose acts carry the force of Parliament within the Church of England.49 Although the development of practical autonomy for the Church of England has been a long process, it was given much of its impetus by the Church Crisis and the attempts of Protestant MPs to legislate against illegal ritualism within the church. The 1927-8 Prayer Book crisis, which had arisen as a result of a recommendation given in the RCED’s 1906 report, also contributed to a desire to reform the relationship between the English church and state.

While the church’s National Assembly struggled to create a new legal relationship with Parliament, Anglo-Catholic forms of worship continued to dominate Anglicanism.

47 Ibid., 234, 238-239.
48 See Owen Chadwick, “The Link Between Church and State,” The Church and State, Donald Reeves, ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984), 40.
49 Robert E. Rodes, Jr., Law and Modernization in the Church of England: Charles II to the Welfare State (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 339, 340, 249-50. The Representative Church Council had been formed out of a merger of the two Convocations in 1903, which was also the year Parliament came its closest to passing a Church Discipline Bill.
Although attendance and enthusiasm for the Anglo-Catholic Congresses had peaked in the 1920s, the 1958 and 1968 Congresses received royal patronage for the first time.\footnote{50} Throughout the mid-twentieth century the Protestant party continued to weaken. As a result, today worship in even self-proclaimed Protestant Anglican churches is far closer to the Anglo-Catholicism of the late-nineteenth century than it is to the evangelical Anglicanism of the same period. Today a customer can even purchase a copy of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, a notoriously High Church hymnal despised by anti-Ritualist Protestants, at the Protestant Truth Society bookstore, the descendent of John Kensit’s original bookstore in Paternoster Row.\footnote{51}

Although the development of Anglo-Catholicism within the Church of England helped lessen anti-Catholic sentiment by normalizing the rites and ceremonies of Catholicism, anti-Roman Catholicism declined more slowly. As late as 1980 a leading article in the *Times* argued that it “would be undesirable for the prince of Wales to marry a Roman Catholic.” Peter van der Veer has written that “this quite recent opinion from a leading newspaper in a so-called secular society is quite remarkable in its insistence on the Protestant nature of the state.”\footnote{52} As a result of increasing immigration, however, and the development of a multicultural society in Great Britain, anti-Catholicism and the connection between Britishness and Protestantism has lessened. In fact, in 2005 Prince Charles delayed his wedding to Camilla Parker Bowles in order to attend Pope John Paul

\footnote{50} Yates, *Anglican Ritualism*, 356. Princess Margaret was a devout Anglo-Catholic and attended both congresses.

\footnote{51} I actually did purchase a copy of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* at the PTS bookstore in the summer of 2006. I declined, however, to point out the irony to the proprietors, who were good enough to give me a complimentary copy of *Contending for the Faith*, a Kensit biography and history of the PTS.

II’s funeral. Such an action would have been perhaps unthinkable and certainly highly controversial one hundred years earlier. Yet in 2005, few commented negatively about Charles’s act of deference to a deceased Pope. Already in 1994 the future Head of the Church of England had argued during a BBC interview that he would like to change his future title from Defender of the Faith to Defender of Faith. Acceptance of Catholicism – both Anglo and consequently Roman, and a looser relationship between the state and Church of England have made such developments possible.

Appendix: Terminology


For the most part, I have attempted to use ecclesiastical terminology as it was used in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. For example, an Anglican was – and still is – a member of the established Church of England.\footnote{Anglican also refers to members of sister churches within the worldwide Anglican Communion under the nominal headship of the Archbishop of Canterbury.} During the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries Anglicans defined themselves as either Protestant or Catholic. “Catholics” saw themselves as Christians who took their identity primarily from their claim to be part of the ancient apostolic and undivided Church. “Protestants,” on the other hand, identified themselves as Christians who were followers of sixteenth-century Reformation theology, in contradistinction to that of the Catholic Church.

Confusion lies in the fact that “Catholic” and “Protestant” were obviously categories that extended far beyond the instructional confines of the Church of England. Within Britain, Protestants could be either Anglican, who belonged to the Established Church, or Nonconformist, like Methodists or Baptists, who dissented from the Established Church.\footnote{Nonconformists were British Protestants outside of the Church of England. “Nonconformist” is synonymous with Dissenter in this context, although the term “Dissenter” was used less frequently in the twentieth century.} Most British Nonconformists and many Anglicans were also what modern scholars refer to as Evangelicals. The term “evangelical” was not as common in Victorian and Edwardian Britain as it is today. Nevertheless, it was still used by some. Moreover, because the “evangelical” rubric has acquired analytical value, I have adopted the term, using historian David Bebbington’s now standard definition of Evangelicalism as a form of Christianity with four marks: conversionism, activism, Biblicism, and crucicentrism. Evangelicalism thus existed primarily among Protestants. To further complicate matters, a good number of Protestant Anglicans and most Nonconformists
were also political Erastians, believing the state had absolute authority over an established church in all matters. This view was generally opposed by Anglo-Catholics.\(^{57}\)

When one thinks of “Catholicism,” the Roman Catholic Church first springs to mind. However, there were many Anglicans who considered themselves fully Catholic without acknowledging the supremacy and spiritual authority of the Pope as the Vicar of Christ on earth.\(^{58}\) Anglo-Catholics were members of the Church of England who identified themselves, and were seen by others, as Catholic, not Protestant. Prior to the twentieth century Anglo-Catholics were commonly called Ritualists.\(^{59}\) Since contemporaries often used the terms Ritualist and Anglo-Catholic terms interchangeably, I have followed this convention. Some historians have classified Anglo-Catholics as Protestants because they were not members of the Roman Catholic Church. I find this to be anachronistic since both Anglo-Catholics and their British Protestant critics saw Anglo-Catholicism as a Catholic religion. Moreover, this stance forces the historian into the role of theologian, judging the legitimacy of various claims to Catholicity. I think it is wiser to simply allow historical actors to lay claim to their own identities.

Anglo-Catholics generally justified their claim to Catholicity through adherence to what was called the “Branch Theory” of the growth of the Catholic Church. According to this view, over the course of its long history, the Catholic Church developed differently in different geographic and national regions. Eventually, these differences caused the trunk of the Catholic Church to split into different regional branches. First the

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\(^{57}\) See chapter 6 for more detail.

\(^{58}\) Roman Catholics, however, usually did not consider Anglo-Catholics to be in full fellowship with the Catholic Church. To the great disappointment of many Anglo-Catholics, Pope Leo XIII’s bull *Apostolicae Curae* (1896) declared Anglican orders to be null and void, effectively speaking the final word from a Roman perspective on Anglican Catholicity.

\(^{59}\) Puseyite was yet another name for a Ritualist or Anglo-Catholic. E. B. Pusey was one of the leading lights of the Oxford Movement and seen by many as a founder of the Anglo-Catholic movement, although he repudiated extreme forms of Anglo-Catholicism.
Catholic Church split into Eastern and Western branches and later, at the time of the
Reformation, the Western Church split into Latin or Roman and Anglican branches.
Each of these branches was fully a part of the one Catholic Church and each had sole
ecclesiastical jurisdiction within its geographical region.60 Thus, for Anglo-Catholics,
while the Roman Church was the legitimate branch of the Catholic Church in continental
Western Europe, it was not the legitimate branch of the Catholic Church in Britain or
Russia. Anglo-Catholics strictly adhering to the Branch Theory often spoke derisively of
the British Roman Catholic Church as the “Italian Mission.” In keeping with this theory,
Anglo-Catholics who traveled abroad did not to attend the local Anglican Church, but
rather attended the local Roman Catholic Church if they were in Spain or Italy, or the
local Eastern Orthodox Church, if they were in Russia or Greece.

60 See, for example, H. Theodore Knight, “Catholicism and Nationality,” The Anglo Catholic 1, no. 2
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