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## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**Henry Parry Liddon : correspondence on church and faith.**

Orford, Barry Antony

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**Henry Parry Liddon: Correspondence on Church and Faith**

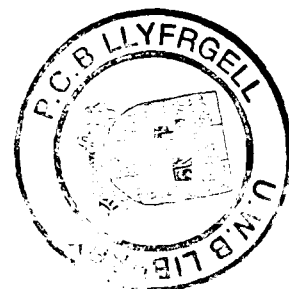
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PhD

University of Wales, Bangor, 2000

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## Summary

Henry Parry Liddon (1829-90) was one of the outstanding British Anglican Churchmen in the second half of the Nineteenth Century. His greatest contemporary fame was as a preacher, notably in St Paul's Cathedral, but he was also a learned theologian and a distinguished Bampton Lecturer. He was the close friend and biographer of the famous Tractarian leader, E. B. Pusey, as well as being acquainted with most of the leading religious and political figures of his day. However, since Liddon's death little attention has been paid to him. This biographical study examines certain aspects of Liddon's life and career through the medium of his correspondence, the greater part of which has been ignored by scholars. The core material is his letters written over a twenty-six years period to his friend Charles Lindley Wood (1839-1934), Second Viscount Halifax and influential High Church layman. This is supplemented by quotation from letters of Liddon's to other correspondents, notably those written to the Revd Reginald Porter which are used in Chapter 2 to provide contrast with the letters quoted in the bulk of the thesis. Considerable use is also made of Liddon's private diaries.

An introductory chapter sketches Liddon's life and background. The succeeding chapters explore through Liddon's correspondence his approach to theological matters, his attitude to the state of the Church of England in general and his views on that Church's leaders. Particular attention is paid to his opinions on, and participation in, the controversies surrounding the Athanasian Creed, the disestablishment of the Irish Church and attempts to reform its Prayer Book, and the issue of Ritualism. This last mentioned subject involves examination of the Public Worship Regulation Act and the prosecutions of clergy which followed it. A concluding chapter assesses Liddon as a man, and also his place in the Victorian Church. The study is an original work based on primary sources, many of which have not previously been examined or utilised by writers on the Church of England in the Victorian era.

# Contents

	Acknowledgements.	Pages i -iii
	Abbreviations.	Page iv
Chapter 1	Introduction.	Page 1
Chapter 2	“My dear Porter”.	Page 9
Chapter 3	The Athanasian Creed.	Page 27
Chapter 4	Liddon and the Irish Church.	Page 44
Chapter 5	Liddon and Ritualism.	Page 75
Chapter 6	The Purchas Judgment.	Page 92
Chapter 7	The Public Worship Regulation Act	Page 107
Chapter 8	The Aftermath.	Page 119
Chapter 9	The Persecutions.	Page 134
Chapter 10	Further Persecutions.	Page 143
Chapter 11	Final Ritual Cases.	Page 157
Chapter 12	Conclusion.	Page 188
	Bibliography	Page 207



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I am deeply grateful to the Department of Theology and Religious Studies in the University of Wales, Bangor, and Prof Gareth Lloyd Jones for allowing me to pursue my studies in the Department as a mature student. I must record my thanks to the Revd Brian Mastin and Dr Densil Morgan for advice and assistance.

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All research students know the problems of obtaining funding for their work. The above listing of those who have assisted me conceals a gratitude which I would find hard to put into words.

Mr A. J. M. Bray, Mrs K. Barker, Miss C. Johnson and Miss A. Sillett very kindly offered me hospitality during my travels to examine Liddon material. They and other good friends nobly endured my interest in a Victorian clergyman.

Finally, I must express my gratitude to my friend Richard Golding for providing me with a home, for the use (very inexpert on my part) of his word processor, and for his company. His own historical expertise was both a stimulus and a rebuke to me. Without his encouragement (and occasional reprimand) I doubt that I should have found the confidence to embark on this study or the will to complete it.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- Diaries* Diaries of H. P. Liddon, Pusey House Mss., Oxford.
- Halifax* Correspondence of H. P. Liddon and Charles Lindley Wood, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Halifax, Borthwick Institute, York, *Halifax Papers*, A4.210.
- Ham. Papers of Walter Kerr Hamilton, Pusey House, Oxford.
- Johnston J. O. Johnston: *Life and Letters of Henry Parry Liddon D.D., D.C.L., LL.D* (London, 1904).
- LBV Liddon Bound Volumes, Pusey House, Oxford.
- LP Letters of H. P. Liddon to E. B. Pusey, Pusey House Mss., Oxford.
- Lockhart J. G. Lockhart: *Charles Lindley Viscount Halifax*, Part I, 1839-85 (London, 1935); Part II, 1885-1934 (London, 1936).
- PL Letters of E. B. Pusey to H. P. Liddon, Pusey House Mss., Oxford.
- Pusey* H. P. Liddon: *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (4 vols., London, 1893-7).
- Tait* R. T. Davidson-W. Benham: *Life of Archibald Campbell Tait*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., (2 vols., London, 1891).

## 1. Introduction

This study is primarily an exercise in narrative history. Its purpose is to restore to wider awareness a figure from the Nineteenth Century who has been largely ignored by historians of the Church of England writing this century. Its method is to examine, and excerpt from, a correspondence continued over nearly thirty years, which in its turn has been almost wholly ignored or simply unknown. It aims to add a piece to the jigsaw of Victorian Anglicanism.

The subject of this work is Henry Parry Liddon (1829-90). Today's scholars remember him, if at all, as the author of the four-volume biography of the notable Tractarian, Edward Bouverie Pusey, an undertaking of such scope that only recently has its portrait of its subject been seriously challenged.<sup>1</sup> Yet in his day Liddon was an important figure in Church of England affairs – a learned (though unoriginal) theologian, and the author of a distinguished series of Bampton Lectures<sup>2</sup>; a powerful controversialist, and by general consent one of the greatest preachers of his age. He was a major figure in the group of “second generation” Tractarians which included such people as Richard Church, William Bright and Edward King, all of whom will be encountered in this study. His almost complete neglect by historians is puzzling. Even where he does find mention, writers can make elementary errors about him.<sup>3</sup>

Four books should be mentioned concerning Liddon's life. The “official” biography by J. O. Johnston<sup>4</sup> is a valuable source book, quoting many letters. Its principal limitation is that of being written by a generally uncritical friend and admirer, concerned with the externals of Liddon's career. Also, at the time this book appeared many of those involved in its story were still living, which made discretion necessary. G. W. E. Russell's smaller book is in some respects more rewarding.<sup>5</sup> Liddon's personality emerges with greater clarity because of Russell's generally anecdotal approach. The centenary of Liddon's birth saw the publication of a small volume of reminiscences of him from five writers.<sup>6</sup> These have interest because of the impressions of Liddon which they give. (To these books might be added the chapter on Liddon in A. B.

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<sup>1</sup> P. Butler (ed.): *Pusey Rediscovered*. (London, 1983)

<sup>2</sup> H. P. Liddon: *The Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. (14<sup>th</sup> ed., London, 1906)

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Lord Elton: *Edward King* (London, 1958), p141; G. Faber: *Jowett* (London, 1957), p341; J. Shelton Reed: *Glorious Battle* (London, 1998), p246, 254, all refer incorrectly to Liddon as a Dean.

<sup>4</sup> J. O. Johnston: *Life and Letters of Henry Parry Liddon D.D., D.C.L., LL.D.* (London, 1904)

<sup>5</sup> G. W. E. Russell: *Dr Liddon*. (London, 1905)

<sup>6</sup> *Henry Parry Liddon D.D., D.C.L. 1829-1929*. (London, 1929)

Donaldson's *Five Great Oxford Leaders*<sup>7</sup>, though it contains nothing which they do not, and is the work of another admirer.)

When the present study was in all essentials complete Michael Chandler's book on Liddon appeared.<sup>8</sup> It is a disappointing work, heavily dependent upon Johnston and adding little to our knowledge of Liddon as a man. Although Chandler lists some primary source material in his bibliography he shows no detailed acquaintance with it, and his work is based almost entirely on secondary, published sources. Thus the Halifax papers are listed but not obviously used, and the number of Liddon's letters is incorrectly given. The description of the Keble College Liddon papers omits to mention the manuscripts of Liddon's sermons and his Bampton Lectures; and the vitally important collection of Liddon's diaries at Pusey House is assigned to an incorrect location. Chandler also appears unaware that the manuscript drafts of Liddon's biography of Pusey are to be found at Pusey House. These errors of detail and others (for example, the name of Lord Halifax's sister is repeatedly mis-spelled) do not inspire confidence in Chandler's work. He offers little material of which the student of the period will be unaware, and at no point has it been found necessary to emend this thesis in the light of his book, to which little further reference will be made.

Liddon's career is soon told. Born at North Stoneham, Hampshire, he was reared in an Evangelical environment. He entered the King's College School, London, in 1844, matriculating at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1846. There he came under the influence of Dr Pusey, and he never departed from the Tractarian principles (High Church, but unsympathetic toward Roman Catholicism) which he learned from him. Despite a disappointing second class in his degree (1850), his intellectual gifts were obvious. He was made a Deacon by Bishop Samuel Wilberforce of Oxford in 1852, and served a brief curacy at Wantage under W. J. Butler (later Dean of Lincoln) before indifferent health compelled him to leave. He was ordained priest in 1853, and in 1854 was appointed Vice-Principal of Wilberforce's new theological college at Cuddesdon, outside Oxford.

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<sup>7</sup> A. B. Donaldson: *Five Great Oxford Leaders*. (London, 1900)

<sup>8</sup> M. Chandler: *The Life and Work of Henry Parry Liddon (1829-1890)*. (Hereford, 2000)

The Cuddesdon years (1854-59) marked Liddon's emergence into public notice.<sup>9</sup> A college devoted to the training of priests was a brave experiment, and to that task Liddon brought his gifts of personal charm, spiritual earnestness, theological learning and powerful preaching, as well as a determined insistence on an ordered routine of worship and devotion. With these, however, came an inflexibility which made him unyielding on what he believed to be fundamental principles. This had unfortunate results when attacks on the College began in 1858.<sup>10</sup> Following John Henry Newman's conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1845, there were Anglican voices heard loudly condemning Tractarian views and everything which smacked of "Romanism". Pusey, the great embodiment of Tractarianism, was a prime target, and Liddon's connection with Pusey made him an object of suspicion: also the ordered services of the College could easily be denounced as pointing men to Rome. Fears were confirmed when some Cuddesdon men did convert, among them, in 1858, F. C. Burnand, later the famous editor of *Punch*. (In a long forgotten piece of fiction, Burnand drew an unkind picture of Cuddesdon as "St Bede's Theological College". Its Vice-Principal, "Mr D'Oyley Glyde", is unmistakably Liddon.)<sup>11</sup> Liddon could not be justly accused of showing favour to Rome, but he was not the man to make concessions necessary for calming the situation. He resigned from Cuddesdon in 1859 and moved to St Edmund Hall, Oxford, as Vice-Principal. There he started the immensely successful series of Sunday evening lectures on the Christian faith which he continued to the end of his life.<sup>12</sup> He devoted himself seriously to the lectures, on one occasion refusing an invitation to preach in Cambridge. He wrote to J. B. Lightfoot,

...[the class] being quite voluntary, and consisting mainly of physical science and non-theological undergraduates, can only be kept together by my being *quite* regular. I have alas! already tampered with it; and it is not what it was or might be.<sup>13</sup>

...I cannot doubt that my preaching in Cambridge *would* involve giving up work which, if I do not do it will be undone; whereas there is no difficulty in filling a University pulpit.<sup>14</sup>

(The evangelistic instinct, the fruit of his upbringing, is clear in this. It never died, and was a major impulse behind his preaching.) One who attended the evening lectures, adopting High

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<sup>9</sup> See O. Chadwick: *The Founding of Cuddesdon* (Oxford, 1954) for a full account of the College's early years and Liddon's work there; also Johnston, Ch. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Chadwick, Ch. 3.

<sup>11</sup> F. C. Burnand: "My Time, and what I've done with it." *Macmillan's Magazine*, vol. XXIX, 1874.

<sup>12</sup> Johnston, p51-2. The lectures were sometimes an effort. On February 23, 1873, he noted in his diary, "In the evening my lecture, which was not very well attended. I seem to have lost the power of lecturing to any purpose through sheer fatigue." For Liddon's work at St Edmund Hall, see J. N. D. Kelly: *St Edmund Hall – Almost Seven Hundred Years* (Oxford, 1989).

<sup>13</sup> *Lightfoot Papers*, Dean and Chapter Library, Durham, April 3, 1873.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* April 4, 1873.

Church views (he made his confession to Liddon) on his way to Rome was the young Gerard Manley Hopkins.<sup>15</sup>

In 1862, illness prompted Liddon's resignation from St Edmund Hall. (The question of his health will be referred to more fully in our Conclusion.) He took up residence at Christ Church, where Pusey was Professor of Hebrew and Canon of the Cathedral, and retained his rooms there until his death. His Bampton Lectures were delivered in 1866, and he acquired increasing fame as a preacher who combined eloquence, passion and intellect. In 1870, Gladstone offered him a canonry of St Paul's Cathedral, which he accepted. The same year he was appointed Dean Ireland Professor of Exegesis at Oxford, and thereafter his time was chiefly divided between Oxford and London, fulfilling his duties as Professor and Canon. His preaching at St Paul's attracted crowds, and left an indelible impression on those who heard it – among them Lady Frederick Cavendish (whose husband was murdered in Phoenix Park), Stanley Baldwin and Walter de la Mare.<sup>16</sup> His life was centred wholly on Church matters in Britain, though he attended the Bonn Conferences on Church reunion in 1874 and 1875. He was well travelled, visiting Russia with Lewis Carroll in 1867<sup>17</sup> and Eastern Europe (where he saw first-hand the effects of the Turkish atrocities) in 1876.

In the matter of Church preferment, Liddon's inflexible convictions probably disqualified him from positions for which his abilities marked him out.<sup>18</sup> However, he displayed a curious lack of enthusiasm for advancement. He was mentioned for the Bishopric of Brechin (1875), but declined to be considered. He showed no enthusiasm for a bishop's throne when approached in 1885,<sup>19</sup> and refused Edinburgh the following year. He turned down the Deanery of Worcester in 1886, and the See of St Albans in 1890.

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<sup>15</sup> R. B. Martin: *Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London, 1992), pp38-46.

<sup>16</sup> See J. Bailey (ed.): *The Diary of Lady Frederick Cavendish*, vol. II (London, 1927), p81 and 142; K. Middlemas and J. Barnes: *Baldwin* (London, 1969), p1067; T. Whistler: *Imagination of the Heart. The Life of Walter de la Mare* (London, 1993), p29.

<sup>17</sup> M. Cohen: *The Russian Journal – II. A record kept by Henry Parry Liddon of a tour taken with C. L. Dodgson in the Summer of 1867* (New York, 1979). This is an edition of that portion of Liddon's diary relating to the Russian tour.

<sup>18</sup> For contemporary estimates of Liddon's character and suitability for promotion see L. March-Phillips and B. Christian: *Some Hawarden Letters 1878-1913* (London, 1917), p167-8, giving the views of Mary Drew (Gladstone's daughter); G. E. Buckle: *The Letters of Queen Victoria* (3<sup>rd</sup> Series), vol. I (London 1930), p426-8, for those of the Queen, Lord Salisbury and Randall Davidson. A. Roberts: *Salisbury* (London, 1999), p678 also deals with Salisbury's attempts to secure a bishopric for Liddon. Johnston, p307-8, gives Dean Church's careful opinion.

<sup>19</sup> Johnston, p313-5.



Liddon's later years saw him increasingly despondent at reforms in the University of Oxford and the advancing secularization he detected there. After Pusey's death in 1882 he literally exhausted himself in the labour of writing a biography which was to be not only the story of a life but also of a religious movement. In this he made a major contribution toward creating a mythology of Anglo-Catholic origins and growth, a mythology whose greatest monument remains Dean Church's *The Oxford Movement* (1891).<sup>20</sup> He was greatly disturbed by the appearance of the essays in *Lux Mundi* in 1889, which he saw as a capitulation by High Churchmen to rationalizing tendencies. He died in the following year, being buried in St Paul's on September 16, 1890.

The reasons for Liddon's neglect by historians will be considered in our Conclusion. This study examines him chiefly as a controversialist. His adult years coincided with a time of struggle in the Church of England – struggles involving the State as well as the Church – in which he was active in defence of High Church principles, with their emphasis on the English Church's Catholic heritage of doctrine and order. He abhorred anything which suggested a weakening of these or a confusion in theological thought. His greatest aversion was the Broad Church school, whose opinions were promoted by the like of Thomas Arnold, A. P. Stanley, Benjamin Jowett or Archbishop Tait of Canterbury.

Though active (sometimes too readily) in controversy, Liddon published almost nothing of a specifically controversial nature. His publications consisted almost entirely of sermons, in which he deliberately avoided political and ecclesiastical questions, concentrating on doctrinal exposition. If we wish to discover his part in the Church upheavals of his time we must turn to his letters, where he expresses his views on immediate issues. His extensive diaries are comparatively unrevealing, but in his letters he voices his opinions of events and individuals.

Like most distinguished Victorians, Liddon wrote prodigious quantities of letters, often twenty or thirty a day.<sup>21</sup> Some were replies to specific queries; some sent information to colleagues; some were to keep friendships in repair, as in the case of his letters to Reginald Porter, a former Cuddesdon student, written between 1856 and 1864, which reveal Liddon at his most relaxed.<sup>22</sup> To one correspondent, however, he wrote steadily about personal and Church matters for twenty-

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<sup>20</sup> See F. Knight: *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1995), p6-7.

<sup>21</sup> *Halifax*, June 5, 1877.

<sup>22</sup> See Ch. 2. I am grateful to the Revd M. Bate for making these letters available to me.

six years. These letters form the basis for the present study. Their interest lies in what they reveal about Liddon and the issues which concerned him and their recipient, the Hon. Charles Wood.

Charles Wood is known to historians by the title to which he succeeded in 1885 – Lord Halifax. During an exceptionally long life (1839-1934) he became the Church of England’s leading High Church layman, respected even by those who disagreed with him strongly. He was active in everything which concerned the views of High Churchmen (or Anglo-Catholics, as they became widely called); but his most important work was done in promoting the reunion of the Anglican and Roman Churches, which led him to take an important part in the discussions between the two bodies remembered as the Malines Conversations (1921-25). His life was authoritatively written by J. G. Lockhart.<sup>23</sup>

While at Oxford, Wood was decisively influenced by Pusey. There also began his acquaintance with Liddon, who became his spiritual adviser and confessor.<sup>24</sup> Their friendship grew quickly and lasted until Liddon’s death. Although Liddon never ceased to be Wood’s guide, he listened to the younger man’s views with respect. They also shared a sense of humour. (Liddon, though of a kindly nature, was more inclined than Wood to display a feline claw. Devotion to cats was one of their joint enthusiasms.)

The correspondence we shall examine is one-sided. Few of Wood’s letters to Liddon seem to have survived. Since most of the correspondence deals with Church questions, it should be added that among them are one or two where Liddon gives practical advice on Wood’s devotional life. For example, he was concerned that Wood, with the recklessness and earnestness of a young disciple, should not damage his health by such disciplines as excessive fasting. (The revival of such mortifications in Anglican circles was a product of the Oxford Movement.) Lockhart quotes a letter on this point, dated January 1, 1879,<sup>25</sup> but Liddon had written on the question previously. When Wood was ministering to victims of London’s cholera epidemic in 1866 – a ministry which Pusey also undertook – Liddon cautioned him, “There can be no doubt about what is right. While cholera lasts and you are in any way exposed to the infection, pray be quite sure to eat as much meat on Fridays as on other days. There can be no doubt as to the adequacy of the reasons

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<sup>23</sup> J. G. Lockhart: *Charles Lindley Viscount Halifax*, Part I, 1839-85 (London, 1935); Part II, 1885-1934 (London, 1936). Lockhart later wrote the outstanding biography, *Cosmo Gordon Lang* (London, 1949).

<sup>24</sup> For Wood’s religious development, see Lockhart, I, Ch. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Lockhart, I, p247-8.

for such a relaxation.”<sup>26</sup> Several years later he felt the need to address Wood’s fasting again in a letter of concern and sound common sense:

Since my return to town I have seen Lady Halifax [Wood’s mother], and found that she was very anxious about your health, and that your sister quite shared her anxiety. They pleaded to me that you did too much in the way of fasting; and, although I explained to them, what indeed they knew, your motives in this and similar matters, I could not but feel that they had practically a great deal to say for what they urged....

Will you then, to oblige me, until we can see each other and talk the matter thoroughly over, make the following Rule?

- 1) Eat meat on all Fridays and Vigils, excepting the first Friday in every month and the three last days of Holy Week.
- 2) *Never* receive Holy Communion in the middle of the day. When you are at places where there is no early Communion, attend without receiving, and make a careful act of Spiritual Communion. In other words, *always* eat a good breakfast on Sunday at 9 o’clock, at latest. I feel sure you will allow me to write thus. In all these matters there is one only end to be kept in view, so far as we know it, the Will of God – and it seems clear that His first will about us is work and capacity for work, His second self-denial, at any rate when its effects end with ourselves.<sup>27</sup>

Wood must have protested at this, for Liddon replied,

We will leave the question as it is until we meet. Only I cannot help fearing that you overrate your strength. I quite admit all that you say about the importance of keeping the Church’s rule. But the duty of attending to health must take precedence....<sup>28</sup>

These letters are quoted as a reminder of a dimension to the friendship between the two men which might be otherwise obscured by the issues dealt with in this study of Church matters raised in the Liddon-Wood papers. I have chosen from their correspondence letters which illustrate events I believe to be of particular interest. Liddon’s letters to other correspondents might have pointed to different concerns. I have drawn on other papers where these illustrate or amplify what is found in the Halifax source. If it is thought that excessive space is given to questions of Church ritual, I can only plead that there is much material to draw on in that area; and that since one reviewer felt that Johnston’s biography underplayed the importance of ritual troubles to Liddon, there is a case for showing how concerned for such affairs he was.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Halifax, August 22, 1866.

<sup>27</sup> Halifax, August 4, 1873.

<sup>28</sup> Halifax, August 11, 1873.

<sup>29</sup> *Church Quarterly Review*, vol. 60, 1905, p373.

### A Note on Editorial Procedure.

Due to haste, Liddon's handwriting can present difficulties to the reader. Familiarity has enabled me to transcribe with confidence; but where uncertainty remains I have indicated this. His punctuation is sometimes eccentric, once again the result of speed. I have left this unaltered except where it might cause confusion, when I have silently corrected it. A shortcoming of Johnston's book is that omissions from letters quoted are frequently not indicated. I have shown such omissions by dots. Where dots are present in the manuscript (an occasional device of Liddon's) I have made this clear. I have also expanded the contractions habitually used by Liddon for such words as "which", "Bishop" and "Archbishop".

## 2. "My dear Porter".

This study is based primarily on the correspondence between Henry Parry Liddon and Charles Wood. By way of preparation, however, it is of interest to give some examples from Liddon's correspondence with another friend. By good fortune letters exist written by Liddon to Reginald Porter, the first dated 1856 and the last 1864, meaning that the correspondence with Porter ends as the Wood correspondence begins.<sup>1</sup> What makes these letters of considerable interest is that they show Liddon writing as a younger man, when his career was under way but before he had achieved prominence in the Church. As such they provide a fascinating contrast in content and tone with his letters to Wood.

Reginald Porter was a student at Cuddesdon theological college when Liddon was Vice-Principal. In a note, Liddon wrote that Porter, formerly a graduate of Exeter College, Oxford, had at first been a conceited student, but had improved. Unsettled by the conversions to Roman Catholicism which had shaken Cuddesdon in 1856, he had recovered his stability, and was ordained Deacon by the Bishop of Oxford in that year. He went as curate to Wantage, where the well-known W. J. Butler was vicar, and where he made a good impression. Ordained priest in 1857, he became vicar of the parish of Kenn in the Exeter diocese, where he remained until his death in 1895.<sup>2</sup>

The most striking feature of Liddon's letters to Porter is a degree of intimacy and affection not found in those written to Wood. To Porter, Liddon can even on occasion sign himself with "my love", which he does not when writing to Wood. Between Liddon and Porter there was not so great a difference in age as there was with Wood, and the greater formality which marks Liddon's correspondence with the latter is not present. There is no doubt that he felt a particular fondness for Porter, and stayed with him at Kenn whenever he could. He found there peace and rest, so that he could write after one visit, "I could not make up my mind yesterday as to whether it is well to visit a place which one is so very sorry to leave as Kenn."<sup>3</sup> The warmth of Liddon's feelings can be seen in a prayer, found among the Porter papers, which was evidently composed by Liddon for Porter's ordination:

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<sup>1</sup> These letters are at present in my possession. They will be deposited in Pusey House Library, Oxford.

<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to Mr John Davies, Assistant Librarian at Ripon College, Cuddesdon, for these details from a note among the Liddon papers held by the College.

<sup>3</sup> *Porter*, September 12, 1860.

O Holy Father we implore Thy blessing upon one dear to us, who is about to enter the ministry of Thy Church. Fill him with a deep apprehension of the awfulness of Thy service, of the preciousness of souls, and of the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Enable him to put aside all earthly motives and to seek Thee for Thyself alone and Thy greater glory. Make all labour rest unto him which is borne for Thee, and all rest toilsome, which is not in Thee. Conform him ever more and more to the Spirit and Image of our All-holy Redeemer, that going from strength to strength he may by Thy mercy, turn many to righteousness and shine as the stars for ever and ever. Grant this O heavenly Father for Jesus Christ's sake our Mediator and Advocate. Amen

Liddon's humanity and concern are fully seen in the letters following the death of Porter's wife on February 1, 1859, after the birth of their only child. On receiving a telegram from Porter that day, Liddon hastened to Kenn, arriving in time for Mrs Porter's death. The following day he baptised the baby, Mary Constance, and remained to support Porter until the funeral. "How truly heartrending was the scene I witnessed this morning!", he wrote after the funeral on February 5. "Thy will O God be done! But how difficult to say this. My poor sorrowing friend, when will thy broken heart be healed by the consolations of Heaven?"<sup>4</sup> Writing to the widower some days later, his first consideration is a very practical one. He advises Porter, who was wishing to return quickly to his parish after bereavement, "I cannot but think that *unless* you can get some companion to be with you *from the moment of your going to Kenn* it would be wise to return at so early a date as you propose." He has taken steps to obtain a curate for Porter as soon as possible, he says; and he concludes his letter, "write to me whenever you feel disposed – whether you have anything special to say or not – whenever you have nothing better to do – at the moment. It will always be a delight to hear from you. You will find much in the two last chapters of the Book of Revelation which will greatly comfort you."<sup>5</sup> Only the briefest comment betrays a grief of his own – "I have announced my resignation [as Vice-Principal of Cuddesdon] to the men." Porter took the advice and found company for his return to the parish. Learning of this, Liddon wrote, "it is I am sure well to have gone home and faced your work and God's will without more delay. It costs you much now. But you will get comfort hereafter from the remembrance that you did not miss your first Lent among your people."<sup>6</sup> Particularly sensitive is his letter written to Porter in the following Eastertide:

I thought much of you on Easter Day. The wonderful consolation which it suggests to those who have lost their friends is apt to be overpowered in a measure by the memories which come back upon us so overwhelmingly. At least it was so with me last year. [His Aunt, a great influence on him, died in March, 1858.] I *hope* that time enough may have

<sup>4</sup> See *Diaries*, February 1–5, 1859.

<sup>5</sup> *Porter*. February 12, 1859.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, March 5, 1859.

elapsed to enable you at least at times to dwell upon the immense Blessings of the Resurrection festival, with delight and thankfulness....Yesterday morning I left Cuddesdon – for good.<sup>7</sup>

On Whitsunday following, Liddon writes to say, “Each of these great festivals brings you very much to my mind, because I know how keenly a recent sorrow is apt to be thrown into strong relief by the Church’s joy.” There is to be a festival at Cuddesdon for students past and present, but he appreciates that Porter may not wish to attend, since “I can understand the shrinking from a crowd of faces old and new, when the heart is sad.”<sup>8</sup> He writes again to say, “Your own troubles I can guess at: so I do not ask you about them. It takes a year to get beyond the First Circle of Deep Grief. But the interest of your parish and its many souls will I expect steadily deepen: while memories of the past will become – not indeed less keen but – more bearable from your deepening submission to the Will of God.”<sup>9</sup>

(The reference to the First Circle of Grief is a strong indication that Liddon was already acquainted with Dante’s work, an interest he shared with many of his contemporaries. He became a keen member of Oxford’s Dante Society in 1878, despite his modest disclaimer to Dean Church of St Paul’s that “I am a mere listener, as I really know nothing about him”. He added drily, “I am reading him through again by snatches. It is impossible while doing so not to make in one’s thoughts all sorts of *modern* arrangements for the great worlds which he describes. But this is not always edifying.”<sup>10</sup> In fact, he built up a substantial collection of books on Dante, and delivered to the Dante Society two papers on “Dante and Aquinas” and one on “Dante and the Franciscans” which reveal his knowledge of the one he called “the most theological of Christian poets” in the original Italian.<sup>11</sup> The papers also show the essential cast of Liddon’s mind by his clear preference for the Aristotelian Thomas Aquinas above the Platonist theologian, Bonaventure. [He is said to have expressed the opinion that a preference for Plato to Aristotle was likely to be “theologically disastrous”.]<sup>12</sup> It is noteworthy that he seizes the opportunity to attack a point of Roman Catholic theology which he always

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, Easter Thursday, 1859.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, Whitsunday, 1859.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, July 21, 1859.

<sup>10</sup> Johnston, p247.

<sup>11</sup> H. P. Liddon: *Essays and Addresses* (London, 1892), p177.

<sup>12</sup> T. B. Strong: “Dr Liddon at Christ Church”, in *Henry Parry Liddon, 1829-1929: A Centenary Memoir*. (London, 1929) p13.

condemned, by praising Aquinas for his refusal to sanction the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary.<sup>13</sup>)

Three years later, Liddon is writing of bereavement in his own family. He had informed Porter,

You will be kindly interested in hearing that my sister Louisa is going to ‘fulfil her mission’. She is engaged to Colonel Ambrose who is at present commanding the garrison of the Tower. He is a communicant, but has, I should think, had few opportunities of learning the truth at all definitely....I could not escape from a shade of disappointment at first, as I had cherished a hope that some day she might be a Religious. But her inclinations pointed steadily the other way, and one has no business to prefer one’s private fancies to a Divine leading or its absence. She will do a great deal of missionary work in the Regiment – where nearly all the Christians are R.C.’s (or Methodists).<sup>14</sup>

The marriage was painfully brief. Col. Ambrose died on July 19 that year. Liddon’s letter informing Porter shows his compassion for his sister, combined once again with realism and practicality:

Louisa finds your book a very great help and comfort. She spends a great deal of time with it in the room with the coffin. Yesterday she was more crushed than has yet been the case: she makes a continual effort to restrain the expression of sorrow – almost, I fear, too great a one. We have decorated the room with every conceivable kind of cross and crown; and are now making a huge cross of flowers 5 feet high to go to the funeral. There is a large, plain metal cross on the coffin. Independently of the satisfaction to the angels, as you would say, these things keep dear Loui occupied: and the question of mourning has happily been extremely intricate.<sup>15</sup>

Liddon’s original ambition for his sister had not wholly vanished. He wrote to Porter, “we are getting accustomed to my sister in her widow’s weeds. I hope that she will never leave them off: it was remarkable that the day after dear George’s death we had that lesson about the widows in 1 Timothy. Louisa noticed it: she will I hope learn to see in a widow’s status a kind of consecration to God’s higher service – such as was felt to be in it in the Primitive Church.”<sup>16</sup> In the event she was to live with Liddon in London when he was made a Canon of St Paul’s, caring for his home there. “Not only did she enter most keenly into all his interests,” wrote his biographer, “but her presence bound up all his work in London into the closest connection with

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<sup>13</sup> H. P. Liddon, op. cit., pp169ff.

<sup>14</sup> *Porter*, Conversion of St Paul, 1862.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, July 24, 1862.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, July 28, 1862.



his early home life, which had always such a deep place in his affection.”<sup>17</sup> By Liddon’s will, Mrs Ambrose received the contents of his London house, except books, and a share in the residue of his estate, “in consideration of her kindness in living with me”.<sup>18</sup> She gave a new High Altar to St Paul’s Cathedral in his memory in 1891.

Liddon’s visits to Kenn provide entertaining day to day details in his letters. On one occasion, when he has stayed for three weeks, he writes to say, “In body and soul alike I feel refreshed by that visit to Kenn, and left it yesterday most unwillingly, and only in deference to calls which I cannot set aside.” After thanking Porter for a gift of fruit he adds, “Kenn is certainly a *Paradisus corporis humani*: and will become one no doubt *animae Christianae*.”<sup>19</sup> The next day he writes, “You will smile when I say that I am again vexed to find that I have left Kenn without paying for my washing. Would you ascertain the amount from Emma [a servant], and let me know? Her moral sense must have been already sufficiently shocked by the delay.” There is also a request for help. “Would you kindly send me 1 doz. Yards of that cheap German framing material. Some of the people to whom I wish to give ‘objects’ are too poor to pay for frames. I will repay you when we meet *here*. [He was staying near Axminster.] I would not trouble you but don’t know to whom to write in Exeter.”<sup>20</sup> Emma is called in later to support Liddon’s concern that Porter should care for his health:

I wish that I had left you in stronger health. You must take more care of yourself. You ought to put a great coat on before going into the prayer room in these winter mornings. It is very much colder than any other room in the house, and goes to explain your cold. I meant to have said this to you: Emma will bear me out.<sup>21</sup>

Emma’s manner was a source of amusement for Liddon and Porter, for a letter sent to the latter as he was due to return home from Salisbury says, “By this time you have reached your Ithaca, no doubt, and Penelope in the shape of Emma has given you that formal welcome which has been from time to time a ‘study’ between us.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Johnston*, p301. Johnston omits to say that at the time of Colonel Ambrose’ death his wife was pregnant. She gave birth to a daughter, Mary, the following year. Liddon’s diaries reveal that as Mary grew up she became an agreeable companion to her uncle, though he was uneasy concerning her liking for dances and other social occasions.

<sup>18</sup> *Halifax*, “[Copy] Will of The Rev. H. P. Liddon, D.D.”, November 24, 1885.

<sup>19</sup> *Porter*, September 11, 1860.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, September 12, 1860.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, January 2, 1862.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, November 8, 1861.

Liddon evidently appreciated the worship of the church at Kenn, and was anxious to join in good singing. Looking forward to a visit, he tells Porter, “Be sure to have attractive Hymns on the 2 days that I am with you. Now that I have bespoken them there will be no excuse if they are not a ‘delicious surprise.’”<sup>23</sup> A year later he says, “After a year’s growth, I shall expect ecstatic Hymns at Kenn – clearly this would be reasonable.”<sup>24</sup>

Liddon quickly developed a great affection for Porter’s little daughter. Many of his letters contain greetings to be sent to “Miss Mary”, and he was enchanted to find that she had developed a Devon accent. In one letter he even becomes facetious on the subject of her pronunciation of a particular word which itself hints at the agreeable hospitality he enjoyed in the Porter vicarage:

Mrs Butler [wife of the vicar of Wantage] asked all particulars about Miss Mary in a truly delightful way. Of course I told them about the “poort”. Now that Max Muller<sup>25</sup> has shown that it is very arrogant in the literary dialect of any language to pretend to be its genuine and exclusive representative, there is no reason why Devonshire should not claim to be the correct and original type of English. And it would be a great pity in Miss M. to unlearn these words – or any other phrases she may acquire; as the accent is too easily lost, and not easily recoverable in after life.<sup>26</sup>

The “poort” evidently became a standing joke. Sending Easter greetings to Porter, Liddon recommends that Miss Mary must be given some on Easter Day.<sup>27</sup>

Porter must have consulted Liddon on difficulties encountered in his parish, as one letter makes clear. Given the attitude to sexual relations outside marriage which prevailed at that time, Liddon’s advice, though firm, is realistic in its estimate of the situation, and not uncharitable:

My first impression is this. You must try to bring the man and woman to agree to be married at Kenn. This public confession of their evil-doing will help to deepen their penitence. Clearly the poor woman has everything to learn. It is impossible to proceed with the preparation for her Confirmation until by God’s mercy you have brought her to a full and contrite acknowledgement of her past sin.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, St Stephen’s Day, 1861.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, October 2, 1862. Does this reflect the excitement in Church circles following the publication of the music edition of *Hymns Ancient & Modern* in 1861?

<sup>25</sup> Friedrich Max Muller (1823-1900), the distinguished Oxford philologist and religious writer, was a friend of Liddon.

<sup>26</sup> *Porter*, Conversion of St Paul, 1862.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, Easter Eve, 1862.

Nothing would really be gained by their leaving Kenn and being married elsewhere. The neighbours would be certain to find out all about it; and the attempt at concealment would bring fresh difficulties.<sup>28</sup>

As well as illustrating the warmth of Liddon's friendship with Reginald Porter, the correspondence also provides interesting side-lights on Liddon's own life. Having left Cuddesdon, he confirms to Porter that he has accepted the post of Vice-Principal of St Edmund Hall in Oxford, giving some reasons for his acceptance:

The S.E.H. report is true. Dr Barrow [the Principal] made the proposal and as it came from without and there was no adequate moral objection, I felt that on my own principles I was bound to accept it. I humbly hope that it may open means of good in the University. It will enable me to entertain my old Cuddesdon friends for as long a time as they can stay with me, and it will of course throw the Hall definitely into the scale of Church-like work. Every little helps. The vacations will leave time for theological work of various kinds, such as would have been impossible in a parish.<sup>29</sup>

A further letter indicates that he has been a little optimistic in his aims, but a humorous aside makes clear that his association with Pusey has been quickly re-established:

Dr Pusey is much better than he has been for a long time, and takes walks in the afternoon. This is quite a new feature in Oxford life and a very delightful one. The men here, i.e. in St E. Hall – are generally speaking nice fellows: my relations with them are much less satisfactory than I could wish and make me uncomfortable: but it is almost impossible to break down the tradition of the university which hedges the person of a tutor with a divinity reducing him to practical uselessness. We have an afternoon sermon on Sundays in Chapel: and I hope, as time goes on, to see other ways of doing good.<sup>30</sup>

The pastoral aspect of Liddon's nature, which he never lost, emerges here. It is seen again in his account of having to deal with an unsatisfactory student. "This morning I have had to send back a candidate for matriculation. The poor dear fellow was in great distress, and *I* could have cried outright, but there was no help for it, he was so *very* ignorant 'of verbs and roots'."<sup>31</sup> His concern for the good of souls led him to begin his Sunday evening lectures on the New Testament which, as mentioned in our Introduction, drew large numbers of undergraduates. He also worked to restore the St Edmund Hall Chapel, taking advantage of a change in the college's Principal to make some alterations. "During the interregnum", he writes, "the table was removed and I have erected a decent altar in our Chapel: it is I think essential that an effort

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, September 3. Year not given, but probably 1861.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, April 9, 1859.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, May 31, 1859.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, October 12, 1861.

should be made to restore it.” There is also the hint of a future controversy in St Paul’s Cathedral when he says that “Branthwaite<sup>32</sup> is a vigorous churchman, and we have signaled his advent by beginning to ‘celebrate in front’ [i.e. with the celebrant at the Eucharist standing before the altar, rather than at the North end according to general custom at the time].”<sup>33</sup> This letter also mentions “Dr Barrow’s mental disease, involving various painful complications” - an oblique reference to the scandal which had threatened the Hall, requiring the resignation of the former Principal, John Barrow. Liddon had been a central figure in silencing rumour when Barrow was accused in February, 1861, of what was evidently a sexual involvement with a second year commoner, a charge which he admitted.<sup>34</sup> It is interesting, therefore, to find Liddon writing to Porter later that year with a request for his assistance:

Could you oblige me by helping anyhow to get a young man a clerkship in an Insurance Office?

Private. He is a brother of one of those whose names I was obliged to remove from the books in the troubles of the Spring of this year. I promised the distressed mother to do what I could for her family. The young man in question is thoroughly well-principled – I thought that something might suggest itself.<sup>35</sup>

The Chapel also provided another anticipation of events in St Paul’s. In March, 1862, an organ was installed, which must have pleased John Stainer, then an undergraduate, who was destined to become organist at the Cathedral and a colleague of Liddon’s.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps Stainer’s presence encouraged a musical innovation in the Chapel. Liddon was evidently attached to the Easter hymn, *O filii et filiae*, which had become generally available in J. M. Neale’s translation.<sup>37</sup> In 1862 he wrote to Porter, “You have I hope attained to the O Filii this year. Last Sunday I was at St Barnabas [Oxford], and the Hymn (in the Ancient and Modern) was quite moving.”<sup>38</sup> The hymn soon found its way into St Edmund Hall, along with the tune in swinging triple time found in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*:

We have been singing O Filii vigorously in Chapel. Its popularity is seen in the fact that men whistle the tune about the quadrangle. This unintentional irreverence is

<sup>32</sup> John Branthwaite, Principal 1861-6.

<sup>33</sup> Porter, May 7, 1861.

<sup>34</sup> J. N. D. Kelly: *St Edmund Hall* (Oxford, 1989), p81-2.

<sup>35</sup> Porter, October 19, 1861.

<sup>36</sup> A. B. Emden: “Liddon at St Edmund Hall” in *Henry Parry Liddon, 1829-1929: A Centenary Memoir*, p31.

<sup>37</sup> His diary for April 25, 1859, records that it was sung in Cuddesdon College chapel at Compline on Easter Monday that year.

<sup>38</sup> Porter, Easter Eve, 1862. Why the hymn should have been sung on what was Palm Sunday is puzzling. Perhaps Liddon was referring to a different hymn.

counterbalanced by the obvious success. *You* would be edified if you were to hear it: we repeat 4 Alleluias between each stanza.<sup>39</sup>

Liddon's intention of doing serious academic work was frustrated by his pastoral concerns and by increasing calls upon him to preach. Pusey was anxious that he should contribute a volume to the Commentary on the Bible which he desired various authors to write. The commentary was to be written "with all the aids afforded by modern scholarship, but in accordance with Primitive and Catholic faith." It was to be "a Commentary for the unlearned", and "it would give only those results of criticism which appeared to be well established, while taking no account of the process by which they had been reached." In other words, it would advance little beyond instancing Patristic comments on scripture, and its exposition would be "confined to one or two spiritual interpretations (where these are called for) relating to Christ and His Body the Church, or the soul of each individual member of Christ's mystical body."<sup>40</sup> Liddon agreed to contribute and began working on the Pastoral Epistles, setting them aside to write instead upon Leviticus. On Whitsunday he told Porter, "Today I hope to begin my bit of the Commentary, placing it in this way under the protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit."<sup>41</sup> Nothing was completed, though some of his work on the Pastoral Epistles found its way into the lectures he gave in later years as Ireland Professor of Exegesis.<sup>42</sup> His diary for 1860, when he spent three weeks at Kenn from August to September, frequently records his failure to work on the Commentary during the Summer, the most terse comment being "No Comm!"<sup>43</sup> Certainly he was not fulfilling his intentions at the beginning of the year when he listed five "motives for exerting myself at Oxford to save souls, and in the commentary."<sup>44</sup> When he resigned from St Edmund Hall in 1862 he wrote of his thankfulness that "I am free to work on the commentary."<sup>45</sup> Resolution again failed. Pusey was not satisfied. "The Great Doctor has come back perfectly ungovernable about the Commentary and not at all pleased at the limited extent of my performances", Liddon wrote to Porter in 1861.<sup>46</sup> Three years later he noted in his diary that Pusey had been "very sharp" with him about his failure to complete his portion of the Commentary.<sup>47</sup> Possibly this rebuke was in his mind when he told Porter,

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, May 20, 1862.

<sup>40</sup> Pusey, vol. III (London, 1894), p149-50.

<sup>41</sup> Porter, Whitsunday, 1859.

<sup>42</sup> H. P. Liddon: *Explanatory Analysis of St Paul's First Epistle to Timothy* (London, 1897).

<sup>43</sup> *Diaries*, August 27, 1860.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 1860, endpaper, dated January 14.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., September 6, 1862.

<sup>46</sup> Porter, October 15, 1861.

<sup>47</sup> *Diaries*, June 2, 1864.

It is not I fear in my power to make any promises about visiting Kenn this October. I am oppressed with multifarious work. I wish that I could say with the Psalmist that my zeal had even consumed me: my “consumption” is simply a result of railroad-travelling. Meanwhile the Great Doctor is very effervescent about the Commentary.<sup>48</sup>

Many events, amusing and serious, fill the letters to Porter, which display an observant eye and powers of succinct description. In 1860, Liddon learns of the Revd Mamerto Gueritz, who achieved a name as an editor and translator of Spanish writings:

Passing through Colyton yesterday, I heard much of Mr Gueritz (the people call him “Grits”) that is very hopeful. He is training a choir: has an harmonium in the Chancel: has “abolished the old Reading Desk”: has weekly Celebration: and – what particularly impressed one informant – has a “Sister of Mercy staying in the Vicarage who does good all day.” She must, I think, be a (natural) sister of Mr Granville, of Sheviock. As Mr G. only came at midsummer - this is very well?<sup>49</sup>

Albert Barff, forceful and irascible, was a source of endless entertainment to Liddon and Porter. He left Cuddesdon, where he had been Chaplain, in 1858, going to the parish of North Moreton. “Barff is doing wonderfully well at North Moreton,” wrote Liddon. “I paid him a visit which is among the most cheerful memories of this vacation.”<sup>50</sup> The former Chaplain did not sever his links with the theological college. “Barff made an inroad in Cuddesdon last week,” Liddon told Porter, “and seems to have persuaded Mr S. [H. H. Swinny, the Principal] that it was right for him (Mr S) (1) to have a special Choral Service for the benefit of the N. Moreton choristers and (2) to pay for half the dinner of the said choristers. This shows that the V[icar] of N. M. is not degenerate: and it also says much for Mr S.”<sup>51</sup> Barff’s requests could be as eccentric as his behaviour. Liddon, for a reason unspecified, asked Porter for “a drawing for a tomb”. Three days later he wrote,

Barff has sent me a design for a Tomb: so that I will not trouble you. He has also issued an order to me to get some sea-gulls, and send them to North Moreton. He no doubt would like me to swing in a basket looking for nests on the side of a perpendicular cliff. But my father says that it is full late [*sic*] to get any: perhaps some old bird may be for sale?<sup>52</sup>

Barff seems to have had problems with one curate; but another assistant gave much satisfaction to Liddon. “Your extract from Moreton is highly characteristic,” he told Porter, “and *greatly*

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<sup>48</sup> *Porter*, September 17, 1864.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, September 11, 1860. Gueritz remained in Colyton until 1901.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, January 28, 1859.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, May 31, 1859.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, September 14, 1860.

interests me. The curate whose physical geography is so portrayed must have been A. M. Morgan. He has a somewhat Napoleonic head.”<sup>53</sup> It is probably Morgan of whom Liddon commented that “M’s descriptive power is of a high order, and I predict that he will come out as an author.” However, Liddon sounded a cautionary note as well: “I should beg M. not to trifle with his duty to God and the Church by going to these Conventicles. He will cultivate that exquisite sense of the religiously grotesque at the expense of what is worth more – the sense of God’s Presence in His Truth and in His Church.”<sup>54</sup>

The connection with Barff was to be maintained, since Liddon recommended him for the Headmastership of St Paul’s Cathedral Choir School on account of his “deep and simple piety” and “originality of mind”. A recent writer has pointed out, however, that Barff took “a morbid pleasure in physical punishment”, and that he was “at once old-maidish and tyrannical...hot-tempered, sarcastic and overbearing”. That “Liddon was perhaps a little innocent not to suspect a want of perfect psychological balance in the ‘originality’ of the headmaster’s mind” is fair comment.<sup>55</sup>

Names which will feature in this study are already present in the letters to Porter. Pusey has been mentioned, and Porter is given the opportunity for meeting him when he plans a visit to Liddon after the latter has resigned from St Edmund Hall and moved back to Christ Church:

I shall rejoice to see your Face. Only I am not, (even now,) in my rooms which are filled with painters. The dirt was insufferable: so that I am having them painted. You will exclaim The World! and put on a virtuous look. I am living in Dr Pusey’s house: where we can see just as much of each other as anywhere else: as he lives in his own study and I occupy the Library. You will thus have an opportunity of making what the French call, in a peculiarly technical sense, an “Etude” of the centre and wellspring of Tractarianism.<sup>56</sup>

Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford appears (“I never saw him in better spirits than last evening: he told stories about Hatchard the bookseller which would have killed you outright – if I may be guilty of the exaggeration. The laughing materially aided my digestion.”),<sup>57</sup> as do A. H. Mackonochie, the famous priest of St Alban’s, Holborn, (“Mackonochie goes to *St Albans* after

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, Easter Tuesday, 1862.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, May 20, 1862.

<sup>55</sup> T. Whistler: *Imagination of the Heart: the Life of Walter de la Mare* (London, 1993), p31-2.

<sup>56</sup> *Porter*, Mid-Lent Sunday, 1863.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, June 3, 1863.

all. Alleluia.”)<sup>58</sup> and A. C. Tait, then Bishop of London, later Archbishop of Canterbury. (“The Bishop of London is very gracious. Scotch, you see. He looks much better than a few weeks ago, and is in capital spirits.”)<sup>59</sup> The unintentional irony of Liddon’s amiable reference to Tait will become apparent.

Graver matters appear also in these letters. Liddon’s health gave way in 1862, and he resigned from St Edmund Hall, telling Porter, “This illness has proved to me that I have not much to fall back upon in the way of constitutional stamina; and it is of course a duty to do the best one can with the one talent of strength.”<sup>60</sup> He went to Milford Haven in Pembrokeshire to recover, sending a depressing report of the state of the religious situation there. (“The degradation of the general Church hereabouts exceeds anything you can imagine: and the whole heart of the people is given to dissent. I preach in an ultra Protestant Church here: remaining in a pew, gowned, until the right time.”)<sup>61</sup> He was grateful to meet some friends, the Mirehouses from Salisbury, in Milford. “It is a great pleasure to see such,” he wrote, adding gloomily, “but one feels that duty points to being as much as possible with the protestant and pagan people here.” For their improvement, he handed out quantities of a tract of *Prayers and Maxims*.<sup>62</sup>

A constant anxiety was provided by those who were tempted to convert to Roman Catholicism. A mutual acquaintance of Liddon’s and Porter’s was troubled in this way in 1862, causing Liddon to write to Porter,

I am glad that Vinney [?] has written to you; as he is more likely to get over his trouble by taking refuge in a sense of the sympathy of his friends than in any other human way. His difficulties are not intellectual, and do not admit of being put down on paper. They are rather an atmosphere of doubt and suspicion which has been gendered partly by the clever efforts of the Romans, or Anglo-Romans, and partly in consequence of his not having watched his affections with sufficient jealousy, or checked them by what he knew of truth as to the Relations of the 2 Communions. But he will now I hope get right: I wish he were at Kenn, or somewhere else than at Kenilworth where the E. C. [English Church] does not show to any advantage to one who has been recently in Italy.<sup>63</sup>

The contrast between the Church in England and abroad was one which Liddon himself felt keenly. He confessed to Porter:

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, Conversion of St Paul, 1862.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, March 15, 1862. In 1863 Liddon preached at St Paul’s for the first time at Tait’s invitation (Johnston, p55).

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, September 6, 1862.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, October 17, 1862.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, May 20, 1862.



I too never go abroad without inward distress at the loss of unity: an English R. C. seems to get his compensation when he crosses the Channel. I fall back on general and historical considerations, but the wound remains. All that we can do is to pray God to heal the breach of His people, and to spread Catholic belief among ourselves, and dread of unwarrantable additions to it among the R. C. On returning to England I enjoy the Morning and Evening Service more and the Communion Service less. The latter loses by comparison with the Mass, while the former as a popular and living service is unlike anything that the Romans have.<sup>64</sup>

Possibly the satisfactory nature of Church worship at Kenn was assisted by Liddon's sending to Porter a copy of *The Priest to the Altar*. This book, published in 1861, aimed to supplement the material for the Church's liturgical year found in the Prayer Book with ancient prayers and collects. The translation of these, and the responsibility for the book as a whole, was P. G. Medd's, but he had consulted Liddon and others.<sup>65</sup> "It has cost us nearly £90 in printing," wrote Liddon, "and I am in no condition to pay my £45. But the book will I think do good. If you can get anyone to take 4 or 8 or 12 copies so as to sell them again to the right-minded you will help us effectually."<sup>66</sup>

Oxford matters naturally receive a mention in Liddon's letters to Porter. He mentions a man with whom "I had a very long talk about *Essays and Reviews*; the subject seems to occupy his mind a great deal, and I fear that he may at bottom think that there is something to be said for the sceptical 'view'."<sup>67</sup> In opposition to this notorious book, William Thomson – later Archbishop of York, and held in very low esteem by Liddon – edited a collection of essays entitled *Aids to Faith*.<sup>68</sup> Liddon entertained few hopes for this volume, as he stated in a letter which reveals something of the foundation on which he stood and also includes a rare positive comment on C. J. Ellicott. When Ellicott, at this time Dean of Exeter, became Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol Liddon would have little good to say of him:

I do not anticipate too much from the *Aids to Faith*? Mansel<sup>69</sup> and Ellicott will be worth reading: but none of the other writers I fear will insist with sufficient energy on the truth that *we* differ from these sceptical worthies not in the details of criticism but in *the*

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid, September 17, 1864.

<sup>65</sup> P. G. Medd: *The Priest to the Altar* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., London, 1898).

<sup>66</sup> *Porter*, December 5, 1861.

<sup>67</sup> *Porter*, March 20, 1861.

<sup>68</sup> E. H. Thomson: *The Life and Letters of William Thomson* (London, 1919), Ch. 4.

<sup>69</sup> H. G. Mansel, Waynflete Professor of moral and metaphysical philosophy. Oxford. Later Dean of St Paul's.

*major premisses of thought* – the leading principles from which we reason. And, in the ultimate analysis, these are rather moral than intellectual.<sup>70</sup>

Benjamin Jowett, who became the legendary Master of Balliol, was a contributor to *Essays and Reviews*. At the end of 1861 Liddon could tell Porter, “we are in the midst of an awful Jowett-row. I enclose a pamphlet which I printed yesterday.”<sup>71</sup> This battle concerned the proposal to increase the endowment of the Greek Professorship, held by Jowett. It was opposed by those who deplored Jowett’s essay in the book, including Liddon. (It may have been a meeting of the Congregation of the University to discuss the question of the endowment which caused Liddon to write with satisfaction, “I came out of Congregation singing glory like a Wesleyan. Benson<sup>72</sup> purred quite audibly.”<sup>73</sup>) This case provided an instance of Liddon’s disagreeing with Pusey, whose proposals on the matter, had they been accepted, would have prevented much argument and bitterness. In later years Liddon confessed that he had been unwise in this disagreement. As it was, Liddon was writing to say “we are in a great ferment here: as the Jowett-case comes on before the V[ice] C[hancellor] on Friday” as long after as 1863.<sup>74</sup>

The longest of Liddon’s surviving letters to Porter is of particular interest, since it gives his views on theological colleges and training for the clergy. Some of the points in it are mentioned in an earlier letter of May 7, 1861, but they are expanded in the letter we will examine. In 1832 Dr Pusey published his *Remarks on the Prospective and Past Benefits of Cathedral Institutions in the Promotion of Sound Religious Knowledge*, in which he suggested that cathedrals should be centres for learning and clerical education.<sup>75</sup> In the years following theological colleges were established in a number of cathedral cities.<sup>76</sup> Bishop Phillpotts of Exeter established such a college in 1861, which occasioned Liddon’s letter.

I am greatly interested [he wrote to Porter] in what you tell me about the generous designs of the Bishop of Exeter for endowing his diocese with a Theological College. I hope that God may speed his endeavours: as to pretend that the universities are any longer fit places for clerical training – secularised and neologian as they are – seems the language of extreme ignorance or of bitter sarcasm. It is of course always a temptation to persons in office here [Oxford], to sacrifice the interests and efficiency of our Church to a narrow academicism: but one looks to the Bishops for larger views than to the

<sup>70</sup> Porter, March 20, 1861.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, December 5, 1861.

<sup>72</sup> Presumably R. M. Benson, founder of the Society of St John the Evangelist, and a Student of Christ Church.

<sup>73</sup> Porter, December 5, 1861.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, February 10, 1863.

<sup>75</sup> Pusey, vol. I, pp225ff.

<sup>76</sup> O. Chadwick: *The Victorian Church*, vol. II (London, 1972), p382.

Heads of Houses, and I am right glad that the cause of Diocesan Colleges is to be reinforced by the ripe wisdom and disinterested foresight of your respected Diocesan.<sup>77</sup>

This passage is revealing, showing as it does that Liddon's suspicion of the universities (especially Oxford) as places for teaching and promoting the Christian religion, which was a marked feature of his later years, had roots early in his career. His opinion that the universities were unsuited to true theological training was in tune with that of Christopher Wordsworth, who founded one of the most distinguished of theological colleges in his cathedral city of Lincoln in 1874.<sup>78</sup> B. F. Westcott also supported such diocesan centres for training future clergy, but was clear that "such theological schools, which we regard as a necessary part of the work of a cathedral foundation, are not designed in any way to supersede the Universities or to serve as places of refuge for men who have neglected to use the opportunities which the Universities offer." He added that while "something may speedily be done for the systematic training of non-university candidates for Holy Orders" this should be quite separate from the work of cathedral colleges.<sup>79</sup>

Liddon had immediate practical concerns for the future college:

I do trust that, if the college is started, some obvious mistakes will be avoided.

1. As to situation. It ought to be not *in*, but *within reach of*, Exeter. The Cathedral theory would of course place it in the close. The college at Salisbury has just been opened on this plan: the Bishop was committed to it beforehand by his Pamphlet. But the arrangement involves a great loss. You want the retirement of the country – which aids collectedness of thought for the coming work. You want to escape for a few months from even that measure of society which is part and parcel of a cathedral atmosphere. You want greater elasticity and variety in your chapel services than a Dean and Chapter could be expected to offer. You want a great deal of work to be done in a short time – and therefore all unnecessary distractions should be avoided.<sup>80</sup>

Here we see the fruits of Liddon's experience in Cuddesdon, with its relative countryside isolation from Oxford. His desire for freedom in the worship of the new college reflects his irritation at the outside interference in chapel services and decoration which he had known in the older college. He goes on to meet arguments which he thinks will be raised in favour of the college being adjacent to the cathedral:

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<sup>77</sup> Porter, May 23, 1861.

<sup>78</sup> Chadwick, op. cit., p383.

<sup>79</sup> B. F. Westcott: "Cathedral Foundations in Relation to Religious Thought" in J. S. Howson (Ed.): *Essays on Cathedrals* (London, 1872).

<sup>80</sup> Porter, May 23, 1861.

It may be objected that a cathedral furnishes a Library. But a working Library would be forthcoming in a year: you remember Cuddesdon. It cannot be objected that the college should be at Exeter to be under the eye of the Bishop: as his Lordship's health keeps him at Torquay.<sup>81</sup>

He then turns to the all-important question of the life to be lived in the college, and the system which will best facilitate the development of the college community:

2. As to system. It will I trust, be *in a Building*. The Wells plan of lodging separately is a great source of weakness.<sup>82</sup> Mr Pinder, I believe, urges that this arrangement accustoms men beforehand to a curate's manner of life in lodgings, and prefers it on this ground to the collegiate system. But – of course – all deficiencies are glad to be provided with a theory, if they can get one; and this looks very like an *ex post facto* argument. They have no college at Wells: therefore it is better not to have one. Experience I think tells the other way. Your object is to bring young men into constant and intimate contact with those who are already ministers of Christ. The trainers and the trained *must* live together: if they meet at lecture only, you have only Oxford over again. When the Apostles were preparing for their ministry, they lived with our Lord: they did not come now and then to hear His discourses....[MS] But I should hope that on this point there would be no doubt: as economy, as well as educational efficiency is in its favour.<sup>83</sup>

Any such venture as a college inevitably involved people who would oversee its affairs, and Liddon's previous experience made him wary of outside interference:

3. As to Government. There will, I should fear, be some risk of a committee, to whom the authorities of the college would be accountable. This committee would almost necessarily be composed of clergymen of high standing in the diocese, but not necessarily conversant with the intellectual or moral aspects of the problem of Clerical Education. Such a committee would not feel that it was doing its duty if it did not interfere from time to time. But I should augur no certain good, and much possible evil from its interference. It would be a serious drawback to the efficiency of a college, if all the important measures of its administrators were to be canvassed by a committee of gentlemen who would necessarily deal with them on a priori grounds, or on grounds of theological prejudice....[MS] Of course such a college should be in letter and spirit subject to the Bishop. This is a sufficient guarantee of its soundness or ought to be so. This must be a condition of its vitality and success. A committee of clergymen is very often after all a Presbyterian Resource – and intended to supersede Episcopal control. You do not want to put the Episcopate into commission in the Diocese of Exeter.

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<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> The theological college at Wells was founded in 1840. J. H. Pinder was its first Principal. See P. Barrett: *Barchester* (London, 1993), p283 for details of the situation of students in Wells.

<sup>83</sup> *Porter*, May 23, 1861.

But I have gone on at too great length. I shall hope to hear that the plan is likely to be realised at no distant period.<sup>84</sup>

The college was indeed founded at Exeter, with C. J. Ellicott as its first Principal, and Bishop Phillpotts bequeathed a substantial amount of money to it in his will. After his death, however, interest in the college waned and the diocese of Exeter used the money to enable students to stay at Oxford for an extra year's study of theology, a scheme which cannot have commended itself to Liddon.<sup>85</sup>

With this letter, whose tone is closer than any others to that found in his letters to Charles Wood, we end our examination of Liddon's correspondence with Reginald Porter. (Other letters, now apparently lost, were certainly written.) However, we may seek an explanation for the difference in manner when Liddon wrote to these men. We have pointed out that the letters to Porter were written when Liddon was a younger man; but the fundamentally more serious approach is found in the first surviving letter to Wood, penned in the same year that the Porter correspondence ceases. Doubtless the solution lies partly in the different role Liddon played in the lives of Wood and Porter. To the former he was spiritual advisor and confessor; to the latter he was a friend. Wood, moreover, was involved in Church politics, which invited Liddon to write to him on serious matters in a serious vein. As the correspondence with Wood progressed Liddon became older, and also a more distinguished figure in the life of the Church of England. Nor should we overlook the fact that Wood was of a quite different stratum in society than Porter, and Liddon would not have forgotten this. Perhaps it also significant that by the time Liddon began writing to Wood he was back in Christ Church, under the eye and direct influence of Pusey. There is humour in his letters to Wood, but little of the sense of fun found when he wrote to Porter. And though he clearly felt great affection for Wood and his family, we do not find in the Wood correspondence the warmth which could make him write to Porter, "How I miss you – I cannot say",<sup>86</sup> and, "As we parted I could not help wishing very much that God had thrown our lots more nearly together. Of course, all is well as it is. But I hope that this year we may see something of each other: and shall look forward imprimis, to the space which Oxford is to have in your Apostolical tour."<sup>87</sup> Wood and Porter certainly knew each other. They may have met when Liddon, who was staying with Wood at Powderham Castle, took him to the "High

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p390 n.4.

<sup>86</sup> Porter, *All Souls Day*, 1861.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, Jan 14. [1886?].

Celebration” at Kenn on St John the Baptist’s day;<sup>88</sup> and when Liddon officiated at the marriage of Mary Porter at Kenn, Wood accompanied him.<sup>89</sup>

We now turn to Liddon’s graver concerns, found in his letters to Charles Wood.

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<sup>88</sup> *Diaries*, June 24, 1877.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, October 6, 1880.

### 3. The Athanasian Creed

It is regrettable that few of Liddon's letters to Wood survive concerning one of the most contentious debates which convulsed the Victorian Church, and one in which Liddon played a prominent part – the question of the Athanasian Creed.<sup>1</sup> It foreshadowed much argument that followed, revealing where battle lines would be drawn.

The Athanasian Creed, unlike the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, which are Greek in origin, is a Latin document. Its date and place of origin, as well as its authorship, are all debated.<sup>2</sup> It differs from the other creeds in structure, and notably in its inclusion of anathemas. It is not a baptismal creed, and has never been accepted by the Eastern Church as defining Christian faith. It is essentially a devotional text, and the Latin Breviary required its recitation on most Sundays at Prime. The rubrics of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer ordered the recitation of the Creed at Morning Prayer on thirteen Holy Days in the year; and since these included Christmas, Easter, Ascension, Whitsunday and Trinity Sunday, the Creed had some prominence, Morning Prayer being the principal morning service in most churches.

The issues surrounding the Athanasian Creed came to the fore due to the deliberations of the Royal Commission on Ritual, appointed in 1867 to examine the instructions on worship found in the Prayer Book.<sup>3</sup> The Commission reached the Athanasian Creed rubric by 1870, which gave Broad Churchmen, notably Dean Stanley of Westminster (a Commission member), the opportunity to urge changes in the Prayer Book's requirements. Their concern was not simply the length of the Creed, and therefore its suitability for saying or singing in a public act of worship – *that* consideration was largely lost to sight in the heated debate which arose. The Broad Churchmen criticised the Creed for giving an impossibly detailed definition of Christ's Incarnation and the Trinity: but their principal attack was against the Creed's anathemas, the so-called Damnable Clauses which, in the words of Payne Smith, the Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, "require men to believe, under pain of perishing everlastingly, not merely the plain statements of Holy Scripture, but deductions gathered from it by human reasoning."<sup>4</sup> To Broad Churchmen these clauses were offensive in themselves, and caused unnecessary difficulties to

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<sup>1</sup> That letters were written which have not survived is clear from *Halifax*, August 13, 1872.

<sup>2</sup> See J. N. D. Kelly: *The Athanasian Creed* (London, 1964).

<sup>3</sup> On the Athanasian Creed controversy see P. T. Marsh: *The Victorian Church in Decline* (London, 1969), pp39ff.

<sup>4</sup> Royal Commission on Ritual: *Fourth Report* (London, 1870), p. xx.

devout lay people; therefore removing the public recitation requirement would ease the situation. At a time when Christian doctrine was under fire, anything hindering belief and not of the essence of Church teaching should, they reasoned, be diminished.

They had support for their views. February 14, 1870, brought the Commission a petition to the Archbishop of Canterbury from “clergymen and Laymen of the United Church of England and Ireland” who held that relaxation of the rubric’s requirement would “tend to promote the return to the communion of the Church of many who are now Separatists in England, though they would be conformists in America, inasmuch as this Creed is not found in the Office Book of the Episcopal Church of the United States.”<sup>5</sup> They wished use of the Creed to be either permissive, or with the offending clauses removed. On May 17, 1870, another petition asked “that relief may be given by the discontinuance of the use of the Athanasian Creed as a Public Confession of Faith.”<sup>6</sup>

The issues might seem straightforward: but behind the question of the Creed lay larger matters, chief among them the ongoing debate on the doctrine of Eternal Punishment which had been fuelled by H. B. Wilson’s contribution to *Essays and Reviews* (1861), by Bishop Colenso of Natal’s commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, and by the writings of F. D. Maurice. Pusey and Liddon were firm in opposition to any weakening of teaching on eternal punishment as a fact; and, knowing that the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed had been invoked during the struggle over that doctrine, they viewed any attempt at diminishing the Creed’s position in worship as a move to smuggle in by the back door liberal views on the greater question.<sup>7</sup> To them, any change would be a capitulation to Rationalism inside and outside the Church’s walls, and a threat to the salvation of souls.<sup>8</sup>

The position of Pusey and Liddon was consistent, but it revealed fundamental weaknesses which would eventually undermine much for which they stood. Firstly, they failed to distinguish between sympathetic and hostile critics of traditional teaching and practice.<sup>9</sup> They were willing to dismiss all theological liberals as covert unbelievers. Writing to Wood, Liddon remarks that

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p158. Stanley was one of the petition’s signatories.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p123.

<sup>7</sup> G. Rowell: *Hell and the Victorians* (Oxford, 1974), p123.

<sup>8</sup> Pusey, writing of Wilson’s piece in *Essays and Reviews*, said “A sentence which should declare that ‘eternal punishment’ only meant ‘very long’, in fact a sort of Purgatory, or that the Athanasian Creed was not a matter of faith would be most fatal.” (Ibid., p119)

<sup>9</sup> Marsh, p45.



“there is something about the existing positions of our Bishops, which utterly demoralizes them, as defenders of the Faith. They make a certain figure if like the Temples or the Thirlwalls they are avowedly on the unbelieving side. But they don’t dare to go against the tide.”<sup>10</sup> This does gross injustice to Frederick Temple and Connop Thirlwall, but it is of a piece with Liddon’s attack on Temple’s contribution to *Essays and Reviews*,<sup>11</sup> and shows that the generally logical Liddon could slip into prejudice when he felt his own position threatened. When confronted with the manifest personal goodness of a liberal like Maurice, he sought refuge in saying (in a letter to Dean Stanley), “that so good a man should be mistaken is a perplexing mystery of the moral world.”<sup>12</sup> He was less generous when writing to Wood, “Maurice can only be acquitted of formal heresy on the hypothesis of his having been hopelessly puzzle-headed”,<sup>13</sup> and “One would as soon take up seriously with F. D. Maurice as with Valentinus or Basilides.”<sup>14</sup>

Secondly, Pusey and Liddon saw the Church’s doctrine, teaching and practice as a unified whole. A challenge to the smallest stone in the edifice would, if successful, fatally weaken the entire structure. This outlook led them to squander time and effort in ceaseless rearguard actions, and helps to explain their stubbornness over the Athanasian Creed.

Pusey reacted quickly to the situation. On February 22, 1870, the Commission received his letter enclosing a memorial (in those days, effectively a petition) signed by himself and (among others) the Oxford Professors William Bright, William Stubbs, and C. A. Heurtley; also R. W. Jelf (Canon of Christ Church), J. B. Mozley (Fellow of Magdalen), Liddon, Henry Baker (Priest and hymn writer) G. A. Denison (Archdeacon of Taunton), J. B. Dykes (priest and musician), H. L. Mansel (Dean of St Paul’s), W. F. Hook (Dean of Chichester), Edward King (Principal of Cuddesdon), W. J. Butler (Vicar of Wantage), T. T. Carter (Vicar of Clewer), W. G. F. Phillimore (ecclesiastical lawyer), Charles Wood, Lord Devon (Wood’s father-in-law), as well as by over a thousand clergy and laity. They said that “either to use the Creed less frequently in the Church service than at present, or to render its use in any cases optional, or to omit the mis-termed damnatory clauses, will be fraught with danger to the best interests of the Church.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Halifax*, August 13, 1872.

<sup>11</sup> P. Hinchliff: *Frederick Temple* (Oxford, 1998), p62-3.

<sup>12</sup> R. E. Prothero & G. G. Bradley: *Life and Correspondence of Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, D.D.*, (London, 1893) vol. II, p168.

<sup>13</sup> *Halifax*, April 4, 1884.

<sup>14</sup> *Halifax*, Monday in Holy Week, 1884. Valentinus and Basilides were Gnostic theologians. For Maurice’s view of the Athanasian Creed see F. D. Maurice: *Theological Essays* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cambridge, 1853), pp482ff.

<sup>15</sup> *Fourth Report*, p159.

Such steps could only weaken the conviction that the Church of England taught “the Faith once delivered to the Saints”. That the question at issue was that of Eternal Punishment was made clear:

If we do not suggest the insertion of an explanation of the real force of the most solemn warnings of the Creed, this is because we apprehend that every well-instructed Christian must understand them to apply only to those whom God knows to have enjoyed full opportunities for attaining faith in the perfect Truth, and to have deliberately rejected it.<sup>16</sup>

A note explaining that the condemnations in the Creed were to be understood as “a solemn warning of the peril of those who wilfully reject the Catholic Faith” was a course considered by the Commission. Other possibilities were removing it from worship and placing it among the Thirty-nine Articles, removing the damnatory clauses, making its use optional, and retranslating it.<sup>17</sup> Archbishop Tait Of Canterbury did not wish to retain the Creed in public worship<sup>18</sup>, and Dean Stanley gave sixteen reasons for the Creed’s recitation not to be compulsory, adding that its discontinuance “whilst giving relief to many, ought to offend none.”<sup>19</sup> He was clear that the Commission’s work amounted to “a unanimous condemnation of the present use of the Creed.”<sup>20</sup>

The *Fourth Report* of the ritual Commission was published in September, 1870. Tait, in the *Guardian* on January 11, recommended legislation on the Creed’s use, but the nature of the legislation was unclear. The issue threatened to be an explosive one in Parliament because, as Tait recognized, proposals for changes to the Prayer Book ought to include the Creed. If they did not, then the Lords and Commons might themselves recommend discontinuing the Creed’s use in worship, a recommendation which would almost certainly be approved, with disastrous consequences for the church of England where opposition to tampering with the Creed was increasing.<sup>21</sup> Gladstone, the Prime Minister, expressed disquiet to Tait at the prospect of a Parliamentary session burdened with ecclesiastical controversy:

[The Government] will ask...what is the legislation which is most likely to be adopted with something like general consent. Unhappily the Commission has made a recommendation so damaged by Dissents as to be destitute of all authority. Dean Stanley

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ironically, Liddon would be invited by the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol to take part in retranslating the Creed. (*Diaries*, October 10, 1871.)

<sup>18</sup> *Fourth Report*, p. viii.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. xviii.

<sup>20</sup> A. P. Stanley: *The Athanasian Creed* (London, 1871), p92.

<sup>21</sup> *Tait*, II, p130.

recommends that the use of the Creed be permissive. Without doubt a moderate suggestion but would it fulfil the condition I have described of attaining general adhesion of Clergy & Laity?<sup>22</sup>

This was astute, for by May the Liberal MP, Thomas Chambers, was prepared to propose the remission of the penalties applying to clergy who substituted the Apostles' Creed for the Athanasian in worship. Tait dissuaded him from taking a vote on disuse of the Creed.<sup>23</sup>

On June 14 Bishop Wilberforce proposed in Convocation a committee of all the English bishops to examine the Creed. Pusey, believing that efforts must be made to prevent Tait from misleading them, wrote to Wilberforce in October, 1871, stating that he could not abide as a teacher in a Church which abandoned the Creed. He was clear that "the idea...of placing it with the Thirty-nine Articles, is merely a civil bowing it out."<sup>24</sup> Liddon also wrote to him in the same vein, drawing the conclusion that diminishing the position of the Creed would "convince a large number of minds that, if only a sufficient amount of negative and unbelieving pressure can be brought to bear, there is no Truth, however central and hitherto undisputed, which the Church of England is prepared to proclaim before God and man as strictly necessary to eternal salvation," and so make it appear that heretics, "however deliberate their heresy, however great their opportunities of escaping from it, do just as well in the world to come as the faithful children of the Church to whom her Creed is a serious reality. I do not think that Dean Stanley would deny this, or would phrase very differently his own idea of the advantage to be gained by doing away with the Creed."<sup>25</sup> Both letters were shown to Tait by Wilberforce.

Writing on October 25, Pusey told Wilberforce that he would "gladly see any right explanation of those warning clauses in the Athanasian Creed."<sup>26</sup> Learning of this, Tait swiftly invited him to state what explanatory words would be acceptable to him.<sup>27</sup> In response to this, and to a request from Bishop Ellicott of Gloucester and Bristol, Pusey asked the Oxford Divinity Professors for assistance, which enabled him to suggest in December the form, "That nothing in this Creed is to be understood as condemning those who, by involuntary ignorance or invincible prejudice are

<sup>22</sup> H. C. G. Matthew: *Diaries of W. E. Gladstone*, VII (Oxford, 1982), p437.

<sup>23</sup> *Tait*, II, p131. See Gladstone to Bishop Wilberforce, *Gladstone Diaries*, VII, p497.

<sup>24</sup> *Pusey*, IV, p233-4.

<sup>25</sup> Johnston, p160-1. The letter is quoted at length from p157. According to a letter from Pusey to Wilberforce, October 25, 1871, (*Pusey*, IV, p235) Liddon had already announced publicly that "he should resign his office of teaching if the Athanasian Creed were tampered with." This is not stated in Liddon's letter to Wilberforce, and seems questionable in the light of his letter to Tait on December 23, 1871, but see Lightfoot's letter to Tait, December 20, 1871, below, n37.

<sup>26</sup> *Pusey*, IV, p235.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* p236.

hindered from accepting the faith therein declared.”<sup>28</sup> Against this, however, was the opinion of the Cambridge Divinity Professors, also solicited by Ellicott, which favoured the disuse of the Creed, or at least of the damnatory clauses.<sup>29</sup>

On December 5, Tait informed a meeting of the bishops that he was prepared to support an explanatory rubric, and with their agreement to ask Convocation to accept the Report of the Ritual Commission with a slightly altered note concerning the Athanasian Creed. Bishop Thirlwall of St Davids and Stanley vehemently opposed the plan, and tempers were roused, fanned by High Churchmen who must have been the more forceful from a sense of comparative weakness. They knew that Broad Churchmen would oppose them; but on this issue, unlike the earlier *Essays and Reviews* battle, they found little support from Evangelicals. Lord Shaftesbury, Pusey’s cousin, was probably representative of the latter group, declaring wholehearted assent to the contents of the Creed, but too aware of the discomfort which its recitation could cause to congregations to be resistant to change.<sup>30</sup>

On December 23, 1871, Liddon wrote formally to Tait saying that if the Creed was “mutilated” or “degraded” he would feel “bound in conscience to resign my preferments, and to retire from the ministry of the Church of England.”<sup>31</sup> The next day he wrote to Pusey, telling what he had done and adding that he believed Tait to be hard pressed by the Creed’s opponents, including the Queen.<sup>32</sup> Tait replied at once, and with some warmth:

You will pardon me for saying that I think such a threat ought not to be held out in the midst of a calm discussion on a very difficult question amongst learned and attached members of the Church of England, when the results of such discussion are on the point of being submitted to the consideration of the provincial Synods of our Church.<sup>33</sup>

His annoyance was justified. Pusey and Liddon *had* agreed to an explanatory note and Liddon’s position *did* rest on a threat. He might with effect have pointed out that Stanley had not threatened resignation if *his* view failed to carry the day. Pusey, however, seemed anxious to avoid open conflict between Tait and Liddon, and advised the latter to write “a respectful letter”, telling the Archbishop “that you are inexpressibly glad to hear from himself of his approval of

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p238. The signatories were Pusey, Mozley, Ogilvie, Heurtley, Bright and Liddon.

<sup>29</sup> *Tait*, II, p132.

<sup>30</sup> *Pusey*, IV, p242.

<sup>31</sup> Johnston, p161.

<sup>32</sup> LP, I, 102. Christmas Eve, 1871.

<sup>33</sup> *Tait*, II, p138.

the Oxford plan.” He concluded that Tait, “with his cold suspicion [?] has a good deal of kindness and fairness and value for work for God. So I would take him on his approachable side.”<sup>34</sup> However, though willing to acquiesce in the Oxford plan, Tait also wished to give due weight to the Cambridge opinion, and asked Liddon to speak to J. B. Lightfoot, Lady Margaret Professor in Cambridge. “He will explain to you the statement of the Cambridge Professors, whose view does not seem to have entered into your consciousness.”<sup>35</sup> Liddon replied that he felt under no obligation to consider the Cambridge view before stating his own, but that he would see Lightfoot, although he had little confidence in him as a theologian (as opposed to “our first scholar, at least in Hellenistic Greek”), and would expect him to favour “mutilating” the Creed. He repeated his conviction expressed to Wilberforce that should the Creed be changed or removed it would sanction the popular belief that “if a man’s life is pure and honest, his doctrinal convictions are a matter of indifference to God. I can have no part, even by passive acquiescence, in any change which would remove from the Public service of the Church our great protest against this fearful delusion, and would thus contribute to the Eternal Ruin of millions of souls.”<sup>36</sup>

Liddon’s stance was known to Lightfoot even before the formal letter to Tait of December 30, for he told Tait on December 20, “I am much grieved that Liddon has taken the very unjustifiable course of threatening resignation; for I have a great personal regard and respect for him. I cannot conceive anything more fatal to the highest interests of the Church than these threats and counter threats.”<sup>37</sup> On January 1, 1872, he expressed to Tait the hope that Liddon would allow him to explain his position. Lightfoot thought the Oxford explanatory rubric “the most objectionable solution, yet it might be better than nothing”, but he could not support it because of “a grave misgiving of the moral consequences.”<sup>38</sup>

Lightfoot and Liddon met the following day. They agreed where they might, but nothing could alter their fundamental differences on the question, as Liddon wrote to Tait.<sup>39</sup> He was interested to learn, however, that “the Cambridge professors have each sent in a separate report. [Lightfoot] had advised the excision of the Damnatory Clauses. Westcott an alteration in

<sup>34</sup> PL, II, 24, December 29, 1871.

<sup>35</sup> Lambeth Palace Library, Tait Papers 91, f.78.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 91, ff.79-82, December 30, 1871.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 91, ff.66-67. His personal respect and regard were always reciprocated by Liddon.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. 91, f.96.

<sup>39</sup> Johnston, p164-5; mss. in Tait Papers, Lambeth Palace Library.

them.”<sup>40</sup> Pusey also, he told Tait, was now declaring his intention to resign should the Creed be “degraded or mutilated in the ways specified.”<sup>41</sup>

Convocation met on February 7, 1872, and Liddon, sending the *Record's* report of it to Pusey, thought Tait had thrown his weight behind the Cambridge scheme while treating the Oxford proposal cursorily.<sup>42</sup> Later, describing what he had learned from Lightfoot, he told Pusey, “Evidently the Archbishop has felt that as against our united effort, these separate expressions of opinion would not have so great weight as he might wish; and he has put them up to making a *joint report after their seeing ours*, and has given them the opportunity of doing it...[MS] In another subject matter I should not describe this as perfectly fair dealing.”<sup>43</sup> But Pusey surprised him by showing a spirit of compromise:

Bright wants us to consider, supposing our plan of explanations rejected, whether we should consider it a case for extremities, if all positive statements of the necessity of faith to salvation were retained, and the negative statements omitted. Certainly one should not have written them; but it is a different matter to leave them out their being there...Certainly, if the Creed had so stood [without the negative statements], it would have stated adequately the necessity of faith to salvation....

I think Bright's idea would be to fight first the battle of our explanation; but if it were lost, then, not for our own sake but for the Church, to secure the [word illegible] of the necessity of faith 1<sup>st</sup> in the Holy Trinity, then in the Incarnation, only omitting the words which pronounce God's judgment on individuals who do not hold that faith, reserving...to God His own prerogative of dispensing with His own laws.<sup>44</sup>

Liddon's reply, which destroys at a stroke the later notion that he was merely Pusey's mouthpiece, incapable of disagreeing with him, was forthright:

If the other Oxford professors should agree to recommend the omission of the “negative” statements, my love and respect for more than one of them might prevent me from making a counter-protest to the Primate: but, *on no account whatever*, would I join in such a recommendation as this.<sup>45</sup>

One paragraph even sounds peevish:

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<sup>40</sup> *Diaries*, January 2, 1872.

<sup>41</sup> Lambeth Palace Library, Tait papers, 91, ff.86-87, Liddon to Tait, January 3, 1872.

<sup>42</sup> LP, I, 108, February 10, 1872.

<sup>43</sup> LP, I, 113, February 17, 1872.

<sup>44</sup> PL, II, 30, February 11, 1872. See B. J. Kidd: *Selected Letters of William Bright D.D.* (London, 1903), p43ff for Bright's views.

<sup>45</sup> LP, I, 110, February 12, 1872.

I do not know that you are committed as distinctly as I am. So far as I remember, you only approached the Archbishop in December, through me, and not directly: and if this is so, you may be able, with consistency, to make compromises, which, if I could welcome them, are no longer in my power.<sup>46</sup>

He continues reproachfully:

For myself, I have burned my ships. In agreeing to the Explanatory Note which you proposed, I yielded to your authority somewhat at the cost of my own strong feeling against explaining, in such a way, a Catholic Creed. But such an Explanatory Note was the extreme limit of concession to the Latitudinarian School which I could conscientiously make. It is no surprise to me that they reject it...But Dean Stanley rules at Lambeth: and we have now nothing to hope for from such a quarter, I fear, but the consideration which may be extorted by a fear for the safety of the Establishment. And as to this, the policy of bartering away the Church's Creeds for a little longer lease of privilege and income *may* succeed. I cannot say; but it is not the question which I have to face.<sup>47</sup>

This emotional self-justification shows how deeply Liddon felt betrayed, although his nerves might have been frayed by illness.<sup>48</sup> Its suggestion of someone almost courting martyrdom is disquieting, however.

Before Convocation, Tait had voiced to Thirlwall of St Davids his conviction that an explanatory rubric would be acceptable neither to that body nor to Parliament, adding, "it is very difficult to prevent violent partisans of Dr Pusey or Mr Liddon from being only strengthened in their resistance by any strong statements that are made on either side."<sup>49</sup> The bishops discussed the question with care, though Magee of Peterborough, who opposed the rubric, wrote afterwards, "we stumbled terribly on the Athanasian Creed; nevertheless, I think we have gained something there too."<sup>50</sup> Responding to Magee, Tait incautiously said that nobody in the Church of England interpreted the damnatory clauses literally.<sup>51</sup> Perhaps exasperation with Pusey and Liddon who did want a literal reading lay behind this remark, which he soon regretted. A storm in the press resulted, accompanied by the inevitable petition from clergy who declared that they

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. The theme of Stanley's sway over Tait will recur in Liddon's letters, but he was unfair. Their relationship was not so straightforward. (See P. Hinchliff: *Frederick Temple* [Oxford, 1998], p88.)

<sup>48</sup> He was unable to be at Oxford due to illness (was it rheumatic fever?) at Bristol. (*Diaries*, January 26, 1872.)

<sup>49</sup> Lambeth Palace Library, Tait Papers, 91, f.103, January 20, 1872.

<sup>50</sup> J. C. Macdonell: *Life and Correspondence of William Connor Magee*, vol. I, (London, 1896), p274. He thought the matter a straight choice between excising the damnatory clauses and removing the Creed from worship.

<sup>51</sup> *Tait*, II, p142. In his first Visitation Charge, Tait commented, "all of us who have subscribed to this Creed know that there is some explanation which prevents these the damnatory clauses from having the full force which they appear grammatically to have." (Tait: *The Present Position of the Church of England* (London, 1872). p64.

never had mental reservations when reciting the Creed.<sup>52</sup> Lord Salisbury, writing to the High Church priest, Malcolm Maccoll, said he wished that “when the Bishops pick to pieces the Creeds of the Church they would have the prudence to turn the reporters out of the room.”<sup>53</sup>

Writing to Lady Salisbury, Liddon repeated his threat of resignation. On March 8, 1872, he accepted an invitation to preach at Hatfield (Salisbury’s home) “if the Church of England still holds to her Creeds.” He told her he believed the meeting of the Lower (clerical) House of Convocation on April 23 would be decisive, having no doubt that Tait (“who in this as in most other matters is, I imagine, the creature and tool of the Dean of Westminster” and “fanatically bent upon degrading or mutilating the Creed”) would try to influence the clergy.<sup>54</sup> This situation, he added, could only help to drive the faithful Romewards. If only laymen like Lord Salisbury would oppose the plan!<sup>55</sup> In a further letter he told her of the many letters he had received distressed by Tait’s position: but then Tait was “a mitred Presbyterian.”<sup>56</sup>

The struggle continued, petitions being drawn up on both sides. One was from Pusey, which Liddon persuaded him to send in his own name.<sup>57</sup> Liddon’s brother Edward, a doctor in Taunton, collected signatures for a petition against change,<sup>58</sup> while Liddon himself, keen to keep up the pressure on Tait, told Pusey,

[The Archbishop] will not easily pardon us, dear man, for getting in his way....[He] thought that he was going to do a generally popular thing in getting rid of the Creed, as well as one quite agreeable to himself. He ought to be undeceived so thoroughly, that, in this generation at least, we may be spared a repetition of the Experiment.<sup>59</sup>

He wrote to Bishop Wordsworth of Lincoln,

If we can tide over the present terrible crisis I hope that some of us may attempt a book upon the Creed which may deal with all its aspects – historical – theological – and ethical. But we are now fighting “from hand to mouth” against a mass of misrepresentation and passion which is only too likely to carry everything before it.

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<sup>52</sup> *Tait*, II, p144-5.

<sup>53</sup> G. W. E. Russell: *Malcolm Maccoll* (London, 1914), p272.

<sup>54</sup> Salisbury Papers, March 8, 1872.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* March 16, 1872.

<sup>57</sup> *Pusey*, IV, p242ff.

<sup>58</sup> *Diaries*, March 20, 1872.

<sup>59</sup> LP, I, 115, March 19, 1872.



...until the Latitudinarian and Sceptical party has really carried its point, I shall not cease to hope and pray God that He will save us as a Church, flooded with His light, from so miserable a fate.<sup>60</sup>

The April meeting of Convocation proved tempestuous. Stanley launched a ferocious attack on the damnatory clauses, saying, "The more you explore them, the more difficult do you find it to arrive at anything whatever that is true at the bottom of them,"<sup>61</sup> which led to protests and to the fierce Tractarian Archdeacon Denison's storming out. The threats of resignation from Liddon and Pusey were alluded to frequently.<sup>62</sup> Days of heated argument could settle on no course of change considered desirable, and Tait agreed to appoint a large committee from both houses of Convocation to examine the issue in the light of the previous debate. His own feelings are revealed in a clear reference to the two Oxford men made in Convocation in July:

Had we not had statements from gentlemen whom we greatly respect, that, if certain courses were not taken, they should feel it their duty to retire into lay communion with the Church of England, the matter would have been settled one way or the other.<sup>63</sup>

Liddon agreed with this. "I have no doubt", he told Pusey, "that making known our determination to resign our positions, if the Creed were tampered with, has exerted a real influence upon the decision."<sup>64</sup>

In August Liddon wrote the first of his surviving letters to Charles Wood on the question. It is a response to Archbishop Thomson of York, who obviously had expressed the view that most people in the Church favoured change in the Creed's use:

This is miserable enough. Archbishop Thomson probably knows what "most people" feel: but the question is whether their "feeling" is a right one. If the warning clauses to which they object do not in his judgment express a solemn truth, the Archbishop has been subscribing dishonestly for an indefinitely long period. If they do, no amount of popular feeling can warrant their being given up. The real point at issue is exactly what these clauses assert, viz., that it will make the greatest difference to us in the next world whether we have or have not believed the True Faith in this. Does the Archbishop believe this? If not he ought to say so, in terms. If he does, he ought to uphold the Creed, as it is and where it is, which does no more than say so.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Lambeth Palace Library, Main Mss. Sequence, Wordsworth Papers, March 23, 1872.

<sup>61</sup> Prothero-Bradley: *Dean Stanley*, II, p224. Note 30, p225, makes clear that this was said on April 24, 1872. The main text misleadingly suggests February.

<sup>62</sup> *Tait*, II, p146. P. T. Marsh, op. cit., p49, thinks Pusey and Liddon expected other Churchmen to follow their example, though he doubts that this would have happened.

<sup>63</sup> *Pusey*, IV, p245.

<sup>64</sup> LP, I, 119, April 27, 1872.

<sup>65</sup> *Halifax*, August 13, 1872.

This letter – an excellent example of Liddon’s tendency to a logic which could err by failure to appreciate the complexity of issues and motives – ends with a tart reference to both Archbishops, “who are really always thinking of the Establishment and their seats in the House of Lords.”

Wood evidently replied inviting him to a protest meeting in Leeds, for Liddon wrote,

I am delighted to hear that anything is likely to be done. The Archbishops seem bent on consummating the *apostasia*, in one way or the other. The only thing that can finally prevent them will be alarm about the Establishment: and I don’t know whether we can inspire them with that. They think, no doubt, that if they muffle or mutilate the Creed, they will gain more support at one end than they will lose at the other. A formidable *lay* demonstration or remonstrance is the only thing that they will mind.<sup>66</sup>

Wood may have decided to ask Lord Salisbury to the Leeds meeting, for in his next letter Liddon advises him to approach the Marquess through the High Church Liberal MP, Beresford Hope. As to the way ahead, he writes,

The plan of absolute resistance, of course, is what I like best. It is a mere question of expediency: (1) how much it is possible to yield without risk to The Faith; and (2) how much it is advisable to yield to save what we can from Stanley’s and the Archbishop’s assaults.<sup>67</sup>

This seems inconsistent with the intransigence which led him to criticise Pusey for his willingness to be more flexible on the question of the Creed. Perhaps Pusey’s influence was softening Liddon’s outlook. Perhaps, consciously or unconsciously, he was preparing a position which would enable him to remain active in the Church’s ministry.

He follows this with a remarkable reference to the Act of Uniformity Amendment Bill. By this Bill, which became law almost unopposed in 1872, Tait managed to achieve some liberty for modifications in the Church of England’s worship, permitting the shortening of some services and obliging those clergy who used shortened forms to substitute the Apostles’ Creed for the Athanasian on five out of the thirteen days when its recitation had been compulsory.

(1) I do not think that anything spiritual is really lost, if the State withdraws, by an amendment of the Act of Uniformity, as much of its coercive jurisdiction as would, if

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid. August 16, 1872.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. August 19, 1872.

applied at present, inflict temporal penalties upon those clergy who publicly disuse or mutilate the Athanasian Creed. Of course I do not like the proposal. It is plainly a precedent of the gravest character: probably the first step towards Disestablishment. But we may not be in a position to choose.

And (2) it might save the Creed in its present position and in its integrity. If it stands as it is in the Prayer Book, the practice of the Church at large will not be greatly affected: loyal churchmen will prize the Creed all the more, on account of the slight put upon it by the State....

Something of this kind, I apprehend, was in Dr Pusey's mind. The Bishop of Winchester [Wilberforce] insists that something is certain to be done and the question is *what*. For me the question is what will and what will not oblige me to resign my position in the Church of England. A mere act of the State would not do this: but if the Church mutilates or disuses one of her Creeds, it is a totally different matter. If you can frighten the Bishop of Winchester and the Archbishop into maintaining the Status Quo, nobody will be better pleased than I shall be.

The use which the Archbishop of Canterbury has permitted himself to make of the Oxford proposal is not ingenuous. We thought nothing whatever necessary; and only suggested this note, at Dr Pusey's instance, to help the Archbishop out of his difficulties.<sup>68</sup>

Reading this, one wonders how Liddon could not have thought it Pharisaical to allow that a reduction in the number of occasions when the Creed was to be used might be acceptable because the State had ordered it, leaving High Churchmen to follow the traditional usage with clear consciences because the Church had not made the change.

The Leeds protest meeting took place in October, 1872, and was, from Liddon's point of view, a success.<sup>69</sup> That month, Tait criticized Pusey and Liddon (though not by name) in his Visitation Charge to his diocese.<sup>70</sup> Learning of this, Liddon wrote to Wood, "The only reports of the Primate's Charge that I have seen are those in the *Times* and the *Guardian*. Perhaps as I am one of the 'reprobates' I had better say nothing more about it."<sup>71</sup> He was more concerned that further meetings opposing change should be organised:

No doubt a meeting in London, and meetings elsewhere are necessary, if the Creed is to be saved. We have no quarter to look for; that is quite certain. If the Archbishop hesitates to push matters to extremities in the interests of free thought, it will be only from fear of powerful laymen like Lord Salisbury, or out of concern for the Establishment.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *Halifax*, August 19, 1872.

<sup>69</sup> *Diaries*, October 13, 1872.

<sup>70</sup> Tait: *The Present Position of the Church of England*, p68.

<sup>71</sup> *Halifax*, October 12, 1872.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

The committee appointed by Convocation to examine the Athanasian Creed question met in December, 1872. Dean Church of St Paul's reported the occasion to Liddon, who told Pusey, "The Dean tells me that the only net result arrived at today by the Lambeth Meeting was a resolution to propose a Synodical Declaration." Even this resolution had provoked disagreement; but Tait (said Church) had been "very fairly impartial." "Altogether", said Liddon, "we have reason to be thankful. We are not out of danger, so long as the question is kept open; but no proposition which would drive *us* from our places will emanate from this committee. *Laus Deo.*"<sup>73</sup>

A meeting in defence of the Creed was held in London on January 31, 1873. So great was the number present at St James's Hall that an overflow gathering was held in the Hanover Square Rooms. The account of the assembly at St James's Hall acquires almost the flavour of a Revivalist convention.<sup>74</sup> The purpose of the meeting was "to deprecate, and if needful to resist, an agitation directed against the present use and position of the Athanasian Creed."<sup>75</sup> Letters of support were read, among them one from Charles Kingsley, which pleased Liddon despite his disagreement with Kingsley on the matter of eternal punishment.<sup>76</sup> Speakers were of one mind:

...If they succeed in the attack [on the Creed] the time must come when the Church of England as a body will teach nothing, for it will believe nothing. (Cheers.)<sup>77</sup>

...I have heard from the lips of clergy that the Creed was false. ("No, No.") I cannot say that I have heard it from the lips of the laity. (Loud cheers.)<sup>78</sup>

Lord Salisbury, who was received "with great cheering", remarked that any changes to the Prayer Book and the use of the Creed would have to be made by Parliament, and "you will not feel that it will tend much to the advance of Christian edification if the highest doctrines of our faith are submitted to amendments and counter amendments, divisions and cross divisions, in that highly honourable, but somewhat combative, assembly."<sup>79</sup>

<sup>73</sup> LP, I, 134, December 3, 1872.

<sup>74</sup> E. C. S. Gibson: *Report of the Meeting in Defence of the Athanasian Creed* (London, 1904). This reissue of the Report was doubtless intended to influence opinion when the Athanasian Creed question was reopened in 1904.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. p1.

<sup>76</sup> Kingsley held that the damnatory clauses of the Creed referred to an intermediate discipline rather than to final reprobation. Liddon's views, he said, would carry weight with him. He felt that objections to the clauses "would die out were the true and ancient Catholic doctrine concerning the future state better known among us." (Russell: *Malcolm Maccoll*, p273-5).

<sup>77</sup> Gibson, p8.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. p27.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. p17-18. Salisbury had previously been sceptical of the value of public meetings on the issue. (Russell: *Malcolm Maccoll*, p273-5.)

Liddon made one of his very rare appearances on a public platform at this meeting.<sup>80</sup> He was greeted “with great enthusiasm. The assembly rose *en masse*, and for more than a minute indulged in cheers, waving of hats, and other demonstrations of approval.”<sup>81</sup> He delivered a speech tailored to the occasion, with characteristic Liddon tones sounded:

...a change which affects any one of the three Creeds is in the nature of an organic change. (Cheers.) It touches the life of the Church of England at its centre.<sup>82</sup>

You cannot believe in God without believing in a large number of propositions, or, if you prefer it, a large number of dogmas. (Cheers.)<sup>83</sup>

How are you to reconcile the doctrine thus reached [of Christ’s Godhead] on the one hand with what we read about His true human nature in the Gospels, and on the other hand with what conscience tells us, and Christianity repeats to us, about the unity of God? You cannot answer those two questions without the assistance which you get from such a Creed as the Athanasian Creed; and if there were time this evening, I should not despair of convincing you between now and twelve o’clock that the answer which the Athanasian Creed gives is the only answer that can be given to those vital questions. (Loud and prolonged cheers.)<sup>84</sup>

We know perfectly well that if this Creed were to be withdrawn, it would be withdrawn in deference to a challenge which is addressed to us from those who, as we cannot refuse to see, deny truths which are taught in the Creed.<sup>85</sup>

The oecumenical character of a document may be secured to it by the silent instinctive action of the Church, which, without assembling in synod, and without thus giving formal utterance to its deep conviction, quietly decides that a given document has a place in its heart and mind which must be universally acknowledged. That was, in point of fact, the case with the Holy Scriptures themselves. (Cheers.)<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> The other notable occasion when he spoke at a public meeting was also at St James’s Hall, December 8, 1876, on the Eastern Question. He found speeches at such gatherings a severe strain. He was unwell, due to tension, the morning of the Athanasian Creed meeting. (*Diaries*, January 31, 1873).

<sup>81</sup> Gibson, p36.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. p37.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. p38.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. p39.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. p40. This was a rejoinder to Bishop Fraser of Manchester, but also to Tait, who had raised the point that the Greek Orthodox Church would think itself under condemnation from words in the Athanasian Creed. Liddon went on to say that the Creed had been received by the Greek Church. As stated above, however, it has not there the authority of the Nicene Creed and is not used in worship. See T. Ware: *The Orthodox Church*, (London, 1993) p202.

Charles Wood was present at the other meeting. He and Liddon were well satisfied by what had been achieved,<sup>87</sup> and with the resolutions passed which were sent as a petition to the Upper and Lower Houses of Convocation on February 11, 1873.<sup>88</sup>

By this time Tait's patience was almost exhausted, his weariness probably shared by a majority inside and beyond the Church of England. After further lengthy debate, it was decided that there was no question of subscription to the Athanasian Creed being removed from the Thirty-nine Articles, but that an explanatory declaration should be printed in the Prayer Book which would help those with conscientious scruples about the Creed.<sup>89</sup> Yet the wordy declaration finally agreed never appeared in the Prayer Book. It was rejected by the Convocation of York, and was not presented to Parliament for fear of Broad Churchmen using that opportunity to advocate its rejection in favour of something more radical.<sup>90</sup>

The Athanasian Creed Controversy was one of the most fruitless struggles to have engaged the Victorian Church. It achieved no positive result, only dissatisfaction to both High and Broad Church parties, weakening the Creed's status according to the former, and setting back the likelihood of necessary change according to the latter. Tait, who had tried to see that any change made was acceptable to the like of Pusey and Liddon, was strengthened in the view that they were unreasonable and intransigent when they believed a matter of principle at stake, an opinion no doubt shared by other bishops and Broad Churchmen. In return, Liddon was confirmed in his worst suspicions of the Archbishop and most of his episcopal brethren. This was not a promising background for the major battles over Ritualism which were on the horizon. To sceptics and critics outside the Church, it was yet another example of the Church's willingness to waste time on irrelevancies. "The energy intended for the defence of the faith against outside attack was dissipated in the fight between the defenders, leaving the enemy unaffected or amused."<sup>91</sup>

The Creed battle throws light on the differing approaches to such a struggle of Liddon and Pusey. Pusey believed in the possibility of Eternal Punishment, but not that this could be God's will for individuals, or that God would fail to note every factor in a person's life which might

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<sup>87</sup> Johnston, p172; Lockhart, I, p179. Liddon, however, records, "The *Times* very angry; and scornful about the meeting yesterday," (*Diaries*, February 1, 1873).

<sup>88</sup> *Chronicles of Convocation*, vol. v (London, 1873), p3.

<sup>89</sup> *Tait*, II, p159-60.

<sup>90</sup> Marsh, p51.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid*.

plead in mitigation of such a condemnation. There was a humanity in Pusey, and an awareness of human frailty which, at least in his initial reaction, could evade Liddon.

With this in mind, an entry in Liddon's diary becomes significant: "In Common Room [at Christ Church] expressed myself warmly about the Athanasian Creed in a way for which I am sorry, as it may have done harm to the young liberals."<sup>92</sup> Was this belated recognition, even from him, that too unyielding a stance, forcefully expressed, tended to drive listeners to the opposite extreme? Two days later, dining at Lincoln College, he wrote, "The conversation turned largely on Mr Gladstone's Irish Bill, which it was thought would be vehemently opposed by the Earnest Liberals."<sup>93</sup> This sounded the warning of another battle for Liddon, and one again involving the Athanasian Creed.

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<sup>92</sup> *Diaries*, February 18, 1873.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* February 20, 1873.

#### 4. Liddon and the Irish Church.

The previous chapter concerned events in the English Church. However, Liddon's letters to Charles Wood reveal his concern for Ireland, where the Anglican Church was debating not only the Athanasian Creed but also the wider issue of revising the Book of Common Prayer. Liddon's correspondence on this question, and on the state of the Irish Church in general, is important, since his activities here went unmentioned by his biographer. Why Johnston passed over this part of Liddon's story in silence will become clear as we examine the case. Other writers on Liddon, including Chandler, have also failed to mention his part in the Irish Church issue.

The disestablishment of the Church of Ireland was a major item in W. E. Gladstone's career, "a formidable political and technical undertaking, an assault on the formal structure of the Establishment as dramatic in principle as anything achieved between 1689 and the present day."<sup>1</sup> Certainly Gladstone was not averse to making political capital from disestablishing the Irish Church, hoping it would make for easier relations between Ireland and the Government in London. He knew the anomalous position of the State Church in a country where the majority was either Roman Catholic or Presbyterian, both resenting the Church's privileges.<sup>2</sup> Even when the Irish Temporalities Act of 1833, and further legislation in 1838, had eased the much-hated system by which the Church was entitled to levy tithes (meaning that Roman Catholics and Dissenters were required to support the Established Church financially as well as providing for their own churches and ministers) it was still seen as a symbol of English supremacy - the church of an aristocratic and powerful minority of English landowners enriching themselves at the expense of the Irish.

To support Irish disestablishment in the hope that such a gesture would ease the troubled situation in that country was part of the Liberal programme. The problem lay in finding a way forward acceptable to all concerned. On both sides of the Irish Sea Nonconformists and Roman Catholics refused to contemplate any political alliance between them which might give an advantage to the other party, even if helped to achieve disestablishment.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> H. C. G. Matthew: *Gladstone 1809-1898* (Oxford, 1997), p194. Pages 193-6 give a convenient summary of the disestablishment. See also K. B. Nowlan, "Disestablishment: 1800-1869" in M. Hurley (Ed.): *Irish Anglicanism* (Dublin, 1970); J. Bromley: *The Man of Ten Talents, a Portrait of Richard Chenevix Trench* (London, 1959), Ch. 9; P. M. H. Bell: *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales* (London, 1969).

<sup>2</sup> Nowlan, "Disestablishment: 1800-1869", in Hurley, p2.

<sup>3</sup> O. Chadwick: *The Victorian Church*, II (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London, 1972), p429.



On this question as on others Gladstone was not motivated solely by political purpose, though he had led the Liberals to victory over the Tories on the issue. He stated in 1867,

In the removal of this Establishment, I see the discharge of a debt of civil justice, the disappearance of a national, almost a world-wide, reproach; a condition indispensable to the success of every effort to secure the peace and contentment of that country; and, finally, relief to a devoted clergy from a false position, cramped and beset by hopeless prejudice, and the opening of a free career to their sacred ministry.<sup>4</sup>

The devoted clergy, who suspected that their Church was to be sacrificed for non-religious ends, were less than properly grateful, however.

Gladstone believed what he said. From a leader of known High Church sympathies, such views were striking, as was the fact that many High Churchmen agreed with him. They were no lovers of Establishment if it resulted in the State claiming the right to decide questions of the Church's doctrine and worship. The role of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, with which we shall deal later, was a case in point.

Gladstone's Disestablishment Bill, presented in 1869, was largely his own work, a remarkable achievement facing the thorny questions of disestablishment, disendowment, and how the money so obtained should be used. The Bill's passage through both houses of Parliament was no foregone conclusion, the Lords threatening to wreck Gladstone's proposals on the redistribution of the seven to eight million pounds which he calculated would become available for charitable purposes after disendowment. It required a combination of Liberal and Roman Catholic opinion to prevent the Lords' amendments on finance from being carried.<sup>5</sup> By the end of July the bill had received the royal assent, and the Irish Church was disestablished on January 1, 1871.

Many members of the Irish Church "watched with helpless dismay the progress of one of the smoothest political operations ever carried through the British Parliament."<sup>6</sup> It had been evident to them from the outset that if disestablishment became a reality, then effective government must be found for the Irish Church. The vital point (certainly in Liddon's mind) was the constitution of the bodies which would govern. On September 16, 1869, Archbishop Beresford of Armagh

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<sup>4</sup> Bromley, p176.

<sup>5</sup> Nowlan, "Disestablishment: 1800-1869" in Hurley, pp18-21.

<sup>6</sup> G. C. Daly, "Church Renewal: 1869-77" in Hurley, p23.

and Archbishop Trench of Dublin summoned their provincial synods as a convocation to prepare for the coming turmoil. Beresford had condemned Gladstone's proposal, calling it "a confiscation".<sup>7</sup> Trench thought disestablishment a danger to the Church and a false aim in itself, believing that "we are the Established Church, because we are the Church which the State believes to be true."<sup>8</sup> He was a scholarly, un-aggressive man who had left the Deanery of Westminster for the see of Dublin in 1863. He was not suited temperamentally to ecclesiastical controversy, and was not helped by the insistence of his friends Pusey and Liddon on regarding him as a missionary to the Irish Church.<sup>9</sup> The convocation met in December, 1869, and decided that the laity should play a full part in the reconstruction of the Church after disestablishment, a necessary concession since the Church would need their financial assistance. But how far was their participation to be allowed? Division on this point was immediate, since there was a voice which argued that the laity should have no part in the discussion of doctrine, worship or questions of morality. Strongly of this mind was the Archdeacon of Dublin, William Lee (1815-83). His proposal to this effect was rejected, which caused Pusey to write to Trench on February 19, 1870:

...I do not see what harm it can practically do to gather representatives of the laity in a separate chamber; for they can only have a negative voice; and, after all, one would act without them. The clergy must be [?] with them in any case.

I trust, then, that the experiment would not involve harm. But to admit what I understand them to demand, to be one chamber with you, would be insanity and to give up the episcopate save in name, to remain only to be dragged at the chariot-wheels of its captors.<sup>10</sup>

The anxiety felt by Pusey (and Liddon) on the question of voting procedures agreed by the Irish Church requires explanation. Lee's motion was rejected by the synods of Armagh and Dublin clergy in September, 1869. A conference in Dublin in October proposed that in future General Synod clergy and laity might vote separately, a suggestion which led to the formation of the committee which drafted a constitution for the disestablished Church in January, 1870. The General Convention of the Church, meeting in February and October that year, considered the draft and decreed that the General Synod, meeting annually, should be the Church's supreme legislative body, comprising the two houses of Bishops and Representatives. The latter would

<sup>7</sup> N. D. Emerson, "The Last Phase of the Establishment" in W. A. Phillips (Ed.): *History of the Church of Ireland from the earliest times to the present day*, III (London, 1933), p320.

<sup>8</sup> Daly, "Church Renewal: 1869-77", in Hurley, p24.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> M. Trench: *Richard Chenevix Trench, Letters and Memorials*, II (London, 1888), p123-4.

contain the clergy and laity (who could vote separately), numerically favouring the laity in a ratio of two to one on the principal that the laity would be unlikely to attend all Synod meetings. The two houses would normally sit together, but the bishops might withdraw for private discussion. On the all-important question of voting, ten clerical or lay members could demand a vote by houses, in which event a motion would be passed only on a majority vote from clergy and laity voting separately, and a similar vote from the bishops. As a result, bishops, clergy or laity might veto a proposal. However, if the bishops vetoed a measure it might be brought before the next annual Synod once again. If two-thirds majorities of clergy and laity then passed it the bishops might reject it a second time only if two-thirds of their whole number voted against it, giving their reasons in writing.<sup>11</sup>

In these complicated voting procedures the matter of the bishops' veto was of great significance. A group of laymen, led by Lord James Butler and strongly Protestant in outlook, was keen to diminish the bishops' power, questioning the right of a small body to frustrate the wishes of the majority simply because its members were bishops, mostly conservative in outlook and resistant to radical change. Faced with such a challenge, it was vital that the newly disestablished Church should insist on the powers and rights of the bishops if it was to remain faithful to its episcopal heritage. The veto secured to the bishops was unlikely to be used; but the possibility made a declaration as to how the Irish Church saw itself, and the way it wished to go.

From this it will be seen that Pusey and Liddon were not being unreasonable in their anxiety at the possible influence of the laity in the Synod. Their alarm was increased by reports in the English papers on the loud and insistent demands of Butler and his followers, whose numbers and actual power became overestimated in the minds of English Churchmen as a result.<sup>12</sup> Pusey and Liddon, it seems, did not appreciate fully the significance of the decision taken about the bishops' veto. However, the activities of James Butler did reveal that disestablishment would

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<sup>11</sup> For a detailed account of organisation in the Irish Church see Bell: *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales*, pp163ff, of which the above is a summary. The arrangements adopted by the Church were very similar to those proposed in 1868 by W. Sherlock, then a curate in County Wicklow, who published a pamphlet on the constitutions of other non-established Anglican churches (see Bell, p127). This pamphlet was approved by Bishop Selwyn of Lichfield, who had dealt with these issues when Bishop of New Zealand. (See Bell, p163. For Selwyn see J. H. Evans: *Churchman Militant* (London, 1964), pp139ff, 163, 165.) That Selwyn, a High Churchman, could support Sherlock's suggestions may account for the animus which the latter entertained against Pusey and Liddon for their distrust of such reforms. (See below.)

<sup>12</sup> Butler's right to sit and vote in the Synod was challenged in the *Guardian* (May 19, 1875, p627) on the grounds that by his own admission he was not confirmed. He caused offence by calling Confirmation "a superstitious ceremony". (*Guardian*, May 5, 1875, p579.)

present an opportunity for the most Protestant minded of the Irish clergy and laity to use their new powers for self-government to advocate reforms which would shape the reconstructed Church according to their own convictions. Soon Archbishop Trench remarked gloomily, “The Church of England can hardly legislate at all; we can legislate only too easily. If it feels the weight of too little liberty, we feel the weight, and, strange as this may sound, it *is* a weight, of too much.”<sup>13</sup> One of the principal areas where pressure mounted for change was in the matter of the Book of Common Prayer.

The Church of Ireland, in a Declaration prefixed to its Constitution and agreed by the general Convention in February, 1870, accepted the Prayer Book, and decreed that a two-thirds majority be required for any modification or change to the Thirty-nine Articles or the doctrine, ritual and rubrics of the Prayer Book, thereby placing definite restrictions on the power of Synod. During the Convention, however, it became apparent that an appreciable number of its members favoured changes in the Church’s formularies, and thereby changes in the Prayer Book. The origins of such feelings were complex, and whether they would have surfaced had disestablishment not become a reality is debatable. Possible contributory influences to this mood were the widespread Calvinism of the clergy, the offence caused by the secession to Rome of the like of Newman and Manning, and the impact made by the decree of papal Infallibility, discussed and defined by the Vatican Council in 1870.<sup>14</sup> The Irish clergy were facing active and influential Roman Catholicism. Many of them felt betrayed by the Church of England, and alarmed by the growing disturbances caused by ritualism in that Church.<sup>15</sup> The first prosecutions for ritual offences were being heard in England, and it was easy for Irish Low Churchmen (as for their English counterparts) to imagine covert Romanism at work in the teaching of the Tractarians, with ritualism the proof that their suspicion was well founded.

Such feelings were enough to fuel a desire for the Church of Ireland’s complete separation from England to be marked by reform of the Prayer Book, but it was particularly unfortunate that immediately after the meeting of the February Convention the fires of antagonism to anything in the Church which smacked of Rome were fanned by a dispute in Ireland. It was the more regrettable that Archbishop Trench should be at the centre of it, for his friendship with such High

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<sup>13</sup> Trench, II, p162.

<sup>14</sup> See C. A. Webster, “The Reconstruction of the Church, 1869” in Phillips: *History of the Church of Ireland*, III, p381.

<sup>15</sup> Bell, p185ff.

Churchmen as Pusey and Liddon was well known.<sup>16</sup> Trench was approached by a Mr L. F. S. Maberly, who complained that a Dublin clergyman was presenting confirmation candidates, among them Maberley's housemaid, with a booklet of prayers to whose comparatively mild Catholic tone Maberly strongly objected. Trench examined the work and sent a characteristically careful and considered reply, stating that he found nothing to censure in its teaching. A more worldly-wise prelate would have foreseen the result, for Maberly, with Trench's agreement, published their correspondence in the *Dublin Daily Express* on April 19. A howl of Low Church protest arose. Trench was vilified, and demands grew for the protection of the Protestant nature of the Irish Church. Trench's defence, that he had refused to narrow the limits of belief permitted in the Irish Church, counted for little. That he had, in writing to Maberly, referred to the Prayer Book in defence of his position counted for everything in the eyes of Protestant zealots. In Easter vestries throughout Ireland there were calls for purging of the "Roman leaven" from the Prayer Book.<sup>17</sup>

More urbane than Trench, the Irish Bishop Magee of Peterborough shrewdly saw the Maberly affair "not as the cause, but only as the occasion, of this outburst of Puritanism. Sooner or later the demand for Liturgical Revision must have come; but the Archbishop has brought it on far too soon, and with every vantage to the revisionists."<sup>18</sup> No less acute was his assessment of the way ahead:

I doubt the clergy, even if honestly opposed to revision, having the courage to withstand the pressure of the plebs and the press. Many of them have pandered to both in a very cowardly way, in the late vestry meetings. I fear that the Convention may pledge itself by some rash resolution to Liturgical revision. I was amazed by a letter from Reichel lately, suggesting a moderate revision by moderate men, to stop the mouths of the destructives.

How does he expect to get an immoderate majority to confide the revision, on which they have set their hearts, to a moderate minority? I earnestly hope that the moderates will make no such fatal mistake as this would be. They would give the radical revisionists all the weight of their learning and moderation in carrying the principle of revision, and find themselves helpless then in guiding or restraining revision within moderate limits.<sup>19</sup>

Fear of Romanism; the desire for a clear identity in the newly disestablished Church; excitement at the prospect of exercising that Church's acquired liberty; anxiety at the possibility of anarchy

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<sup>16</sup> Bromley, p196ff.

<sup>17</sup> Trench, II, p128.

<sup>18</sup> J. C. Macdonnell: *The Life and Correspondence of William Connor Magee*, vol. I (London, 1896), p252.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. Canon Reichel later became Bishop of Meath.

and schism – these were some of the currents flowing in the Irish Church when the question of Prayer Book revision was thrust to the front of its agenda. To the minds of Pusey and Liddon the dangers attending the issue were considerable, and they watched with concern.

A speech made by Dr George Salmon, Regius Professor of Divinity at Trinity College, Dublin, at the General Synod of 1871 led to the forming of a Revision Committee.<sup>20</sup> Salmon had been dubious concerning the wisdom of Prayer Book revision, but now he said that he believed such revision to be “not only lawful, but expedient and absolutely unavoidable”, and that the work must be done not by Synod, but by a committee led by the bishops:

It were an unheard of thing if a company of presbyters and laymen were to draw up a series of liturgical reforms, and tender them to the bishops for acceptance or rejection. Moreover the committee must not be one-sided. The party of change and the party hitherto opposed to change must be fully and fairly represented.<sup>21</sup>

A selection committee proposed names for the Revision Committee, though in the event Synod rejected some of their nominations and appointed others. The early stages of the revision debate were always in danger of dividing along lines between clergy and laity, and many in Synod did not appreciate the complexity of the issues surrounding the project:

There was at stake nothing less than the delicately-balanced synthesis of the great Anglican divines. What many of the revisionists were unable, or unwilling to see was that in their anxiety to resolve all ambiguities in a Protestant direction they were shifting the gravitational centre of the Anglican Church and creating a new body which, however admirable it might have been in other respects, would not have remained Anglican in any meaningful sense of the term.<sup>22</sup>

The Report of the Revision Committee was presented to Synod in two parts in 1872 and 1873 respectively, but the debate continued until 1876. The questions of the Ordinal and Baptismal regeneration (the latter a particularly tense theological issue since the Gorham case in 1847, and a doctrine on which Pusey had contributed three of the *Tracts for the Times*) generated great heat. Pusey and Liddon expressed their concern in letters of advice to Trench.<sup>23</sup> Both wrote on May 9, 1873, regarding the proposed declaration on the Real Presence of Christ in the bread and

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<sup>20</sup> George Salmon (1819-1904) was one figure of genuine theological stature in the Irish Synod. His important study, *The Infallibility of the Church* (London, 1888), remained in vogue for many years.

<sup>21</sup> Webster, “The Reconstruction of the Church, 1869”, in Phillips, III, p382.

<sup>22</sup> Daly, “Church Renewal: 1869-77”, in Hurley, p30.

<sup>23</sup> Trench, II, pp152-4.

wine consecrated in the Eucharist. On Ascension Day Liddon was clear how the Irish Church should act:

In the long run, a Church which is loyal to its principles, and which adheres strictly to the doctrinal standards of the Church of England, would, I believe, do better – incomparably better – than a body which goes to work upon no higher principle than that of bidding for popular support, striking a kind of equation between the wish to keep on *some* terms with the Church of England, and yet to conciliate convictions which are irreconcilably at issue with the plain grammatical sense of her existing formularies.<sup>24</sup>

The next day he wrote in his diary, “Dined with Dr Pusey. He thinks that the Irish difficulties will not affect us: because the Irish curates on coming over here will conform to the English prayer-book.”<sup>25</sup> This reveals two points of significance. Firstly, that dissatisfied Irish clergy were likely to leave Ireland for England; secondly, that Pusey and Liddon were worried lest any taint of reforming zeal should come with them.

In August Liddon was anxious at a rumour that Trench had agreed to undertake the biography of the recently deceased Bishop Wilberforce. “Your Grace now can have no time or strength to spare for such an enterprise”, he wrote<sup>26</sup> - ironically anticipating what would be said to Liddon himself when he was sinking under the burden of writing Pusey’s life. In December he wrote acknowledging receipt of Trench’s Charge to his clergy given earlier in the year, sharing Trench’s regret that clergy were leaving the Irish Church for the Church of England. Many of them were dissatisfied that the abolition of episcopal patronage, which was part of the disestablishment programme, meant that laity were free to appoint to parishes only those clergy whose religious opinions they approved. We have seen that he and Pusey had noted such departures, of which Liddon said to Trench,

It is due, no doubt, to controversial as well as less respectable causes, but it must have a very demoralizing effect upon the spirit and self-respect of the Church, unless, as I trust is the case, our Lord makes up in other ways what He withdraws in this.<sup>27</sup>

Proposed changes to the Lectionary displeased him; they would not, he comments, have met the test of antiquity. “If St Jerome might possibly have made himself at home in your new Lectionary, it is hard to see how St Augustine could have done so.”<sup>28</sup> However, it is sacramental

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p157-8.

<sup>25</sup> *Diaries*, May 23, 1873.

<sup>26</sup> Trench, II, p163.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p165.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

teaching which is of chief importance. “If only those vital questions about the Sacraments can be laid to rest, or settled satisfactorily, the worst of the crisis will have passed.”<sup>29</sup>

In 1875 Liddon’s correspondence on the Irish Prayer Book question and its implications becomes most informative. Early that year discussion began on the proposed new Preface to the Prayer Book, Dr Salmon being to the fore in the debate. Trench was depressed by what was proposed, and was reassured to find Liddon of a mind with him. “I had a long, most able, and most interesting letter from Liddon yesterday on the subject”, he wrote on March 31. “He thinks it will be simple ruin.”<sup>30</sup> Certainly there was enough to alarm them in the proposed Preface.<sup>31</sup> Suggested changes to the Catechism would have allowed that in Holy Communion the Body and Blood of Christ were received by the communicant “only after a heavenly and spiritual manner”. The statement on Baptism decreed that it meant not to “limit or abridge, on the one side or the other, that liberty of expounding [certain expressions in the Baptismal services] which has been hitherto allowed by the general practice of this Church”. The Athanasian Creed would not be used in its entirety. The statement on the Ordinal declared “that no power or authority, saving such as may belong to him in the remission of Ecclesiastical censures, is ascribed to the Priest in respect of the absolution of sins after Baptism, other than the ministerial one of declaring and pronouncing, on God’s part, remission of sins to all that are truly penitent.”<sup>32</sup>

Liddon’s letter, to which Trench refers, has survived. It is a crushing attack on the proposed Preface. “It would be almost impossible, as I think”, he wrote, “to have written a document better calculated to secure the future disunion of the Anglican Churches, or to make the aggressions of Roman controversialists on all sides easier than they are now.”<sup>33</sup> He attacks the narrowing of possible interpretation of doctrine, “interpreting in a specific and narrow sense, changes or refusals to change which might have admitted, perhaps, of other and better interpretations.”<sup>34</sup> The Preface as a whole provokes one of his best pieces of sarcasm:

Its key-note is – “we should like to have got rid of a great deal more of the ancient language and faith of the Church: but there were prudential reasons for holding our hands.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p172.

<sup>31</sup> Trench, II, pp176-83, provides a copy of the proposed Preface, along with the version of certain portions which was finally adopted.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> LP, I, 195, March 27, 1875.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



Be assured however that what we have retained ought not to offend the Puritanism which would reject it.<sup>35</sup>

He thinks English Churchmen will see the proposed Preface as giving

...a formal rejection of certain parts of the Revealed Will of God. The Apology is throughout addressed to Popular Puritan feeling which is assured to have some reasonable grounds for complaining that more has not been done in the way of destructive Revision.<sup>36</sup>

If accepted, the Preface will fix the interpretation of changes already made, and fix them in a Protestant direction, as well as encouraging further depredations on what remains of Sacramental Truth. In a particularly forceful passage he writes,

The object of the Preface seems to be to retain the *prestige*, in a Church sense, of a Prayerbook, unaltered in regard to

1. The Baptismal Service.
2. The Communion Service.
3. The Ordinal.

but very significantly mutilated in regard to

1. The Visitation of the Sick [whose form of Absolution was rejected].
2. The Athanasian Creed.

While retaining this *prestige*, if they can, the writers of the Preface supply a means of *authoritatively* nullifying the Catholic interpretation of the unaltered formulas.<sup>37</sup>

To speak frankly, says Liddon, “ a *bona fide* Puritan alteration of both the Communion and the Baptismal Services (to say nothing of the Ordinal) would have been a manlier and a worthier proceeding.”<sup>38</sup>

Then follow detailed criticisms. Is there not a rejection of the Real Presence? What is being said about Baptismal Grace? Why reject Absolution in visiting the sick without a clear statement of the doctrine involved? And as to the Athanasian Creed,

...I must entirely demur to the right of a local Church to mutilate an Oecumenical document in the way proposed – it only condemns itself by doing this....As for the

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

reference, in such a document, to the “See of Constantinople” – it almost provokes a smile. I could wish that that see, and some others, had been thought of a little earlier.<sup>39</sup>

Pusey, to whom Trench had also sent a copy of the proposed Preface, replied on April 2, and again on April 5, when he opined that “If this were passed, I cannot imagine any person who has belief in the Sacraments or in absolution remaining, much less being ordained, in Ireland.”<sup>40</sup> To make matters worse, the Synod voted in April on the proposal that the Athanasian Creed should, with certain verses omitted, be used only on Christmas Day, Whit Sunday and Trinity Sunday. On April 23 this was passed. However, a vote remained to be taken at a later date that the revised Prayer Book be accepted as a whole as the only lawful book to be used in the Irish Church. Until such a resolution was taken, the English Prayer Book, with its rubrics, remained in force.

To Liddon, affairs were now urgent. On May 6 he wrote to Gladstone:

We have deliberately abstained from interfering in any way with Irish Church matters; it seemed possible that our interference might do more harm than good. But nothing can be worse than the state of things which has been created by the action of the so-termed “Synod”; and if the Irish Church can yet be saved from the suicidal policy of a majority of its representatives it must be, humanly speaking, by our letting them know what we think of their proceedings.

I have rarely read a theological document, more thoroughly disingenuous than the proposed preface to the new Irish prayer book, which nevertheless with some trifling modifications, would seem to be passing through the Synod.

You will, I think, forgive me for troubling you with this matter. The disestablishment of the Irish Church seemed to offer to that branch of our communion a great opportunity for securing a useful and even splendid future. As it is, in an ecstasy of folly, Irish Churchmen have determined to break with a not inglorious past, and to create for themselves a future in which serious and intelligent Churchmen on this side of the water can feel no possible interest.<sup>41</sup>

How, in the light of this letter, Liddon justified his own and Pusey’s concern for the Irish Church is not clear: nor could their letters to Trench be considered other than interference. Furthermore, they were no longer content merely to voice disapproval. There was before them a practical suggestion from Archdeacon Lee, who had refused to recognise the authority of the Irish Synod. Deciding that drastic measures might be necessary should the Irish Church destroy the integrity of the Book of Common Prayer, he wrote to the *Guardian* on April 30 denouncing “the body

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Trench, II, p173.

<sup>41</sup> Gladstone Papers, British Library Add. Mss. 44237, vol. 152.

which has usurped the authority of the National Synod of the Church of Ireland as defined in the 100<sup>th</sup> canon of 1634”, and which had adopted “a new Creed, from whose articles the necessity of belief in the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ was deliberately excluded.” He and other clergy, he wrote, would send in their protests when “all the other changes in doctrine and rubrics, already passed or threatened, are finally adopted.”<sup>42</sup> Then came his startling proposal for a church to be built in Dublin in which (should the detested revisions become effective) the Prayer Book would be used in its original form:

I hereby invite communications from Churchmen, lay and clerical, who are willing to adopt measures necessary for maintaining in Ireland the form of worship set forth in the unaltered Prayer-book, and for providing permanently for continued communion with the Church of England. The few churches in which the old services will be performed, and which, in the necessity of things, will day by day become fewer, will supply but scanty means for preserving among us our ancient faith and worship.<sup>43</sup>

The *Guardian* noted that it had heard of possible support “in influential quarters” for the Archdeacon’s proposal should the Preface be adopted.<sup>44</sup> Certainly he found a ready response from Pusey and Liddon. On the same day that he wrote to Gladstone, Liddon addressed a letter to Lee, promising £100 for the new church in Dublin, provided that the use of the unaltered Prayer Book could be guaranteed, and that,

...in the event of the acquiescence of the Archbishop of Dublin in the decision of the (so-termed) synod to omit the Warning Clauses in the Public Recitation of the Athanasian Creed the proposed Church be withdrawn from His Grace’s jurisdiction, and its officiating minister shall formally repudiate communion with him. Of course I believe that I am providing – in the case of the present revered Archbishop – for an improbable, I would rather say, an impossible contingency.<sup>45</sup>

He made clear that he thought the foundation of such a church to be desirable. It would serve as “a point of departure for a new organisation” should the action of the Synod (“so to term a mixed conference of clergyman and laymen”) effectively destroy the Irish Church as “a witness to primitive truth.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Guardian*, May 5, 1875, p562-3.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* p562. He adds that Lord Longford has promised to withdraw subscriptions to the Church should the Synod “clip or vary” the Creeds.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* p557.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* Liddon enclosed a copy of this letter when writing to Gladstone.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

This is an astonishing letter. In defence of the Prayer Book and what he conceives to be right doctrine, Liddon is prepared to join in offering a direct material challenge to a part of the Church where he does not live, threatening it with the establishment of a schismatic (or in his eyes, orthodox and faithful) Church. In defence of principles, he risks undermining the very cause of Church unity which he wishes to preserve. In addition, he is breathtakingly insensitive to the offensive character of his description of the Synod, and its likely impact on Irish Churchmen.

Gladstone's diary indicates that he replied to Liddon on May 7.<sup>47</sup> Liddon responded at once, acknowledging that it would be difficult for the other man to take a public part in the issue at that time, and expressing the hope that there might be public support for Trench from English Churchmen. Two anxieties pressed upon him, he wrote: firstly, that the Roman Communion would gain more converts among those disillusioned with the Irish Church, and secondly that "our tacit acquiescence in the Irish ecclesiastical revolution will, at no distant date, be used as a powerful argument in favour of similar or more radical changes among ourselves."<sup>48</sup> He was sure that Dean Stanley and his supporters would be heartened by the success of the reformers in Ireland. Solid opposition to Prayer Book revision, plus the warning of a new church built in Dublin, might cause them to hesitate before urging their case in England.

Liddon may have sent Gladstone's letter to Charles Wood, for the latter wrote on May 9, 1875, saying that due to Gladstone's part in achieving Irish Church disestablishment, "I agree with him in thinking it probable that any action on his part...would possibly do more harm than good."<sup>49</sup> Certainly Liddon's anxiety as to the effect in England of successful Prayer Book reform in Ireland was shared by Trench. On May 8, 1875, Maria Trench told Pusey that her father feared the English Convocation's "acquiescing in what has been done to the Creed, and of its being the beginning of fresh mischief against the Creed in England."<sup>50</sup>

On May 11, 1875, Liddon wrote to Charles Wood, "you will see that the Believing Irish were not up to the mark. They were evidently frightened at our proposal to 'make a schism'. Yet what else was there to do?"<sup>51</sup> As with his letter to Lee, this is disquieting. Could he really have contemplated schism in the Church apparently unperturbed? At any rate, there was no such calm

<sup>47</sup> H. C. G. Matthew: *Gladstone Diaries*, vol. IX (Oxford, 1986), p34.

<sup>48</sup> Gladstone Papers, Brit. Lib. Add. Mss. 44237 vol. 152, May 8, 1875.

<sup>49</sup> *Liddon Papers*, Pusey House, Box 4, bundle 3.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> *Halifax*, May 11, 1875.

in Ireland when Lee's proposal, and Pusey's and Liddon's support for it, became public knowledge. The *Gazette* called it "a piece of Ecclesiastical fenianism."<sup>52</sup> Resentment grew hot against the attempted interference of the two Oxford dons in Irish Church affairs, and the memory of it lingered for years. In 1910, Archdeacon Sherlock of Kildare was savage in his condemnation:

The truth is that the English high church party was incapable of understanding the position of affairs after disestablishment. It dreamed, at least Canon Liddon who might be taken to represent it did, so late as 1875, that the Church might have gone on without lay representation:

"The greatest mistake," he wrote, "was the substitution of the anomalous synod for the ancient convocations....Are not the old convocations only dormant? Could they not be summoned by the Archbishops? Would they not at once speak with an authority which this singular collection of clergymen, colonels, and lawyers, can never command when undertaking to deal with the truths of Divine revelation however indirectly?"

One does not know whether to wonder at his total misconception of the circumstances of a disestablished Church, or at the singular ignorance of human nature betrayed by such remarks.<sup>53</sup>

Some twenty years later, another writer would comment, "the criticisms levelled by Dr Pusey and Dr Liddon during the debates on the revision of the Prayer Book were harsh and unjust. Their suggestion of building a church in Dublin in which only the unaltered English Prayer Book should be used, and their offer of large subscriptions towards that end, was nothing short of monstrous."<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, the efforts of Pusey and Liddon were destined to be counter-productive. "The fact that leading personalities in the English Church should have lent their names to contingency plans for a schismatic enclave in Dublin only served to strengthen the hands of those who sought to stiffen Irish resolve by appealing to national pride."<sup>55</sup> At the time of the debate, Bishop Alexander of Derry no doubt summed up much popular feeling by remarking, "These people who desire to be Accephalous Catholics, and to start churches in Dublin under no Bishop, are not witnesses who should tell greatly against us. I wish them no worse humiliation than Caesar wished the dramatic knight – 'to be compelled to take the leading part in his own play.'"<sup>56</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Daly, "Church Renewal: 1869-77" in Hurley, p36.

<sup>53</sup> W. Sherlock: *The Story of the Revision of the Irish Prayer Book*, (Dublin, 1910), p45-6.

<sup>54</sup> Webster, "The Reconstruction of the Church, 1869" in Phillips, III, p395.

<sup>55</sup> Daly, "Church Renewal: 1869-77" in Hurley, p36.

<sup>56</sup> H. E. Patton: *Fifty Years of Disestablishment – A Sketch*, (Dublin, 1922), p51. In his letter to Wood of May 11, 1875, Liddon showed little faith in Alexander. "The Bishop of Derry *speaks* well. But when it comes to action, he will not stand firm, you will find." (*Halifax*)

Distant from the battlefield, Liddon was keen that letters from himself and Pusey defending their stance should be published in Ireland, but Archdeacon Lee was slow to do so. Lord Limerick addressed a letter on the situation to Charles Wood, who forwarded it to Liddon. Writing to Wood, Liddon asked for discussion of the Prayer Book issue in the proper circles:

Lord Limerick seems to contemplate a *public* meeting of some kind. I hope this will not be entertained. Our experience of last year has shown, I think, that this is too rude an instrument for dealing with so serious a subject.

Archdeacon Lee has not yet published our letters. So yesterday we both wrote to him to ask him to do so. And Dr Pusey sent a copy of *his* to the Bishop of Oxford.<sup>57</sup>

Evidently there is a new Conservative feeling in the “synod” – produced no doubt, in part, by a fear of consequences. But the main evils are still unredeemed; and they seem to be accepting that wretched “preface” in great blocks, and almost without any real discussion of its abounding sophisms.

Archbishop Trench comes here on Saturday. I am thankful that the believing laity in Ireland are withdrawing their subscriptions.<sup>58</sup>

We have seen that the withholding of subscriptions to the Church was a course open to opponents of change.<sup>59</sup> Archbishop Trench himself was mindful of this form of protest. In 1870, giving £1,000 to the Central Sustentation Fund, he spread the payments over five years, with the right to suspend them “should the Church of Ireland turn out, after all, to be no Church, but only a Protestant sect.”<sup>60</sup> One correspondent, Walter Farquahar, wrote to Liddon on May 31, 1875, to tell him that “there is a strong feeling on the other side of the water [Ireland] that, even if the Revision is closed before the Dissolution of the present Synod *as it now stands*, (maintaining of course the Athanasian Creed) the High Church Party here will notwithstanding refuse their cordial and *pecuniary* help to the sister Church...I mention pecuniary help because they say little or no money has been contributed to the Sustentation Fund by English High Churchmen.”<sup>61</sup>

The most telling of Liddon’s letters to Wood concerning the Irish Church is dated Whitsunday, 1875. “The Archbishop of Dublin has been here all day and leaves tomorrow. We have had a

<sup>57</sup> Lee was writing to Pusey on the same day Liddon wrote this letter. PL, II, 110, May 13, 1875.

<sup>58</sup> *Halifax*, May 13, 1875. This was Liddon’s second letter to Wood that day.

<sup>59</sup> See n.43 above. See also a letter of E. P. Shirley (*Guardian*, May 5, 1875, p559) confirming this view.

<sup>60</sup> Trench, II, p130.

<sup>61</sup> *Liddon Papers*, Pusey House, Box 1, no. 3.

great deal of conversation. (Dr Pusey, King, I and the Archbishop.)”<sup>62</sup> Liddon’s diary mentions his dining with King and Trench (“Archbishop of Dublin present – in the lowest spirits about the Irish Church. He thinks that if the Creed is used on Trinity Sunday only it may yet be saved.”)<sup>63</sup> but is silent on their discussion with Pusey, making his account of that meeting to Wood of particular importance. “All is not yet lost in Ireland,” he writes, “even as regards the Creed. The Synod has not done its worst until it fixes a date from which the decree of Mutilation is to take effect. And on this issue the whole Battle may be fought over again.”<sup>64</sup> He then comes to the practical points for discussion. The first is the necessity for building a new church in Dublin (“Dr P. says *three* churches”) where use of the unreformed Prayer Book would be guaranteed. We have noted this suggestion already, but Pusey’s proposal is intriguing. It might have been the excited reaction of his passionate nature; but possibly it was a reflection of his deeply Trinitarian faith desiring a trinity of churches, perhaps one for the poor, one for the middle class and one for the upper class.<sup>65</sup>

As in his letter to Archdeacon Lee, Liddon makes no comment on the radical nature of this plan, nor was it the first time he had toyed with such an idea. Contemplating the possibility of leaving the Church’s ministry during the Athanasian Creed fight in England, he had written to Pusey,

If we have to go out, a large Church in London, in which nothing was spent on architecture and 3,000 or 4,000 were accommodated, might be a point d’appui for action when Disestablishment and the accompanying break-up arrives. It cannot be very far distant: and God may mean that we should make preparations for the future of those Catholic and believing Elements which will then separate from the Puritan and Rationalistic ones at present united to them in the established Church.<sup>66</sup>

Writing to Wood of the plan, he says,

The Archbishop was at first frightened at this project. But I think I persuaded him that it alone will enable us to hold out against the synod. “The old Prayerbook” is a capital cry. The Archbishop says that a good English subscription list for such an object, even if nothing is done, *would carry the utmost consternation* into the ranks of the revisionists.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *Halifax*, Whitsunday [May 16], 1875. Edward King had become Regius Professor of Pastoral Theology in 1873. Trench stayed with him at Christ Church. (Trench, II, p197).

<sup>63</sup> *Diaries*, May 15, 1875.

<sup>64</sup> *Halifax*, Whitsunday, 1875.

<sup>65</sup> In 1839, during the controversy surrounding the proposed Martyrs’ Memorial in Oxford, Pusey proposed that a church dedicated to the Holy Trinity be built in the poor area of St Ebbe’s. (*Pusey*, II, pp64-76.) That year he also financed the building of St Saviour’s Church, Leeds. See N. Yates: *The Oxford Movement and Parish Life: St Saviour’s, Leeds, 1839-1929* (York, 1975).

<sup>66</sup> LP, I, 112. February 16, 1872.

<sup>67</sup> *Halifax*, Whitsunday, 1875.

Then follows the second point:

...there is work to do at the *Lambeth meeting for the Irish fund*. One of the recently elected ultra-Protestant bishops is coming over to raise subscriptions. It is of the *greatest importance that somebody should go to the meeting prepared to raise the whole issue of the Prayer Book*, and especially the mutilation of the Creed. If the English bishops etc. go on subscribing (after these changes actual and imminent) nothing can be done to stem the torrent. The Archbishop said, "It is of the first importance to stop that aberration [?]", anyhow to challenge the consistency of the English Churches who contribute to the apostasising Irish Church. This is private – but there can be no doubt of its wisdom.

Mr Hubbard would be a good person to "ask the question" if he could be induced to do it.<sup>68</sup> If he will not, someone else should. Lord Bath has a large Irish property: would he, do you think? Dr Pusey, the Archbishop, King and I are of one mind as to the vital importance of a decided step at the Lambeth meeting.<sup>69</sup>

This letter, whose suggestion regarding the Lambeth meeting was to earn support from Lord Limerick,<sup>70</sup> is revealing on several counts. Trench's divided mind is plain. Temperamentally allied with the concern of Pusey and Liddon, his first hand experience of the Irish situation warned him of the offence and division which would be the likely consequence of their projected action. Moreover, a "schismatic" church in Dublin would be a challenge, forcing him as a bishop to declare where his first loyalty lay. His "even if nothing is done" is significant. Yet the astonishing truth, not stated in the documents quoted so far, but clear from letters written to Liddon, is that the idea of a new church in Dublin originated neither with Pusey, nor Liddon, nor Archdeacon Lee, but with Trench himself. His daughter Maria, in some reminiscences of Pusey written for Liddon, states clearly:

...one evening toward the end of [April], the Archbishop said to us that he believed what would have most effect in stopping the Revisionists would be if we could get a certain number of leading men, clergy and laity, to sign and put forth a declaration that if certain changes were made in the Prayer Book, they would immediately build a Church where nothing but the English Prayer Book should be used...I wrote his suggestion down on one side of a page of note paper, and shewed it to him to be sure it was accurate, and then talked to Archdeacon Lee etc. and sent the paper to Dr Pusey....

I often think, when people speak or write...of your having proposed to make a schism against the very Archbishop for whom you expressed respect, how little they know that

<sup>68</sup> J. G. Hubbard (1820-87), 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Addington, built and endowed St Alban's Church, Holborn, but later protested to the Bishop of London against certain ritualistic practices there although he was a High Churchman. (*Tait*, I, pp431ff.)

<sup>69</sup> *Halifax*, Whitsunday, 1875.

<sup>70</sup> PL, II, iii, 11 July, 1875.



you and Dr Pusey acted on a suggestion which first emanated from the Archbishop...and that the Archbishop laid stress upon the move being made independently of him.<sup>71</sup>

This is confirmed in a letter from Archdeacon Lee to Liddon in the month following the Oxford meeting, where Trench's loss of nerve concerning the plan is made plain:

I send you the Archbishop of Dublin's letter just received. You see that, although the idea of the new church in Dublin originated with him, he now thinks it more prudent to hold back for a time. I fear what he says is too true as to the amount of assistance likely to be offered, as long as matters remain in suspense.<sup>72</sup>

As it happened, money *was* offered for the proposed church. In addition to Liddon's £100 and Pusey's smaller donation of £50 ("because I am embarrassed")<sup>73</sup>, four subscriptions of £500 each were offered from Belfast.<sup>74</sup> However, Lee returned the subscriptions he received, "as no scheme of a definite nature has, as yet, or indeed in our very indefinite circumstances, can be adopted."<sup>75</sup>

In Liddon's Whitsunday letter to Wood it is clear that Trench, having put forward the idea of a new church, possibly in a moment of exasperation, experienced cold feet when he realised the practical implications of his comment in a way characteristic of him. (Pusey said to Maria Trench, "Every one loves the Archbishop: but we think he wants firmness."<sup>76</sup> Even Maria Trench herself expressed the wish, in a deeply distressed letter to Liddon, that her father would be more decisive.<sup>77</sup>)

In this letter of Liddon's there is no mention of Pusey's questioning the practical or political wisdom of the scheme for a new church, even though he had been warned by Bishop Mackarness of Oxford of the dangers of interference in the Irish Church. Mackarness told him, "your proposal to repudiate the jurisdiction of any Archbishop of Dublin who should accept the Prayer Book in the form adopted by his Convention, appears to me to strike at the root of Church order and discipline."<sup>78</sup> Pusey and Liddon appear so caught up in the battle that there is no examination

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<sup>71</sup> LBV/129/1.

<sup>72</sup> *Liddon Papers*, Pusey House, Box 1, no.3, June 6, 1875.

<sup>73</sup> LBV/129/23, Pusey to Maria Trench, May 6, 1875.

<sup>74</sup> *Liddon Papers*, Pusey House, Box 1, no. 3, undated fragment in Maria Trench's hand.

<sup>75</sup> *Liddon Papers*, Pusey House, Box 1, no. 3, Lee to Liddon, May 31, 1875.

<sup>76</sup> LBV/129/15, August 20, 1874.

<sup>77</sup> *Liddon Papers*, Pusey House, Box 4, no. 3, May 7, 1875.

<sup>78</sup> *Liddon Papers*, Pusey House, Box 4, no. 3, Mackarness to Pusey, May 14, 1875.

of the principles involved in the plan. Maria Trench remembered that Pusey was “very happy” after the meeting.<sup>79</sup>

Tantalising in Liddon’s account is the presence of Edward King. One would give much to learn how far he sympathised with the position of Pusey and Liddon, since he held the older man in great respect and was a warm, but not uncritical friend of the younger.<sup>80</sup> He was a man of open and balanced mind, the last person to see every ecclesiastical squabble as potentially a terminal crisis for the Church, as his two Christ Church neighbours tended to do. The Irish question does not feature in his correspondence at this time, so it is impossible to be certain of his views;<sup>81</sup> but it would be surprising had he been at ease with anything which might provoke division in the Church. He is described as being “of one mind” with the others only in agreeing that questions should be raised at the Lambeth meeting. He might have approved of airing the subject, but perhaps Liddon read more into King’s quiet agreement with that decision than the Pastoral Professor intended.

By May 18, when Liddon again wrote to Wood, the Prayer Book debate, and the Dublin church plan with its possible consequences, were finding their way into the press in England:

I had written a long letter for the *Guardian* – enumerating what I conceive to be the theological crimes of the Irish synod. On reflection, I hesitate to send it; because it will merely lead to a vast controversy, or rather group of controversies, in the course and detailed treatment of which the Governing Issues will be too probably lost sight of. Our best way is – not to discuss but to act. Our action will compel attention to what has been done in Ireland; and may induce the Irish to retrace their steps. It is still just possible for them to do so. But they are too much pleased with their achievement now to listen to any arguments save those which threaten their future position. The “old prayer book” will be an uncomfortable Ghost to haunt them with.

As to the new Church or Churches. We want first of all, a *lay secretary*, who will receive subscriptions; and we want also a short statement of *motives*. About this last I will take counsel with Dr Pusey and write to you again.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> LBV/129/1.

<sup>80</sup> King’s letter to Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford during the troubled time at Cuddesdon when Liddon was Vice-Principal (November 27, 1875) gives a charitable but penetratingly accurate assessment of Liddon and the “strong will” which could override his better judgment when matters of doctrine or Church order were at stake. (O. Chadwick: *The Founding of Cuddesdon* [Oxford, 1954], p79-80.)

<sup>81</sup> I am grateful to the Revd Dr John Newton for this information.

<sup>82</sup> *Halifax*, May 18, 1875. This letter reveals that Lord Devon, Wood’s High Church father-in-law, was willing to assist Pusey’s and Liddon’s cause by his presence at the Lambeth meeting on the Irish Church.

By what means could Liddon have justified to himself the conflicting positions stated here? He wishes the issues surrounding Prayer Book revision to be correctly recognised and discussed, yet he at once advocates a course which must render all such discussion impossible. Having adopted a controversial position, he suddenly seems to fear that controversy will be the result.

On May 19 the *Guardian* published Liddon's letter to Lee, and also one from Pusey to the Archdeacon in which he commented that "the proceedings of the (so-called) Irish Synod remind me vividly of the Arian attempts to supplant the Nicene Creed by creeds of their own, which should convey to the ear something sounding like the truth, but in fact denying it." He invited Lee to use the letter as he saw fit, "if you think it can be of any use in expressing how shocked we are at the proposed 'whited sepulchre' of this truth-denying Prayer-book."<sup>83</sup> Lee himself wrote a battle cry letter to the paper, calling the revisionists unrepentant up to the close of the last meeting of Synod:

In fact, the Prayer-book from beginning to end has been reconstructed – not, it should be remembered, tentatively as in former years, but finally and absolutely as to what has been done, additional changes being in prospect; the new book which has thus been thrust upon Irish Churchmen embodying the worst suggestions of successive revision committees.<sup>84</sup>

He lists his complaints, which are those of Liddon to Trench concerning the Preface. The Athanasian Creed is mutilated, Eucharistic doctrine depraved, and the absolution in the service for visiting the sick thrown into conflict with what is said of absolution in the order for ordaining priests. The book teems with alterations petty, frivolous and vexatious, with new prayers and services ill-conceived and ill-written, "duller even than such modern compositions usually are." And he sounds a warning: baptismal doctrine will be the next field of conflict, therefore "no time is to be lost in preparing for the continued maintenance of the faith in the old historic Church of Ireland."<sup>85</sup>

Published with this philippic was a very different letter, whose author commented that Irish Churchmen "have simply done what so many of our Bishops and clergy and laity have long desired to do in England, and what will be done as soon as the laity have a fair voice in our Church council – viz. to separate the most offensive Damnatory clauses from the matter of the Creed." He adds, "would it not be sufficient to make the reading of the Athanasian Creed

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<sup>83</sup> *Guardian*, May 19, 1875. P627.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

compulsory only on Trinity Sunday?”<sup>86</sup> No wonder Liddon was concerned for the effect Irish Prayer Book revision might have in England. What became rapidly clear to him, however, was that while some of his acquaintance in England approved the Dublin church scheme, others emphatically did not. He wrote to Wood,

This morning's post brings a warm letter from Beresford Hope to me.<sup>87</sup> He will be at Lambeth and will “ask the question”. He thinks “the old Prayer Book” a very good cry to go upon.

Lord Beauchamp holds aloof:<sup>88</sup> he thinks our proposal for a new Church involves an act of schism. I have written to explain, but do not expect to convert him. The Bishop of Brechin<sup>89</sup> says that Lord Salisbury disapproves of us too; so I shall not write to him as I had intended. The fact is that to be in office, or near it, makes it very difficult for men to look at a question of religious truth entirely on its merits.

I have had several furious newspaper articles which show that attention at any rate is being drawn to the subject. This must, with God's blessing, do good. The *Church Times*, I see, is opposed; the correspondent of the *Rock* thinks the prospects of the Irish Church serious.

No doubt there are many practical difficulties in the way, and there is plenty of serious criticism ready to hand.<sup>90</sup>

This betrays more unease than Liddon wished to admit. Beresford Hope's willingness to help was pleasing, but the opposition of Lord Beauchamp, whose sympathies Liddon might have thought to rely on, was obviously unexpected and his objection uncomfortably firm and specific, fixing on the very point Liddon preferred not to face. The disapproval of his friend Lord Salisbury, who had defended the Athanasian Creed in England, must have been a particular blow. Liddon attempts to diminish the criticisms, but he is clearly disturbed by them. Even as he wrote, a letter from Dean Church of St Paul's was on its way to him. “I am afraid I have misgivings about the Dublin Church,” wrote the Dean. “Breach of communion is a tremendous extremity – and I should like to have waited longer.”<sup>91</sup> Three days later Church wrote again,

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> A. J. Beresford Hope (1820-87. Conservative member for the University of Cambridge, 1868-87, and a High Churchman, he built All Saints' Church, Margaret Street, London.

<sup>88</sup> Frederick Lygon (1830-91), 6<sup>th</sup> Earl Beauchamp. Conservative MP and High Churchman who assisted in founding Keble College, Oxford. Liddon asked Wood to put before him the Dublin scheme and the need for a question at Lambeth. (*Halifax*, Whitsunday, 1875.) For Beauchamp's response, see his letter of May 20, 1875. (*Liddon Papers*, Pusey House, Box 4, Bundle 3.)

<sup>89</sup> Alexander Penrose Forbes (1817-75), Bishop of Brechin from 1847.

<sup>90</sup> *Halifax*, May 23, 1875.

<sup>91</sup> *Liddon Papers*, Pusey House, Box 4, bundle 3, May 22, 187.

saying, “Still I wish Lee had waited longer. I am afraid his move will irritate more than it frightens: and on both sides of the water. I hope I may be wrong.”<sup>92</sup>

Two days after Liddon’s letter to Wood was written the *Guardian* appeared, with the Irish Church question to the fore. “The *Guardian* of today has quite a fierce article against us for our published letters to the Archdeacon of Dublin,” wrote Liddon. “There are hostile letters too from several writers.”<sup>93</sup> Even when not hostile, the tone of most of the letters on Pusey’s and Liddon’s support for Lee’s plan was cool. Some clergy thought their reaction premature since the changes in the Prayer Book were not yet authorised, believing that the Church would retrace its steps before this happened. Others opposed the Oxford men because of their known stance regarding sacramental confession. The menacing tone of Liddon’s letter was criticized; and sharp-tongued Canon Reichel posed an astute question which would be often repeated in the ensuing *Guardian* correspondence:

Doctors Pusey and Liddon, and, I suppose, Archdeacon Lee, are now inclined to break off all communion with the Church of Ireland, although the latter has not rejected the Athanasian Creed as a standard of doctrine, and has only omitted its Damnatory Clauses in using it as a formulary of devotion. Do they, then, disown the American Episcopal Church, which has gone much further? Or do they consider the Pan-Anglican Synod [comprising all bishops in communion with the Church of England, including American Episcopal Church bishops] a body vitiated by heresy?<sup>94</sup>

The *Guardian* itself considered that Pusey, Liddon and Lee had effectively pointed revolvers at the Irish Church:

Excommunication is the last resource – the deadly weapon – when altar is set up against altar, and congregations of Christians, hitherto organised as one body, break their unity, repudiate communion, and so treat each other as aliens from the faith and cut off from the Body of Christ....It is a blow which Archdeacon Lee, Dr Pusey and Dr Liddon – doubtless with the strongest sense of the responsibility which they are incurring – aim at the existing Irish Church.<sup>95</sup>

What, asked this writer, if Lee’s scheme succeeded? The Irish Church would be divided into two bodies, one of them at least excommunicating the other. Both parties would appeal to England for help, and the like of Pusey and Liddon would have to excommunicate English Church

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<sup>92</sup> *Liddon Papers*, Pusey House, Box 4, bundle 3, May 25, 1875.

<sup>93</sup> *Diaries*, May 26, 1875.

<sup>94</sup> *Guardian*, May 26, 1875, p656.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* p660.

supporters of those faithful to the Irish Church and its decisions. Such divisions would be catastrophic:

Those who adopt a course which, if it answers their expectations, can scarcely fail to end in breaking in pieces this great edifice, under which they have become what they are, and their predecessors what they have been, may be obeying an inevitable necessity and performing a heroic act – or they may be committing an error which will be held more than a mere error by posterity, and by Him Who is greater than posterity.<sup>96</sup>

This was sanity indeed, and awareness of its force surely lies behind a pettish entry in Liddon's diary, "Decided to take no notice of the *Guardian*, which has behaved very badly."<sup>97</sup> Such wise counsels as the *Guardian*'s were needed, for hackles were rising. Dr Salmon commented,

Drs Pusey and Liddon, who pass for High Churchmen in England, seem to us here to need to learn the very alphabet of Church principles. They seem to look on the Church as a mere club, with which any one may drop membership the moment he is outvoted on any disputed question.<sup>98</sup>

John MacDonnell, the former Dean of Cashel supported this:

A more startling step has not been taken by any men of mark in the Church of England for many years, nor one apparently more subversive of all Church principles hitherto acknowledged...they sanction the great principle of Protestant Dissent – viz., that private individuals, on their own judgment of what is or is not heretical, have a right to set up a separate Church or sect independent of Episcopal authority.<sup>99</sup>

Another writer asked which bishop would have authority for the proposed Dublin church:

Will Canon Liddon make a Bishop for the new sect as John Wesley is said to have done for the Methodists in America? It seems to me that our advanced High Churchmen are fast drifting into Congregationalism.<sup>100</sup>

There was uncomfortable truth in this last charge. In practical terms, Tractarian (and especially ritualistic) churches could easily lead a self-sufficient existence which was essentially congregationalist.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> *Diaries*, May 27, 1875.

<sup>98</sup> *Guardian*, May 26, 1875, p670.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p671.

There was, as might have been expected, a letter published from High Church Malcolm MacColl supporting Pusey and Liddon, whilst a priest in Dublin lamented that “if the faithful Bishops and clergy that are left us would only declare plainly and openly that they will *not* use a revised Prayer-book, and that they *will* continue to use the old one as heretofore, it would do more to revive and rally scattered and disheartened Church people... than half a dozen new churches built with English money and supplied with English clergymen.”<sup>101</sup> Yet it was an English clergyman from Norfolk who asked of the Irish Church, “what has it done, so ridiculous or so contemptible, that two grave and respected men should write of it in terms of petulant impatience, speaking with bitter scorn of its ‘so-called’ synod, and branding its revised Prayer-book with the epithets ‘faith-destroying,’ ‘deformed,’ and ‘changeling?’”<sup>102</sup>. A correspondent in Manchester was sure that Pusey and Liddon could only encourage those who wished for radical change in the Prayer Book.<sup>103</sup>

In all this, there was some comfort for Liddon in learning that on May 13 a meeting had been held in Ireland, with Trench in the chair, to form an Athanasian Creed Defence Society. Less pleasing to him would have been the discovery that an invitation sent to all clergy, inviting them to protest at changes to the Creed, had not found universal agreement.<sup>104</sup>

On May 28 the *Church Times* carried a letter from militant Archdeacon Denison. Did the fact that the Church of England had got it wrong with regard to the American Church and its discarding of the Athanasian Creed mean that she was precluded from getting it right in respect of the Irish Church’s attempted mangling of that Creed? he thundered. Furthermore, “the term Schism may be applied to separation for a just cause. If mangling a creed be not a just cause, I do not know what is.”<sup>105</sup> The Editor’s response was sharp:

1. Dr Pusey and Dr Liddon are not the Church of England. If the Church of England choose synodically to break with the Irish Church, that is another thing. 2. The American Church has mangled the Apostles’ Creed as well as discarded the Athanasian Creed. 3. The English Church has mangled the Nicene Creed by omitting the word “Holy” before “Catholic and Apostolic Church.” 4. We do not dispute that Irish Puritans may force on

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid. p670.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. p671.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. p670.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. p656.

<sup>105</sup> *Church Times*, May 28, 1875, p268.

secession. All we say is that they have not done so yet, nor fallen so low as we did in 1552.<sup>106</sup>

Writing to Wood on May 28, Liddon gives no hint of having read the *Church Times*, but the *Guardian* correspondence has clearly rattled him:

The outburst in the *Guardian* shows that good has been done by our letters, - in that the chronic inattention of the English Church to the Puritan Revolution in Ireland is henceforth impossible. Of course the Irish cry out, on the wolf and lamb principle. Partly through cowardice, partly through wantonness, partly in ignorance, they have acted in a sinful and outrageous way, and, human nature being what it is, they do not like to be told so. Their anger is a necessary condition of their improvement; if, by God's grace, they do improve. I cannot also but feel that, as a school, we High Churchpeople are to blame for having kept so much at a distance from them. We ought to have helped them with our money and with our sympathy; and they would have felt that they were less at liberty to take their own line in these tremendous matters, of which they evidently suspect neither the heights nor the depths.

The *Guardian* itself is far less excusable than its Irish correspondents: it adds one more to that long list of occasions on which it has thrown over the school which established and which for many years has upheld it, at a critical moment.

We do not intend, either of us to write a line in the *Guardian*, which must say and do what it likes. But it *is* desirable that others should speak out, and speak strongly....

Dr Pusey is going to address a Public Letter to Sir Joseph Napier which will enter into the question of our proposals at some length.<sup>107</sup>

The *Guardian* (and the writers?) misunderstands us. They assume that (1) we mean a new communion and not a new building by the expression "new Church"; (2) that we wish this "new Church" to be set up at once, whether the Irish synod consummates its threatened apostasies or does not.

I am more and more satisfied that it is better to have interfered now, than to have allowed the Irish quietly to construct a very effective Major Premiss for the use of the Prayerbook Revisionists in England.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid. The reference is to the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI, which moved in a more Protestant direction from the Prayer Book of 1549. These comments are also a reminder of the perennial tendency of catholic-minded Anglicans (including Pusey and Liddon) to assume that they alone represent the Anglican Church. Archbishop Benson chided Wood for this in 1894. (See A. C. Benson: *The Life of Edward White Benson*, II (London, 1899), p611-2.

<sup>107</sup> Sir Joseph Napier (1804-1882), Lord Chancellor of Ireland. A firmly Protestant Evangelical, he opposed Irish disestablishment. He was a member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Liddon discussed the proposed Public Letter with Pusey and Bishop Forbes of Brechin (*Diaries*, May 28, 1875), but it appears never to have been written, probably due to an illness of Pusey's.

<sup>108</sup> *Halifax*, May 28, 1875.



For all the vigour of Liddon's language, this does not begin to face the criticisms levelled at Pusey and himself in the *Guardian*, especially the acute question of episcopal jurisdiction for the Dublin church. To claim that the paper and its readers misunderstood is evasion of the facts. His letter to Wood on May 18 makes clear that he is contemplating immediate action in the raising of funds for the church (or churches) in Dublin, and his printed letter to Lee states unequivocally that such a church should be removed from the jurisdiction of an Archbishop approving alterations to the Athanasian Creed. Liddon makes no answer to the charge of promoting schism. However, the writer of the *Guardian's* article against Pusey and Liddon mentions one factor which may go a little way toward explaining the latter's position. Considering the result of a divided Church in Ireland, the article says,

..an Anglo-Irish communion will be formed, gravitating possibly towards the German Old Catholics, with whom, and perhaps with the Eastern Church, they may hope for unlimited freedom of action in a direction hitherto forbidden to them by English law. This would be a consummation which many persons who like their own way would hail with satisfaction; and it is one which seems so naturally, and in the main so inevitably, to follow from the excommunication of the Irish Church, that it would be some imputation on the seriousness and forethought of the excommunicators to suppose that they have it not more or less before their minds.<sup>109</sup>

This is an almost direct reference to Liddon, whose attendance at the First Bonn Reunion Conference in 1874 was well known. The purpose of the conference had been to allow discussion between representatives of the Church in Russia, England and America with those of the Old Catholic Church, whose members had seceded from the Roman Catholic Church after refusing to accept the decree of Papal Infallibility. The President of the conference was the immensely learned theologian, J. J. I. von Dollinger, excommunicated by Rome for his opposition to Infallibility, and a supporter of the Old Catholics though never formally a member. His friendship with Liddon was common knowledge.<sup>110</sup> In his letters to Wood, Liddon makes no reference to a split in the Irish Church opening a possible avenue toward communion with the Old Catholics; but the idea was clearly in the mind of at least one writer, and it is difficult to believe that it could not have occurred to Liddon, given his sympathies toward the Eastern Church and the Old Catholics. Indeed, the very existence of the Old Catholics was proof that schism *had* taken place in the Church very recently, and Liddon certainly saw their separation

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<sup>109</sup> *Guardian*, May 26, 1875, p660.

<sup>110</sup> On Liddon and the Bonn Conferences (he attended the Second Conference in August, 1875), see Johnston, pp183-90. In 1872, disturbed by the Athanasian Creed debate in England, he admitted to thinking seriously of joining the Old Catholics should the Church of England repudiate the Creed. (Johnston, p168.)

from Rome as an example of the faithful removing themselves from the erring larger body. Nor was it clear at this point that the Old Catholics would always remain a minority movement. Dollinger's support gave them considerable credibility, and many British High Churchmen, including Gladstone, thought they represented true Catholicism in Europe.<sup>111</sup>

Beresford Hope kept his word and spoke at the Lambeth meeting of the Church of Ireland Sustentation Fund on May 28, 1875, urging the Irish Church to hold fast to the unrevised Prayer Book. Archbishop Tait in the chair moved quickly to prevent discussion of the Athanasian Creed.<sup>112</sup>

The *Guardian* of June 2 contained, Liddon observed, "a very angry article about our letters in which it takes the part of the Revisionists entirely."<sup>113</sup> It printed a letter from Lee, indignantly remarking that "to call those schismatics who are resolved to adhere to the unaltered Prayer-book, and those loyal Churchmen who abandon it, is simply to invert the meaning of words."<sup>114</sup> An English clergyman defended Pusey and Liddon, remarking that "the resolution to repudiate and (if necessary) to separate from fundamental error must not be mistaken for 'schism'."<sup>115</sup> The Manchester correspondent who claimed previously that Liddon and Pusey had unintentionally given encouragement to the revisionists supported the view that schism in Ireland must lead to schism in England.<sup>116</sup>

In the next issue of the *Guardian*, Beresford Hope continued his Lambeth work by accusing the paper of failing to see the gravity of the situation, thereby supporting those "whose object honestly avowed is to alter the Church of England either in a Puritan or a latitudinarian direction, and who are acute enough to realise the vantage-ground they have won in Ireland."<sup>117</sup> The *Guardian* replied with force that Pusey and Liddon were persons of considerable standing and influence, whose potentially divisive actions could have serious consequences for the whole

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<sup>111</sup> H. C. G. Matthew: *Gladstone*, p257n; p264-5. In Germany the Old Catholics benefited numerically for a time from those who joined them as a result of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*. Toward the end of his life, Liddon's view of the Old Catholics became less favourable due to changes in their position, including the abolition of clerical celibacy. In 1888 he helped to draft, and signed, a memorial to the bishops at the Lambeth Conference expressing concern lest closer links with the Old Catholics should pose a threat to wider possibilities for Church unity. See *Liddon Papers*. Pusey House, Box 1, no. 2, for the draft and text of the memorial.

<sup>112</sup> *Guardian*, June 2, 1875, p706.

<sup>113</sup> *Diaries*, June 2, 1875.

<sup>114</sup> *Guardian*, June 2, 1875, p701.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.* p702.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> *Guardian*, June 9, 1875, p733.

Anglican communion. This danger the writer hoped to be arrested. However, there was a further danger:

...the remarkable absence in this country of any sympathy with the step taken by Dr Pusey and Dr Liddon may encourage the opposite party in the Irish Church to a course which may provoke, and justly provoke, another and more formidable movement of the same kind. It is the standing perplexity of those who would keep the peace, that it is sometimes almost impossible to arrest extreme measures on one side, without encouraging them on the other.<sup>118</sup>

“The *Guardian* of this week is still attacking us”, wrote Liddon to Pusey. There was also “a second very angry article” against them in the *Record*:

It makes much as they all do of our supposed inconsistency in condoning the Americans while we “excommunicate” the Irish about the Athanasian Creed. The real answer seems to be that, although the Americans in disusing the Creed *altogether*, seem to go greater lengths than do the Irish, yet in reality the latter *assume* much more authority which does not belong to them in mutilating a Catholic document. They write about it as if it had just as much prestige (and no more) as the General Thanksgiving or the Dearly beloved brethren.<sup>119</sup>

Admittedly, Liddon was not alone in his pessimism about the situation. Only the previous day he had received a depressing letter from Archbishop Trench’s daughter, who feared the worst for the Irish Church.<sup>120</sup> Yet the poverty of his defence in the letter above shows so starkly the illogicality of his position that it is difficult to think he could not have begun to entertain private doubts about it. Meanwhile Pusey, brought to the point of collapse by the strain of the fight, had had to leave Oxford.<sup>121</sup> Even Archdeacon Lee was drawing in his horns. He wrote to Liddon:

It seems to be a matter of such supreme importance to have the countenance of the Archbishop of Dublin in the steps that are taken in this crisis – that every possible sacrifice of one’s own opinion ought, I think, [to] be made to act in conformity with his wishes. Even irrespectively of Church principles, the response has not been as general as one could desire, and thus it becomes necessary when the final blow has been struck, and the time when false doctrine is actually imposed has come – to be able to say that from the outset the course of resistance has been entered upon under the legitimate authority of the Archbishop.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid. p724.

<sup>119</sup> LP, I, 198, June 11, 1875.

<sup>120</sup> Maria Trench to Liddon, PL, III, Appendix 17.

<sup>121</sup> *Diaries*, June 10, 1875; PL, III, Appendix 16.

<sup>122</sup> *Liddon Papers*, Pusey House, Box 1, no. 3, June 9, 1875.

“The *Guardian*...continues its attack upon our letters to Archdeacon Lee, and inserts a new batch of Irish correspondents in the same strain”, Liddon noted.<sup>123</sup> However, by this time the outcome of the struggle was not in real doubt. “We hope,” said the *Guardian*, “we shall hear no more of the suggested ‘English Church in Ireland,’ and we will add that the notion, besides being to our mind utterly indefensible, was, moreover, grievously impolitic.”<sup>124</sup> To the revisionists the paper gave a warning: their policy would encourage people not to Protestantism but to Rome. Rome succeeded by the truth contained in her system; it would be folly to aim at uncatholicising the Prayer Book:

It does not look well when the Unitarians of Belfast offer congratulations to the Church on its dealings with the Athanasian formulary....We believe that most English Churchmen deplore the policy on which the Irish Church has entered. We trust that it is not yet too late for her to listen to the remonstrance of friends; and the more unreservedly this is done as regards tampering with the Prayer-book the better for us all, and especially and above all for the Irish Church and for Ireland.<sup>125</sup>

In the event, the Irish Church listened to such wise voices. In 1876 its General Synod voted almost unanimously to remove the rubric before the Athanasian Creed, but the new Preface to the Prayer Book pointed out that “in so doing, this Church has not withdrawn its witness as expressed in the Articles of religion, and here again renewed, to the truth of the Articles of the Christian Faith therein contained.”<sup>126</sup> The Revised Prayer Book was authorised for use in January, 1879. After the stormy debates, the revisions introduced seem almost pathetically meagre – one or two deletions, a few additions, and a Preface which, when compared with the Preface of the 1662 Prayer Book, is a poverty-stricken affair, decidedly Protestant in tone, written in dull English and chained to the immediate concerns of the post-disestablishment Irish Church. At the end of 1879 Liddon wrote to Trench expressing his mind on the finished work:

...since the introduction of the new Prayer-book, or even before it, all the appointments to the Irish Episcopate, and almost all the official language which has reached us from Ireland, have seemed to be less and less encouraging. However, your Grace is on the spot; and I would fain hope that a reaction against the irreverence and unbelief which dictated the suppression of the Creed and the mutilation of the Prayer-book may have set in, and may in time be strong enough to undo and to condemn that most unhappy piece of work.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> *Diaries*, June 19, 1875.

<sup>124</sup> *Guardian*, June 16, 1875, p756.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.* p756-7.

<sup>126</sup> Church of Ireland, *Book of Common Prayer* (Dublin, 1936).

<sup>127</sup> Trench, II, p212.

This is unfair, missing the point that it was a real achievement of the Irish Church, struggling after disestablishment with a vehemently Protestant movement within it which called for radical Prayer Book revision, to have kept its balance and avoided being broken by schism. However, there is no suggestion from Liddon of calling those opposed to change out of the body of the Church. That course has been quietly dropped, and in his surviving letters to Wood Liddon makes no further reference to the issue.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the Irish Church affair is not mentioned by Johnston in his biography of Liddon. Even more striking, Liddon refers to it in only the most cursory way in his life of Pusey, and with no mention of the Dublin church scheme. Leaving untold a part of Pusey's public career and controversy is unusual in Liddon's work, and therefore suggestive. He obviously felt, as did Johnston in his turn, that this was a story which reflected no credit on those involved, an opinion the student examining the story today is likely to share. Pusey and Liddon were correct in thinking that questions of doctrine were of the utmost seriousness, requiring a grasp of theology and history. Yet their reverence for the priestly office disposed them to undervalue the contribution made by the laity, some of whom *were* theologically informed. The comments of Archdeacon Sherlock on Liddon and Pusey and the Dublin church plan cut near to the bone:

In making [the proposal] they went directly in the face of their own principles, according to which such churches were unlawful intrusions into the dioceses of the Episcopal Church in Scotland, with which the Church of England was in full communion....Here were two simple presbyters of the Church of England, of their own mere motion, without sanction of archbishop or synod, or even consulting them, planning to foster with their own money a schism in a Church with which their own Church was still in communion. That such a schism in the struggling Church was not begun and established, with evils that none now can calculate, was due, not to their Christian charity, or care for Church order, but to the saner judgment, and more truly Catholic principles of the Archbishop of Dublin.<sup>128</sup>

Against this harsh charge it is difficult to defend either man, even when allowing for Trench's own part in the Dublin church plan. Possibly Liddon saw their attempted intervention as a tactical device to arouse opinion in England. More likely, as we have suggested, he thought that it was not schism for the faithful remnant to depart from the larger, apostate body, and his letters to Wood suggest that this might have been his defence for his actions. Nevertheless, Sherlock's comment that Pusey and Liddon "might have had faith, and not have hastily concluded that all

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<sup>128</sup> Sherlock: *Revision of the Irish Prayer Book*, p47-8.

that was threatened was already lost” hits home.<sup>129</sup> Also, they were inclined to view the Church of Ireland as remaining essentially part of the Church of England, and for them the needs of the Church of England always had first claim. Nor were they alone in this.<sup>130</sup>

That Liddon (and subsequently Johnston) did come to regret the part he and Pusey had played in the Irish controversy is suggested in a letter he wrote to Trench in November, 1879, where he pays an oblique tribute to the Irish Church as well as providing a glimpse of what he believed was awaiting the Church of England:

In one respect the Irish Church, if she knew her strength, is better off than the English; she is beyond the reach of State Courts and of Parliamentary legislation. She has nothing to hope, but also nothing to fear, from a general election. Whenever our day of disestablishment and disendowment arrives, the Irish Church will see reason to congratulate itself that it was the first and not the second member of the Anglican family to submit to the process. What a “General Synod of the Church of England” would do, I do not venture to anticipate; but I am only certain that such changes in the Prayer-book as these which have been made in Ireland would lead to disruption.<sup>131</sup>

The Irish Church, he hints, is weathering the changes better than he expected, though nothing so positive can be hoped for in England. His reference to State Courts and Parliamentary legislation reveal another conflict engaging his attention to which we may now turn.

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid. p45.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. R. C. Moberley, “Considerations upon Disestablishment and Disendowment” in *Problems and Principles* (London, 1904), p214. where he questions the notion of Welsh identity during agitation for Welsh disestablishment in 1894. Such a view could easily embrace a corresponding conception of Irish independence.

<sup>131</sup> Trench, II, p212.

## 5. LIDDON AND RITUALISM

So far we have been concerned with Liddon's involvement with internal controversies of the Church. We turn now to an area where a central question was the role of the state in influencing or deciding matters of Church practice - that of ritual in public worship. A great deal has been written on this aspect of the Victorian Church: here we must restrict ourselves to those areas where Liddon expressed opinion, or where he was active in the bitter disputes over ritual.<sup>1</sup> We will deal with matters peculiar to the Church of England, but we should bear in mind that the question of Church-State relations was a lively one in the Nineteenth Century Europe, notably in France and Germany. The possible background influence of continental Church struggles on attitudes in England should be neither overstressed nor dismissed. On the British scene we begin our discussion with a body highly influential in Victorian Church battles, and one mentioned by Liddon in his first surviving letter to Wood - the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

At the Reformation, the practice of making appeals to Rome, usually on matrimonial or testamentary cases, was abolished.<sup>2</sup> Henceforth, a final appeal in ecclesiastical matters might be made to the King in Chancery. This was not to be routine procedure, but a course of action when the courts of the Archbishops had proved unsatisfactory. There was therefore no need to set up a permanent court, but appropriate experts in ecclesiastical law ("Delegates") would be appointed by the Crown as necessary. This Court of Delegates was not deemed to have jurisdiction over doctrinal or disciplinary cases, of which only seven came before it between 1534 and 1832. In each case the Court upheld the decision of the Archbishops' courts. From the mid Eighteenth Century onward the legal tone of the Court of Delegates was decidedly secular. Looking back in 1881, Liddon commented,

It must be admitted that the old Court of Delegates was not the best possible expression of the principle of the preamble of 24 Henry VIII., that spiritual causes should be judged by the spirituality. But so long as that court existed, the Crown was always at liberty to

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<sup>1</sup> Biographies of the principal figures in ritualist battles give accounts of the background. See also O. Chadwick: *The Victorian Church*, vol. II (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. London, 1972), pp212-221, and especially J. Bentley: *Ritualism and Politics in Victorian England* (Oxford, 1978).

<sup>2</sup> See G. Crosse, "Courts" in S. L. Ollard and G. Crosse: *A Dictionary of English Church History* (London, 1912).

keep faith with the Church by acting on the rule in question. For the purpose of hearing ecclesiastical causes, the Court of Delegates *might* always be composed of ecclesiastics. True, it also might not. Still, when rejecting the usurped jurisdiction of Rome, the Church of England had trusted herself to the faith and piety of English Sovereigns; and whatever from time to time may have happened in practice, there was nothing to prevent a loyal recognition of the principle affirmed in the Reformation Settlement until the year 1832.<sup>3</sup>

In 1830 the Ecclesiastical Courts Commission recommended that an appeal to the King in Chancery should be replaced by an appeal to the King in Council, the grounds for the change being the cost and delay involved in appeals to the Court of Delegates, and the lack of uniformity in that court's judgments, for which it was required to give no reasons. In 1832 the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was formed to hear appeals to the King in Council, with the result that because the constitution of that court was fixed, comprising the Lord Chancellor and a collection of judges and ex-judges, only one of whom was required to be a Churchman, the Crown lost its right to appoint suitably qualified judges. It rapidly became clear that this secular court faced grave difficulties, since appeals on points of doctrine were not distinguished from those on other ecclesiastical issues.<sup>4</sup> Its inadequacy for dealing with doctrinal matters, inherent in its composition, was quickly spotted by the greatest ecclesiastical lawyer of the era, Sir Robert Phillimore.<sup>5</sup> The handing over of Church appeals to the Committee was in his view unsatisfactory, since there was no guarantee that any one of its members would have a knowledge of either theology or of the principles of canon law; it was to exchange a court of professionals for a court of amateurs.<sup>6</sup> Liddon supported such a view; and the fact that the Church Discipline Act of 1840 appointed all Archbishops and bishops who were Privy Councillors to be members of the Judicial Committee for hearing appeals under that act did not satisfy him:

...the real effect of the measure was to transfer effective government of the Church to lawyers, who might or might not be Churchmen, or even Christians, and to deprive the Crown of the power of insisting on the observance of the principle set forth in the

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<sup>3</sup> H. P. Liddon: *Present Church Troubles* (London, 1881), p.xxiv.

<sup>4</sup> Chadwick: *Victorian Church*, vol. I (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., London, 1971), p257.

<sup>5</sup> For a concise view of Phillimore (1810-85) see J. H. Baker, "Sir Robert Phillimore, QC, DCL, and the last practising Doctors of Law" in *The Ecclesiastical Law Journal*, vol. 4, no. 21, July, 1997, pp709 ff.

<sup>6</sup> P. Hinchliff: *John William Colenso* (London, 1964), p6.



preamble of 24 Henry VIII. Under the new arrangement, the attendant Bishops only decorated by their presence a tribunal which was essentially civil and lay; they lent to its decisions a semblance of ecclesiastical authority which it could not in fact possess, and which was only calculated to embarrass tender consciences.<sup>7</sup>

He made this point concerning the presence of the bishops on the Judicial Committee repeatedly, as we shall see.

In 1850 the insufficiency of the Judicial Committee as a court of final appeal in Church affairs was dramatically illustrated by the Gorham Case.<sup>8</sup> In 1847 the High Church Bishop Phillpotts of Exeter refused to institute the Revd G.C.Gorham to a living because he considered him unsound on the question of baptismal regeneration. Gorham appealed to the Court of Arches, which in 1849 upheld Phillpott's action. Gorham then appealed to the Judicial Committee, which in the following year declared in his favour.

This was a devastating blow to High Churchmen, a number of whom seceded to Rome, among them H.E.Manning, R.I.Wilberforce, and Phillpott's own chaplain, William Maskell. They perceived that what was at stake was not simply whether a bishop in the Church of England could insist upon a particular interpretation of doctrine as enshrined in that Church's formularies, but whether a secular tribunal might define the limits of the Church's teaching, and that on the principles of common law rather than canon law.<sup>9</sup> Uproar followed the judgment, and confidence in the Judicial Committee vanished among High Churchmen. This had serious consequences:

At this particular stage in the history of the Church of England it was particularly tragic that there was no ecclesiastical court which could command the respect and obedience of every churchman, for there were within the Church distinct schools of thought whose opinions differed so radically in so many important respects that sooner or later there was bound to be open conflict. When such conflict finally came to a head, it was felt that some public and official declaration must be made as to what the Church of England did or did not believe. Since Convocation had been muzzled in the eighteenth century,

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<sup>7</sup> Liddon: *Present Church Troubles*, p.xxv.

<sup>8</sup> See J. C. S. Nias: *Gorham and the Bishop of Exeter* (London, 1951); Chadwick, I, pp250ff; Hinchliff, p6.

<sup>9</sup> Hinchliff, p6.

because it had presumed to exercise this very function, there was no body other than the ecclesiastical courts to pronounce on the matter.<sup>10</sup>

In May, 1850, Bishop Blomfield of London even attempted to get a bill passed by the House of Lords to the effect that on doctrinal questions the Judicial Committee should receive, and be bound by, the views of its episcopal members. He failed.

Liddon's first letter to Wood in the Halifax papers, dated March 5, 1864, was written against the background of another notorious judgment of the Judicial Committee, that on two contributions to the book *Essays and Reviews*.<sup>11</sup> This collection of essays caused a scandal on its publication in 1860 because of what was considered the inadmissibly liberal tone of its clerical authors, particularly on the questions of scriptural inspiration and the eternal punishment of the wicked. Demand grew that two of the contributors, Rowland Williams and H.B.Wilson should be removed from their clerical office by reason of their essays being incompatible with the teaching expected from priests of the established Church. Archbishop Sumner of Canterbury was reluctant to encourage prosecution of the two men in the ecclesiastical courts, but public feeling made such a course inevitable. Liddon was touched personally by the situation since Rowland Williams worked in the Salisbury diocese, whose bishop, W. K. Hamilton, had appointed Liddon his chaplain in 1863. Hamilton, a deeply devout High Churchman, decided after much soul-searching that he had no option but to permit a prosecution of Williams for his views.<sup>12</sup> Liddon assured him that he would earn the gratitude of many whose minds were unsettled by liberalising trends in the Church of England. In 1864 he told him, "If this anxiety should take the form of insisting upon a new Court of Appeal for spiritual cases, you would have done for the English Church the greatest possible service."<sup>13</sup>

On June 25, 1862, Stephen Lushington, the dean of arches, gave his judgment on the men, revealing at once that he approached the points at issue not as a theologian but as a lawyer.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid p6-7.

<sup>11</sup> Chadwick, I, pp75ff.

<sup>12</sup> H. P. Liddon: *Walter Kerr Hamilton* (London, 1869), pp. 87ff.

<sup>13</sup> Ham. 6/95/25, February 6, 1864.

<sup>14</sup> S. M. Waddams: *Law, Politics and the Church of England, the career of Stephen Lushington 1782-1873*. (Cambridge, 1992), p315.

What was at stake, he maintained, was not niceties of doctrine, but the legal formularies of the established Church: his court could decide only upon "that which is by law established to be the doctrine of the Church of England, upon the true and legal construction of her articles and formularies."<sup>15</sup> All questions not clearly defined by the formularies were to be considered open ones. However, he decided that both Williams and Wilson had, in their essays, contradicted the Articles of Religion in the Book of Common Prayer, and suspended both from their benefices for a year.

To conservative minded Churchmen of all schools, Lushington's judgment was disturbing. Doctrinally, the points on which Wilson and Williams had been condemned were not small ones. Scriptural inspiration and the eternal punishment of the damned were theological questions which would seethe in the background of religious discussion for the remainder of the century. Liddon, among others, would enter the lists in defence of a traditional view of both doctrines. Yet Lushington, while pointing out where he thought the two men had overstepped the mark with regard to legal formularies, appeared also to sanction considerable freedom regarding what a clergyman might believe and teach. Concerning the requirement at ordination for belief in the scriptures, he maintained that the declaration of belief "must be considered with reference to the subject matter, and that is the whole Bible, the Old and New Testaments." The number of books in the scriptures, their antiquity, their being translations, their variety of subject matter, "parts being all important to the salvation of mankind, and parts being historical and of a less sacred character, certainly not without some element of allegory and figures - all these circumstances, I say, must be borne in mind when the extent of the obligation imposed by the words 'I do believe' has to be determined."<sup>16</sup> This was not what biblical literalists wished to hear, but it represented growing opinion in informed circles, and Rowland Williams rightly believed that he and Wilson had effectively been vindicated by Lushington, despite their suspension.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p318. Waddams is clear that Lushington was not quite so disinterested in making his judgment as he claimed, or indeed believed.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p332. Waddams says correctly that in view of these sentiments Lushington's condemnation of Williams' opinions on scripture was odd, to say the least.

<sup>17</sup> Chadwick, I, p81-2.

Lushington gave leave to appeal against his judgment, and this appeal was lodged with the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The general feeling was that the Committee, inclined by its membership toward toleration in matters of doctrine if not in questions of ritual, would not be more severe than Lushington, and this proved to be the case.<sup>18</sup> On February 8, 1864, a majority of the Committee (including A. C. Tait, then Bishop of London) cleared Williams and Wilson, though the Archbishops of Canterbury (Charles Longley) and York (William Thomson) did not concur. The result of this judgment was a rapid coalition of High and Low Churchmen deploring the decision and Tait's part in it. Liddon's letter to Wood on March 5 expresses, in tones too patronising to please modern taste, his pleasure that the two Church parties were united on this issue at least:

...the recent decision cuts into the truths which High and Low Churchmen hold in common; it would, I should think, be acceptable to no single body of Religious People in England except the Socinians [Unitarians] and the Rationalising section of the Church of England. I must say I thankfully hail the opportunity of acting in concord with Low Church men in defence of the common Faith. They will unlearn some of their prejudices and they will, I trust, learn by God's grace to enlarge their creed through being brought into contact with earnest Churchmen. And, in presence of the common enemy, the love of Our Lord ought to raise His worshippers above the barriers which separate them in a united struggle on behalf of His insulted Truth.<sup>19</sup>

In this, Liddon was at one with Pusey who was, as Liddon noted in his diary, "very much distressed at this decision."<sup>20</sup> Even before the judgment, Pusey had written several letters to Tait on the dire consequences should the two essayists be acquitted, and he had also written to the evangelical journal, *The Record*, to call for united action from Christians of differing shades of churchmanship in defence of belief in the doctrine of Eternal Punishment, and in the Bible as the Word of God.<sup>21</sup> In this aim he received many letters of support, notably one from his rigidly Evangelical cousin, Lord Shaftesbury.<sup>22</sup> As a consequence, he and a number of other churchmen, Tractarian and Evangelical, signed a declaration to the effect that they held the Church of England to believe in "the inspiration and divine authority of the Bible",

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p82.

<sup>19</sup> *Halifax*, March 5, 1864. This view is repeated in a letter to Dean Stanley on March 10, 1864. (Johnston. p75.)

<sup>20</sup> *Diaries*, February 14, 1864.

<sup>21</sup> *Pusey*, IV, p50; *Tait*, I, p314.

<sup>22</sup> *Pusey*, IV, p51-2.

and to teach the everlasting punishment of the "cursed" and eternal life of the "righteous."<sup>23</sup> Liddon, in his letter to Wood, wrote, "The '*declaration*' no doubt is necessary and will be made by (I trust) a large proportion of the clergy."<sup>24</sup> It was signed by 10,906 clergymen, but there was opposition to it in some quarters.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, the Evangelicals were placed in an awkward position because, as Liddon wrote to Hamilton, "they are acute enough to see that by bringing this Decision [of the Judicial Committee] into contempt they will really blow up the Gorham decision."<sup>26</sup>

In writing to Wood, Liddon states forcefully his own opinion of the Judicial Committee:

An effort to get rid of the Judicial Committee as a final Court of appeal in Ecclesiastical matters is well worth making. The present Court has the semblance without the reality of a Spiritual court. It was, as you know, originally designed for very different purposes, and when it was adapted to Church purposes, the Episcopal assessors were added by way of lessening the extraordinary absurdity of referring Religious Questions to a group of highly accomplished lawyers. The Bishops gave to the Church decisions of the Court respectability - but nothing more. The decisions are really the work of lawyers. It is true, as you observe, that the Court declines any such responsibility as that of formal determination of doctrine. But on the other hand, it *does* practically deal with doctrinal questions - pure and simple; and it imports into theology some traditions of the legal profession which are absolutely *fatal* to a fair consideration of theological formularies. This is of course a large subject, which we may (if you will allow it) revert to in conversation some day; at present I will only observe that the hopeless unfitness of the legal machinery for maintenance of Religious Truth is in no way neutralised by the presence of 3 Prelates, who are either weak enough to concur with anything, because Great Lawyers say it, or who like the two Primates have the courage to dissent, but whose dissent, alas! has no practical result whatever. [This charitable reference to Thomson of York is unique in Liddon.] If it were possible (1) to make the final Court of appeal to consist entirely of laymen - turning the Bishops out and thereby destroying the make-believe character of the present Court, and (2) to restrict the functions of the new Court to a revision of the Temporal results of the Spiritual Counsels (themselves final) pronounced in the Court of Canterbury, the Church would gain greatly by this arrangement. All questions of suspension *a sacris* being referred to the Archbishop as the final adjudicator, but the Crown revising any temporal consequences in its own court, such as loss of income etc....As it is, the Lord Chancellor does practically

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<sup>23</sup> Chadwick, I, p84.

<sup>24</sup> *Halifax*, March 5, 1864.

<sup>25</sup> *Pusey*, IV, pp56ff. F. D. Maurice challenged it in a correspondence with Pusey in the *Times*. Liddon (*Diaries*, March 6, 1864) records hearing some in the Christ Church Common Room who "vehemently denounced" the declaration. On March 12 he mentions (*Diaries*) "a great deal of talk with the Dr [Pusey] late at night about the Declaration" as the debate raged.

<sup>26</sup> *Ham.* 6/95/29, March 11, 1864.

determine for the great mass of English people who do not understand the technical aspects of these things, whether or no the Bible be a collection of foolish legends, and whether or no there be any such place as an Endless Hell. It would be no little gain, if this illusion could be dispelled.<sup>27</sup>

This passage is a shrewd assessment of the limitations of the Judicial Committee, and captures not only Liddon's disquiet, but that of many High Churchmen. He would return to these criticisms, and the question of scriptural inspiration, on which the judgment of the Committee touched, was one which would occupy him for the rest of his life, from his Bampton Lectures of 1866 to his last controversy over another collection of essays, *Lux Mundi* in 1889.

While visiting Keble in his Hursley parish, Liddon discovered that Keble and Pusey had attended a meeting at which those present had formed “a league for suppressing the Court of Final Appeal.” However, he noted, “Mr Keble thought that nothing would be saved by turning the Bishops out of the Final Court. Nothing but the voice of the Collective [?] Episcopate would be loyal to our Blessed Saviour.”<sup>28</sup> Pusey told Liddon that it would be “perfect insanity” to remove the bishops from the Committee, so that “the supreme Court of Appeal, recognised by the Church, should be simply civil...making the Queen, Summa Episcopa, Episcopa Episcoporum.”<sup>29</sup> Liddon, however, was not convinced by these views.<sup>30</sup>

He next refers to the Judicial Committee in the Halifax papers in 1868, but the question of the Final Court had not left his mind in the intervening years. He even wrote “part of a Litany for the Court of Appeal Reform association.”<sup>31</sup> His diary for February 14, 1865, records “a fierce argument” with the Bishop of London’s chaplain on the matter, an argument which he mentioned to Bishop Hamilton.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> *Halifax*, March 5, 1864.

<sup>28</sup> *Diaries*, September 30 and October 1, 1864.

<sup>29</sup> LP, I, 98, October 3, 1864.

<sup>30</sup> See LP, I, 7, October 6, 1864.

<sup>31</sup> *Diaries*, February 5, 1865.

<sup>32</sup> Ham. 6/95/50, February 17, 1865.

Writing to Wood at the end of 1868, Liddon returns to the attack on the Judicial Committee. In October that year he wrote to the High Church lawyer, Sir Roundell Palmer, who was evidently standing for election as a representative of Oxford in the Canterbury Convocation, to ascertain his opinions on the reform of the Court of Final Appeal in ecclesiastical cases, and also his commitment to opposing “any attempt at legislation respecting the Doctrine, Liturgy, or religious ceremonies of the Church of England within the walls of a Parliament containing a large body of Christians who are conscientiously opposed to the doctrines of the Church, as well as many persons who entirely reject all allegiance whatever to Christianity.”<sup>33</sup> The issues mentioned provide a foretaste of the struggles ahead. Palmer must have received a similar request from Pusey, for Liddon notes Pusey’s news that Palmer “declines, under present circumstances, to explain himself.”<sup>34</sup> In Liddon’s letter to Wood ritualism appears clearly, and so requires some explanation.

The Tractarian leaders were concerned to restore to the Church of England a sense of its Catholic heritage, recalling it to a life centred on the adoration of God, expressed in renewed devotion in worship and full appreciation of the power of the sacraments. However, for Keble, Newman and Pusey, the essential questions were doctrinal, historical and spiritual; they had no desire to initiate changes in the order of the Church's services, insisting only that these should be conducted with fitting reverence and dignity. It was the next generation of their followers who desired to see restored catholicity of teaching given visible expression in the conduct of public worship. Believing that Holy Communion should be the principle act of the Church's offering of praise and prayer to God, it was a logical step to wish to enhance that service with music, lights and colour - not as ends in themselves, but as aids to devotion in the worshipper.

It is important to stress this last point. What was at stake for the best of those priests who became known as ritualists was not quibbles over liturgical minutiae. (Some others, it must be admitted, did insist on such niceties in order to annoy Church authorities.) The conduct of services and the ordering of churches were symbolic and sacramental, raising the heart and

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<sup>33</sup> LP, I, 32, October, 1868. Actual day not given.

<sup>34</sup> *Diaries*, October 24, 1868.

mind to God, but they were also statements about belief, notably of belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the consecrated elements offered in the Eucharist. It was this latter point which made them immovable in defence of their position, and there was an additional, practical reason for their stance: they had in many cases taken to heart the important principle proclaimed by Pusey, that "if we would see [Christ] in His Sacraments, we must see Him also, wherever He has declared Himself to be, and especially in His poor,"<sup>35</sup> a sentiment which fired some of the greatest among them to minister in the slums of the burgeoning industrial cities of the Victorian era. Seeking to win for the English Church those largely untouched by it, they offered not only firm teaching, but colour, ceremony and excitement in worship to those enduring life in appalling conditions. To people being ground down by poverty, sickness and despair, they gave a sense of personal value and dignity, as well as the glimpse of a heavenly dimension beyond the squalor of everyday existence.<sup>36</sup>

The difficulty faced by those who favoured a more visible, liturgical expression of the Church's sacramental life was that in the eyes of many of their contemporaries this was a plain capitulation to Roman Catholicism. The power of anti-Roman feeling in Victorian Britain must never be underestimated. As we will see, it was to lead, in a number of parishes where an "advanced" ritual was adopted, to scandalous scenes in churches when organised mobs tried to disrupt services, and it provoked attacks in the courts upon ritualistic clergy - attacks often instigated by the Church Association, founded in 1865 to defend Protestant principles in the Church of England. It was the right of secular courts to try such cases and pronounce on questions of teaching and worship which led Liddon to take part in the controversies concerning ritualism.

Liddon's letter to Wood on December 28, 1868, was written in connection with proceedings taken against one of the most famous of ritualist clergy, Alexander Heriot Mackonochie

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<sup>35</sup> Cited in G. Rowell: *The Vision Glorious* (Oxford, 1983), p82.

<sup>36</sup> See Rowell, pp116ff. In stressing the mission of the ritualist clergy to the poor it should not be overlooked that their teaching and worship also had a strong appeal among the educated and wealthy. The latter provided the funds for building new churches such as St Alban's, Holborn. See N. Yates: *Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain 1830-1910* (Oxford, 1999).



(1825-87).<sup>37</sup> The two men had overlapped briefly when serving as curates in Wantage under W.J.Butler, and Liddon testified after Mackonochie's death that "Nobody could enjoy the privilege of being near him when he was a young man without being braced in numberless ways by his companionship and example."<sup>38</sup> Austere, dedicated, tireless and somewhat taciturn (he was of Scottish descent), Mackonochie was an uncompromising ritualist,<sup>39</sup> who described himself as "a man of extreme views as to ritual, and of deep convictions as to the essential connection of a sound faith and the ritual expression of it."<sup>40</sup> After work with Charles Lowder in Wapping, Mackonochie was invited to take charge of the church of St Alban being built in Holborn, (Liddon had been offered the post, but declined it) and was instituted there on January 3, 1863 by A.C.Tait. Within days the church's builder, J. G. Hubbard, was having doubts about Mackonochie's suitability for the post. Liddon and W. J. Butler, who had recommended him, were drawn into the difficulties.<sup>41</sup> The problems were smoothed over, though not without trouble. "Had a very angry letter from Mackonochie," wrote Liddon, "for my having advised him to accept Hubbard's terms. A second letter by an evening post, stating that H. had given in."<sup>42</sup>

Given Mackonochie's unashamed ritualistic inclinations, it could be only a question of time before the Church Association prosecuted him. In February, 1867, with the assistance of a solicitor named John Martin, it brought an action against Mackonochie which Bishop Tait referred to the Court of Arches. After delay, due in part to the retirement of Stephen Lushington as Dean of Arches, his successor, Sir Robert Phillimore, delivered his judgment on March 28, 1868.<sup>43</sup> The Church Association wished for rulings against Mackonochie on the points of whether the elevation of the chalice and paten above a certain height during Holy Communion contravened the Prayer Book Rubric; whether the use of incense was legal; whether water might be mixed with the wine during the celebration; whether the celebrant

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<sup>37</sup> See E. A. Towle: *Alexander Heriot Mackonochie* (London, 1890); H. Reynolds: *Martyr of Ritualism* (London, 1965).

<sup>38</sup> Towle, p39.

<sup>39</sup> He was not entirely happy with the term; see Reynolds, p109.

<sup>40</sup> B. Palmer: *Reverend Rebels* (London, 1993), p79.

<sup>41</sup> *Diaries*, January 21, 1863.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, February 6, 1863. See Reynolds, pp88ff.

might kneel during the prayer of Consecration; and whether lights might be lit on the Holy Table during the Celebration. Phillimore ruled against incense, the mixed chalice and the elevation of the chalice and paten, acknowledging that Mackonochie had already discontinued the last practice and also the use of incense, "though, it is true, he has done so under protest."<sup>44</sup> On the questions of kneeling and of lights on the altar he decided in favour of their legality. Also, perhaps unimpressed by the fact that "the promoter [of the action - Martin] is not a churchwarden, nor a resident parishioner," he made no order as to costs, leaving each side to pay its own costs.<sup>45</sup>

The Church Association, again using Martin as its tool, appealed to the Judicial Committee on the two points granted to Mackonochie and the disallowance of costs. The case was heard between December 17-20, before "the Lord Chancellor, Lord Cairns; two former Lord Chancellors; two ex-judges; and Archbishop Thomson of York",<sup>46</sup> and judgment was given against Mackonochie on all counts. This was not surprising. Thomson and Cairns were notoriously Protestant in outlook, and there was rumour that the Lord Chancellor had moved this case to the top of those awaiting his attention so that he could insist that "in the performance of the services, rites, and ceremonies ordered by the Prayer Book, the directions contained in it must be strictly observed; no omission and no addition can be permitted",<sup>47</sup> before Disraeli's government fell and removed him from office.

The decision caused disquiet to many Churchmen:

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<sup>43</sup> The judgment also included the case of *Flamank v. Simpson*, on the question of placing alms on a stool instead of on the Holy Table. See R. Phillimore, DCL: *The Principal Ecclesiastical Judgments delivered in The Court of Arches 1867 to 1875* (London, 1876), pp77ff.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* p117.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* p117-8. In publishing his judgments in 1876, Phillimore made clear that his chief purpose was "to ascertain and apply the law of England." (Phillimore, p.xiii) In ritual questions his concern was with their *legality*, and he was of the opinion that where ornaments and practices were the issue, "the true criterion [in deciding their legality in the Church of England] is conformity with primitive and catholic use, and not mere antagonism to Rome." (*Ibid.* p.xi)

<sup>46</sup> Palmer, p92.

<sup>47</sup> W. G. Brooke: *Six Judgments of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in Ecclesiastical Cases, 1850-1872* (London, 1874), p119-120. Cairns was quoting from the earlier Judicial Committee decision in the case of *Westerton v. Liddell*. Two Committee members, Lord Westbury and Sir William Erle, dissented from his judgment. (Lockhart, I, p187)

Its veto on altar lights appeared to contradict previous court decisions; its arguments about standing rather than kneeling before the altar unintentionally regularized the controversial eastward position; and its ruling on costs seemed an unnecessarily harsh burden which Mackonochie might well find crippling.<sup>48</sup>

On Christmas Eve, 1868, Liddon wrote to one of his sisters,

You see that the Judicial Committee has decided against Mackonochie on all counts, and he is to pay the expenses in both Courts....It really seems as if everything were going against the catholic party in the Church of England. Between these miserable appointments [of Bishop Tait to Canterbury and Bishop Jackson of Lincoln to London], and these miserable decisions of a Court whose very existence is, religiously speaking, a crying outrage, we are very hard pressed. I feel sure that all sorts of troubles are ahead; both the Puritans and the Rationalists are more bitter and menacing than ever, and, what is worse, our own people are very far from wise.<sup>49</sup>

The lack of wisdom from the High Church party referred to here (and which Liddon would bemoan later) is a want of discernment on the part of some ritualist clergy as to the effect of their liturgical actions.

On December 28, Liddon wrote to Wood, who had that year become President of the English Church Union, founded in 1859 for the defence of the High Church position.<sup>50</sup> Wood had asked him for his views on what steps should be taken against the judgment, but Liddon was clear that the judgment was not the chief point at issue:

My own inclination is for resistance, if there is a chance of resisting with such unanimity and success as to make the Judgment a dead letter. For it seems to me that a much more serious thing than any particular judgment which may emanate from that Court is the fact that such a Court should give judgment in such matters at all, and that the Church of Christ, by tacit or practical consent, should acknowledge its jurisdiction. The Court is at once a standing defiance to our Lord's arrangements for the government of His Church, and a very dishonourable violation, on the part of the State, of the Reformation settlement (cf. 24 Hen.VIII. preamble). As a natural consequence, the instinct of the Court is, under pretence of administering law, to support infidelity and to insult Church-truth on every possible opportunity.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Palmer, p92.

<sup>49</sup> Johnston, p115-6.

<sup>50</sup> He was President until 1919, and again from 1931-34.

<sup>51</sup> *Halifax*, December 28, 1868.

Liddon is for once resisting the temptation to squander effort on secondary matters, but he suspects that Pusey and Bright, the Church historian, will wish to fight the judgment itself, and that this will be Wood's opinion also:

But I see your mind runs strongly in the other direction; and I suspect that this is the case with Bright and the Dr. And of course it is no good to knock one's head against a stone wall. Although therefore I express my opinion as you desire me, I am quite willing to believe that it is a mistake, and shall acquiesce in whatever is decided. Only I wish for the sake of the poor Church of England that that miserable Court could be abolished. Mr Keble said more than once to me that "no one who cared for Our Saviour's honour and the future of our Church should rest while it is as it is."...I know full well the difficulties of proposing an alternative, and still more of getting any proposal attended to. But - unless I am quite wrong - Lord Cairns has sacrificed his Conservatism to his ultra-Protestantism: he has driven a rather large nail into the coffin of the English Establishment.<sup>52</sup>

It is regrettable that Liddon was prepared to accommodate his position to that wishing to make war against the judgment, for on this matter his perception was sound. Nor was this the only time when he would urge the English Church Union, through its President, not to act with undue haste.<sup>53</sup>

The sad tale of Mackonochie's persecution was to grind on until 1883, but there are only a few other specific references to him in the Liddon-Wood letters. However, the battle lines were clearly drawn in his case.<sup>54</sup> Liddon's concern, as we have seen, was not with ritualism in itself, but with the position of the Judicial Committee as the Court of Final Appeal in Church matters. The Committee was still to the front of his mind early the 1869, for on March 16 he wrote:

The cold here has been very great during the last two or three days, and the green things which had begun to grow look terribly pinched, like Christians after a "judgment" of the Privy Council. By-the-by, I have got into a certain sort of hot water for a sermon about that P.C. at Oxford the other day, which accordingly I must print.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> See *Halifax*, February 17/18, 1871, on the question of Princess Louise's marriage during Lent.

<sup>54</sup> Liddon and Mackonochie always respected each other. Liddon's diaries show that Mackonochie and other clerics invariably dined with him on Christmas Day.

<sup>55</sup> Johnston, p117.

The sermon referred to was the Assize Sermon which Liddon preached in Oxford on February 28 on the theme of "Christ and Human Law."<sup>56</sup> Beginning with the image of Christ before Pilate (John 19: 10,11), he begins a discussion of the source of authority in law, stating bluntly that "human law and the authority which wields it are from God." However,

...civil government, although its original sanctions are divine, is human in its immediate origin. Here civil government differs from that of the Christian Church. The Apostles were immediately appointed by our Lord Himself; whereas civil power is derived from Him only mediately, although really, through the force of events, through dynastic struggles, or through the will of the people.

If we look to the historical influences which have actually enacted human codes, and which have governed their administration, it is at first difficult to understand the sanctity which is thus attributed to the law and its ministers. And if, further, we examine the contents of human codes, and observe how far short they fall of enforcing, even within the limits that must bound all attempts at such enforcement, anything like an absolute morality, this difficulty is not diminished.<sup>57</sup>

Civil law is at once put on a lower level than Church law, to be followed (after a reference to Judge Jeffreys has made all law-abiding flesh creep) by the question "How can it be said of courts which habitually administer fear, or prejudice, or contempt, or moral indifference under the forms and in the disguise of law, that a sanction still rests upon them, and should be recognised in them, which has been 'given from above'?"<sup>58</sup>

It is obvious that the ground is being prepared for an attack on interference from the civil courts in religious affairs, but Liddon is careful not to minimize the social role of law:

In point of fact, and historically speaking, law is created by and meets a great social want. It satisfies the demand for protection against the passions and desires which are the motive forces in the lives of those multitudes of men who are unchastened, undisciplined by religious influences....

Now society cannot protect itself effectually against these foes...unless it is prepared to recognise and to put in force at least three great moral laws of God whereon it is itself based....Respect for human life, respect for the marriage tie, respect for property.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> H. P. Liddon: *University Sermons*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Series (London, 1891).

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. p238-9.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. p240.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p240, 241.

Now the way is clear for a discourse on "the grave evil of any discord between the interests of religion and the enactments or action of civil law", which is nothing less than "discord between one department of God's moral kingdom and another."<sup>60</sup> But law must recognize its proper place in that kingdom:

Law deals with only so much morality as it is necessary to enforce in order to secure the safety of society; unlike morality, it penetrates into the sphere of motive only incidentally; it measures and judges of the outward and the tangible; its certificate of civil excellence is no certificate whatever of religious excellence; it makes no pretensions to wield any penetrating empire over conduct and conscience, such as is claimed by the precepts of the Gospel, by the law of the Church of Christ.<sup>61</sup>

With the Judges of Assize reminded that "if civil law does not attempt to enforce all the obligations of morality upon a Christian man, it may, at least, avoid enactments which are in conflict with the Christian conscience", Liddon provides examples of such enactments. The Divorce Act of 1857, by which a clergyman was required to marry in church the innocent party of a divorce and to make his church available for the marriage of a guilty party, is the first target. Then comes the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which "assisted by two or three of the bishops, not selected for personal fitness as judges, but in virtue of their sees," is allowed to make "the final decision of questions touching the doctrine and discipline of the Church." Liddon is quoting a judge - Sir John Coleridge - and he continues from the same source:

Even if the Committee were necessarily composed of Churchmen, there would be the question whether such matters are properly to be adjudicated on by laymen; but it is well known that among its members may be those who are, conscientiously or otherwise, not only alien from the Church, but opposed to it.<sup>62</sup>

If this were not enough, Liddon reminds his audience that the chief author of the act which gave power to the Judicial Committee, Lord Brougham, confessed to feeling that the

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p242, 243.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. p243.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. p249.

Committee "had been framed without the expectation of [ecclesiastical] questions...being brought before it."<sup>63</sup>

"Is it too much to hope," asks Liddon, putting the judges on the spot, "that some effort will be made to remedy so serious and so threatening an evil? Is it really impossible to harmonize the historical prerogatives of the Crown, and the just susceptibilities of the guardians of the law, with the immemorial rules, with the governing principles of the Church of Jesus Christ?"<sup>64</sup>

Let the civil authorities be clear:

The Church of God is freer to acknowledge, to uphold, to insist upon the Divine sanctions of the civil law, without suspicion of her motives in doing so, if Caesar does not touch the things of God; she is better able to proclaim the mission which civil government has received from heaven, if Christian doctrine is not brought, I will not say, before Pilate, but before judges, upon whom high character and position will not of themselves confer the Apostolical power of "sitting on thrones to judge the Twelve Tribes of Israel."<sup>65</sup>

Small wonder that he found himself in hot water over such vehement criticism of the Judicial Committee. Two years later he would find himself involved in even more personal and public confrontation with its decisions.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p250.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> ibid. p251.

## 6. The Purchas Judgment

Once again it was the Church Association which fomented one of the most contentious ritualist struggles of the Nineteenth Century when it prosecuted the Revd John Purchas (1823-72), vicar of St James', Brighton, charging him with thirty-five illegal ritual practices. Of these, six were of particular importance - the eastward position, the mixed chalice, unleavened bread, altar lights, incense and eucharistic vestments. The Dean of Arches judged in Purchas' favour on these points, but the Judicial Committee, on appeal, decreed them illegal on February 23, 1871.<sup>1</sup> While opinion had previously been divided on these points, the judgment now proclaimed all who embraced such practices to be law breakers. Liddon wrote to Gladstone on February 25:

...the actual decision of the Final Court goes the whole length of proscribing any adequate expression of Sacramental belief with ritual usages of the Church of England. By rendering the position of the celebrant in front of the altar-table, during consecration, illegal, it strikes a blow at the great mass of the moderate High-Church party, and on a point, as I need not point out to you, about which old fashioned and well educated High Churchmen have always been peculiarly sensitive. It would have been condemned by Mr Keble, had he been still among us.

It is much to be feared that the effect of this Judgment will be to alienate a large number of minds, which the Vatican Council had again rallied to the Church of England....

Unless I am misinformed, the Judgment does not become law until it has received the sanction of Her Majesty. I am writing to ask you whether it would be possible at the last moment to arrest a certain and fruitful cause of extreme disaster.<sup>2</sup>

Replying the following day, Gladstone indicated that he would not try to alter the decision of the Judicial Committee, though "I cannot deny that in its practical effect the recent judgment may advance us another step in a cause too likely to end not only in disestablishment but in schism." Nor could he doubt that the judgment "has tended to compromise the high reputation of our judges, and that the composition of the Court is by no means adequate to the nature of the Reformation settlement as between Church and State." He hoped that "much

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<sup>1</sup> Lockhart, I, p141.

<sup>2</sup> Gladstone Papers, British Library, Add. Mss. 44237.



time (if needful) will be taken, and much self command exercised, in arriving at an estimate of this judgment," and stated bluntly that:

I must own my inability to see how any one of perfectly cool and balanced mind can see in it an inversion[?] of the integrity of Christian doctrine: or can regard limitation to the surplice in celebrating the Eucharist, or compulsion to stand at the North end of the Holy Table in the act of consecration, as capable of being put higher than a hardship, to be borne, in this world, like many other hardships. In this I think you would agree: and if you do your holding the opinion is of much more importance than mine.<sup>3</sup>

Liddon assured him that he would try to allay exasperation aroused by the judgment, but he foresaw clearly its likely results among those who did not possess Gladstone's olympian reasonableness:

It is, I fear, morally impossible for not a few of the clergy to obey such a Judgment as this, regard being had to the temper of their flocks; and they would rather risk the deprivation which the continued activities of the Church Association may very probably entail, than face the certain consequences of revolutionising their Services in obedience to a jurisdiction which they cannot defend. A partial obedience would irritate one party without satisfying the other.<sup>4</sup>

Response in the press was quick. The *Guardian* had little time for Purchas' ritual excesses, but concerning the condemnation of the eastward position it could only lament

...the absence of that theological mind, and that reverence for the great principles and indefeasible truths of the Catholic Church of Christ, which are looked for in a Court whose decisions are to determine the course of English Church life. The goodness of the Bishop of London, the ability of the Archbishop of York, and the integrity of the Lord Chancellor, will not float the Court, burdened as it is with the dead weight of an ill-omened origin and an unhappy history. It is the composition of the Court itself, radically incompetent to sit in judgment on these cases, which is an offense at this moment to the Churchmen of this country far more grievous than any particular judgment it may deliver in this or that dispute. As year by year goes on, the most Conservative of Churchmen will give up the defence of an institution so indefensible as the Judicial Committee.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Gladstone expressed his views on the doctrinal interpretation of rubrics in an article with special reference to the Purchas Judgment, "Is the Church of England worth preserving?", *Contemporary Review*, June, 1875. See the *Guardian*, June 30, 1875, p814.

<sup>4</sup> Johnston, p145.

<sup>5</sup> *Guardian*, March 1, 1871, p241.

The same number of the *Guardian* contained a letter from Liddon invoking, as in his first letter to Gladstone, the solemn shade of Keble:

The late Mr Keble said to me, not many months before his death, "Depend upon it, we shall never have God's blessing on our work in the Church of England while we continue quietly to acquiesce in the present constitution of the Court of Final Appeal." Mr Keble had been dwelling on the contradiction which he held to exist between our Lord's own provisions for the maintenance of His truth and authority in His kingdom, and the purely human device for dealing with these solemn interests which we have in the Final Appeal Court. He had also insisted on the further contradiction which is observable between the Court as recently constituted, and the original terms of the Reformation settlement.

Surely his words are being verified. The judgment which has been recently delivered in the case of Mr Purchas would have condemned Mr Keble's own practice had he been still among us. It does condemn, not merely those clergymen who are known as "extreme ritualists", but the High Church school as a whole. It condemns a practice - that of consecrating in front of the altar-table - cherished by the old-fashioned and learned Churchmen of generations which preceded the Oxford Movement. We shall, of course, be told that it simply declares the law with rigid impartiality. But to receive this statement with implicit faith, it would be necessary to shut one's eyes to the actual substance of the judgments which the Court delivers.<sup>6</sup>

Liddon sums up his argument in a paragraph of some importance for the insight it gives into his own position:

The more thoughtful and earnest members of the party which urges on these prosecutions through the Church Association must, surely, at times doubt whether they are really doing God's work. Infidelity menaces us with intellectual forces greater than at any previous period in the history of the Christian Church, and here we Christians are waging a war of mutual extermination about questions of ceremonial. Far less important than this consideration is the bearing of these struggles on the security of the Establishment. But if the High Church party is desired to take its choice between submission to a tribunal which proscribes its historical traditions, and a separation from the English Episcopate which it shrinks from as from schism (and therefore as sin in the sight of God), the result is not difficult to foresee. Churchmen will, to a very great extent indeed, find relief from the dilemma in a third course - viz., co-operation with the political forces which, year by year, more and more steadily are working towards disestablishment. This is not a menace; it is the statement of a simple fact.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p242.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

Other correspondents in the *Guardian* were also of the view that a doctrinal principle was at stake in the Purchas judgment. Nor did it escape comment that in declaring vestments illegal the Judicial Committee had contradicted its own previous judgment, while Liddon pointed out in a letter of March 8 inconsistencies between the Committee's ruling on the celebrant's position at the altar in the cases of Purchas and Mackonochie.<sup>8</sup> There were some among the *Guardian's* readers who approved of the judgment, but more who were uneasy about it, and the disquiet went beyond party boundaries. Even Liddon's usual sparring-partner, Dean Stanley, while not "attaching the least importance to things so insignificant in themselves, or significant only so far as they disturb the peace of the Church and distract its attention from weightier matters," was unhappy with the manner of the judgment, though he wished to retain the Judicial Committee.<sup>9</sup> The *Guardian* was aware that the judgment hit out at "not a small clique of extravagant innovators, but the main body of quiet, sober-minded High Churchmen." Ritualism might be difficult to contain, it added, but it could not be dismissed as mere eccentricity or self-will; "too much real, hard, religious work goes with it, for any just man to consent to sacrifice it to enemies who hate it quite as much for its good as for its evil. And its mischief will not be mended by treating it with unfairness, and pushing the letter of the law against it to extremities, at the dictation of those who are great offenders against it themselves."<sup>10</sup>

Liddon's criticisms of the Committee made it inevitable that he would be challenged to suggest a more satisfactory alternative. Responding to a not unfriendly invitation from J.C.Ryle (later the first Bishop of Liverpool), Liddon set down his principal objections to the existing court, and then stated what would, he believed, prove a more satisfactory arrangement. They are recommendations to which he would adhere later. A final court consisting of the entire English Episcopate with legal advisors would be best, he wrote. Failing this, a purely secular court with the bishops excluded would be an improvement on the existing Committee. Theological experts might be consulted on specific points. Also, "each Judge might give his decision, together with the reasons for his decision, separately."

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<sup>8</sup> *Guardian*, March 8, 1871, p288.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p287.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p272.

Such a court "would practically deal only with the property and secular rights of the clergy, and there would be no danger of its giving itself any of the airs of the Vatican." Above all, "the practical exercise of the Church's ecclesiastical authority would be confined to the Courts of Canterbury and York, and provision would have to be made for cases in which the civil results of the decisions of those courts were not upheld by the courts of law."<sup>11</sup>

Whatever the status of the Judicial Committee as the Court of Final Appeal, the practical effects of the Purchas judgment had to be met, and here Liddon's prophecy in his second letter to Gladstone proved accurate. Not only Purchas, but other clergy also defied the judgment, refusing to recognise the Court's jurisdiction. The Church Association, no doubt anticipating this, was determined to press home its advantage - "When there is a clear infraction of this authoritative Decision, let the Bishop have no peace until he interposes."<sup>12</sup> Certainly not all bishops were displeased at the judgment. Magee of Peterborough cynically hoped for "the schism of the ultra-Ritualists", though fearing "a dogged resistance, one by one to be met by a series of law suits, which will wear out English patience at last, and so promote the disestablishment, which is coming fast enough without it."<sup>13</sup> Archbishop Tait, naturally inclined to sympathy with the judgment, was decidedly over-sanguine when he wrote, "it will be a great mistake if the High Church party generally excite themselves respecting the position at the Communion table...in minor matters we do not all observe all the Rubrics, and till there is a formal complaint, no harm is done."<sup>14</sup> He was much put-out when a protest against the judgment was addressed to the Church of England's bishops by more than four thousand clergy.

Among the Wood/Liddon papers is part of a letter addressed to Wood by Frederick Temple, Bishop of Exeter, which gives a fascinating insight into a Broad Churchman's view of the situation - a letter which Wood forwarded to Liddon. Temple thought the judgment "both ill written and ill argued", but paradoxically believed it to be sound. He was clear in his own mind that the position of the celebrant at Communion should be at the north end of the altar:

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<sup>11</sup> *Guardian*, March 22, 1871, p349.

<sup>12</sup> Johnston, p145.

<sup>13</sup> J. C. Macdonnell: *Life of Archbishop Magee*, I (London, 1896), p266.

<sup>14</sup> *Tait*, II, p95.

But at the same time I feel bound to add that if I had to decide the Purchas case I should have said, "This is in our opinion the true intent of this Rubric; but the Rubric is so obscurely worded that we cannot form a penal decision on it, and therefore on this ground only we are unable to condemn Mr Purchas in this particular."<sup>15</sup>

Temple was the last man to deprive the clergy of legitimate freedom; his view of the Ritualists is therefore of importance, and he was certainly not alone in it:

...it must never be forgotten that the Clergy exist for the Laity, not the Laity for the Clergy. If the worship is such that the Laity are repelled, or frightened, or misled, the whole aim is lost. And I really do think that the Ritualist Clergy undervalue this and seem to think their ritual is good per se and that, if it does harm, that is no argument against it. I am sure that in some cases true Christians are so alarmed that they abstain from the Holy Communion, and I cannot but think that this is a very serious matter. I do not think that it is a valid defence to say that they ought to come and do what their clergyman tells them; certainly it is not a valid defence in the mouths of the Ritualists, who certainly, as far as my experience goes, push the right of private judgment as far as ever man did yet.<sup>16</sup>

But despite his reservations, Temple, like certain other bishops (including Tait), recognised the admirable qualities of the Ritualists:

As a matter of fact the zeal, the earnestness, the devotional feeling, the religious fervour of the Ritualists are beyond all praise. To lose them out of the Church would be a very grievous loss.

But they sell their services very dear. Their vestments and their posturing very often do much harm. And they themselves are not aware how much.<sup>17</sup>

In one respect, however, Temple made a serious misjudgment:

Their vestments give an air of silliness to much of their work. They talk of symbolism, but the age of symbolism is gone and the whole of it an anachronism. The educated (who could appreciate the symbolism) are most struck with the unimportance of such a

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<sup>15</sup> *Halifax*. Undated, but probably April, 1871.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

matter; the uneducated cannot understand the symbolism at all without an amount of explanation which is now impossible.<sup>18</sup>

Such incomprehension of the nature of symbolism is remarkable in an age which saw the work of artists like D.G.Rossetti, Holman Hunt, Millais and Pugin, and the original and distinguished work in stained glass by C. E. Kempe. Temple was not wholly representative of the episcopate in his lack of understanding; his predecessor as Archbishop of Canturbury, Edward White Benson, was a man of very different stamp, quickly impressed by symbolism, especially in church architecture. Temple's failure to grasp what the services of the Ritualists could offer to those in the poorest city parishes is a reminder of how distanced those in authority could be from awareness of what made for attractive worship in that area of mission.

Temple wished to be fair to the Ritualists, "for though I cannot pretend to hold their opinions I am compelled to look on them, taken broadly, as containing some of the very hopes of the Church. I would not lose their strong religious earnestness if I could possibly help it."<sup>19</sup> But he knew that, like other bishops, he was in a delicate position:

If the Purchas judgment is confirmed I may be called on to enforce it.

I cannot pledge myself not to do so. I think this would be inconsistent with duty.

But I certainly should be most reluctant. I should use every means in my power to conciliate rather than appeal to legal compulsion. I should do everything that I honestly could to procure for every Clergyman full liberty in all these matters. I should try to persuade his people not to hamper a good man by legal fetters.<sup>20</sup>

By the time Temple wrote this letter, Liddon was already embroiled in an act of defiance against the Purchas judgment. Most of the six principal points of contention in it did not affect his work in St Paul's Cathedral, where he had become a Canon. Vestments, for example, were not worn there, and he considered their use a needlessly provocative

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. See P. Hinchliff: *Frederick Temple* (Oxford, 1998), p148 for Temple's approach to ritual questions, which this letter illustrates well.

practice.<sup>21</sup> As before, it was the right of the Judicial Committee to pronounce on matters of ritual and doctrine which was his sticking-point. Writing to Lord Salisbury, he noted that

Already the Purchas judgment has strained the patience of the High Church clergy to a very serious degree indeed; they are quiet, because other people than those mainly concerned write letters to the newspapers and do what they can:- but the feeling is one of "tranquil exasperation", created by the impression that justice is impossible at the hands of the *present* Court of Final Appeal.<sup>22</sup>

A few days later he again attacked the Committee, once more denouncing the presence of bishops on it:

...its pseudo-ecclesiastical character is a great misfortune. The Bishops are thrown overboard with scant ceremony, when they disagree with the Lay Lords, as in the *Essays and Reviews* case. But their presence gives the Court in the eyes of the people at large, a sort of ecclesiastical character: and of course, writers like the Dean of Westminster constantly allude to it as an Ecclesiastical court of the *highest* authority.<sup>23</sup>

There have been, he notes, voices raised in defence of the "statesmanlike" judgments given by the Committee; to which he tartly comments, "How there could be any room for 'statesmanship' in a judgment dealing with hard facts, and construing with scholarlike integrity certain given documents, I never could make out."<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, there is little chance of improvement in the situation while the Lord Chancellor has the power to suspend a clergyman from duty without consulting his bishop, as was the case with Mackonochie. "The Lord Chancellor might just as well have held a general ordination in St Paul's."<sup>25</sup>

The point on which Liddon decided to base his protest was the eastward position of the celebrant at the altar during Holy Communion. In this he was joined by his fellow St Paul's canon, the pugnacious Robert Gregory, who would end his long life as the revered Dean of

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<sup>21</sup> Writing to Lord Salisbury, Liddon said, "I should be *very sorry* to introduce vestments at St Paul's: and do not sympathize with the eager feelings of my brethren on the subject." (Salisbury Papers, June 9, 1874.) He would wear vestments when officiating in a church where they were already in use. See V. S. S. Coles: *St Barnabas*, Oxford (London, 1919), p58.

<sup>22</sup> Salisbury Papers, March 10, 1871.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. March 14, 1871.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

that cathedral. On March 2, 1871, they wrote to John Jackson, the Bishop of London, virtually inviting prosecution under the terms of the Purchas judgment:

...We, the undersigned, being Canons of your Cathedral Church of St Paul in London, beg to state very respectfully to your Lordship that we have heretofore been accustomed to stand in front of the Holy Table during the Service for the administration of the Lord's Supper, and after the Nicene Creed. We have carefully considered the recent Judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in its relation to our obligations, and to the general law of the Church; and we are unable to recognise in that Judgment any sufficient reason for departure from our existing practice.<sup>26</sup>

Jackson's reply the following day is instructive, arguing for obedience to the Judicial Committee's judgment on the basis of civil law, thereby confirming the very criticism of its position which Liddon and others were making:

...I am not about to defend the Judgment; nor the constitution of the Final Court of Appeal. Let it be admitted, if you please, for the present, that the former is a mistake, and the latter unwisely framed. But I would ask you seriously to consider what judgment would be passed on any two persons of character and position in Church and State who should deliberately declare their intention of disobeying a decision of the Queen's Bench, or the Court of Chancery, or of the Committee of the Council itself in an appeal from a Civil Court, on the ground that *they* could not in *their own* judgment reconcile it with their obligations to the common law of the land. Would it not be said that they were violating the first principles of civil society and good government, and by their example encouraging anarchy?<sup>27</sup>

Gregory wrote back at once, and put the real point of dispute in a sentence - "if it be that the position of the Celebrant is a matter of itself indifferent, it is not a matter indifferent whose order we obey in adopting or discarding it."<sup>28</sup> Bishop Jackson invited both men to see him, which encounter Liddon described in a letter to William Bright:

He was very patient when I told him that the Judgment was unjust somewhat emphatically. In fine we said that, for various reasons which we stated, we *could* not submit; that we hoped he would take proceedings against us, before doing so against any of the parochial clergy, who might be less able to defend themselves...The Bishop "had

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<sup>26</sup> Johnston, p145-6.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p146.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p148.



thought that it would be his duty to deal with us first;" it "would give him the greatest pain."<sup>29</sup>

Gregory, remembering this meeting in later life, confirmed that he and Liddon deliberately invited prosecution, and stated that the inspiration for their so doing came from Lord Salisbury.<sup>30</sup>

By this time a war of pamphlets had begun. It is striking that many of them argue about the historical foundations for interpreting the rubrics of the Prayer Book, whilst ignoring the question of the status of the Judicial Committee as the Court of Final Appeal, as well as assuming the definitive nature of its statement on the position of the celebrant at the altar.<sup>31</sup> Liddon made a powerful contribution to the debate with an open letter to Sir John Coleridge, a judge who had publicly declared that he thought Purchas unfairly treated.<sup>32</sup> Coleridge was of the opinion that the eastward position could be conclusively proved neither right nor wrong, which led Liddon to observe that the Purchas judgment was "an attempt to close a question which, if the Rubric is to rule, ought to be left open."<sup>33</sup> He also pointed out again that the Committee had contradicted its own decision in the Mackonochie case, for if Mackonochie was judged wrong in kneeling during the prayer of consecration, then Purchas obeyed the law by standing before the table.<sup>34</sup>

In this open letter, Liddon is clear that the dress or posture of clergymen are essentially secondary matters, though he believes that ancient and modern Christendom support the

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p149.

<sup>30</sup> R. Gregory: *Autobiography*, ed. W. H. Hutton (London, 1912), p109-110.

<sup>31</sup> As late as 1874 a pamphlet on *Notes concerning the position of the minister during the celebration of the Holy Communion, drawn up at the suggestion of a Clerical Meeting, held October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1874* (Northampton, 1874) could refer to the issue "having been cleared up and definitively interpreted" by the Judicial Committee.

<sup>32</sup> H. P. Liddon: *The Purchas Judgment* (London, 1871). Coleridge (1790-1876) was a friend of Wordsworth, Thomas Arnold, Pusey and Newman. A Tractarian, he had published a *Life of Keble* (Oxford, 1869). Pusey offered to write a letter to be used as an Appendix to Liddon's open letter. (PL, II, March 28, 1871.)

<sup>33</sup> Liddon: *The Purchas Judgment*, p7.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p10. This point was made by Coker Adams, Rector of Stockton, Warwickshire, and Fellow of New College, Oxford, in *Principles of the Purchas Case* (London, 1871), p2. He also remarked that of the five Privy Councillors who had judged Purchas, "one, the only ecclesiastical lawyer, is opposed to the Council; while of the others, two are not lawyers at all. They are Bishops, who, having been placed on the Judicial Committee to assist the lawyers on questions of doctrine, remain there to judge the clergy on questions of law." (Ibid. p1.)

eastward position as "the most convenient, as well as the most full of reverent meaning."<sup>35</sup> But the authority claimed for the Judicial Committee is his target, drawing from him irony worthy of Newman:

If the Judicial Committee had distinctly claimed to be inspired or infallible, it would be more than indecorous in any, who admitted such a claim, to criticise its judgments. But it makes no such claim for itself, although some writers, who generally reject other inspirations and infallibilities, seem disposed to make one for it. If the Committee does not merely announce its decisions, but condescends to argue in their favour, we must presume that it invites honest criticism. We have, indeed, lately been told by the more passionate advocates of the recent judgment, that such criticism is inconsistent with the duties of a good citizen; but the substance of your letter proves that you, at least, do not assent to a doctrine which would be more consistent in an Ultramontane Bishop, enforcing "interior assent" to the decisions of the Vatican. And criticism must pronounce that the materials before the Court must have been subjected to a somewhat violent process in order to make them yield the result which popular Puritanism demands. It is inconceivable, that if any but a theological interest had been at stake, any English Court could have pronounced a penal condemnation on Mr Purchas for "standing before the Holy Table" during the Prayer of Consecration.<sup>36</sup>

Liddon quickly (if, as we shall see, somewhat disingenuously) denies imputing dishonesty to Committee members, but of the body itself he is in no doubt that "it exercises something like a legislative as well as a judicial control over the questions before it."<sup>37</sup> He argues forcefully that the civil power of the Committee will have dire results in Church affairs. A bishop may, for the good of the Church, wish not to enforce an order given by the Committee; but "behind the Bishop there rises the form of the Judicial Committee", and the bishop is "reduced to the position of a legal officer; and his moral dignity is overshadowed by the Civil Court, whose behest he obeys." (Had he read Temple's letter when writing this?) There is no doubt that the Court has "done so much to impair the already enfeebled moral authority of our Fathers in Christ", or that the bishops will be pressed to enforce its judgments, including that on Purchas.<sup>38</sup> After a neat swipe at the Church Association for encouraging people to attend

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<sup>35</sup> Liddon: *The Purchas Judgment*, p18.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p14-15.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p19.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p23

Holy Communion solely in order to spot ritual illegalities rather than from motives of devotion, Liddon drives home his conclusion:

It is indeed a serious source of weakness to our Church at this moment, that we have a Supreme Court which fails to touch the conscience of a large body of the clergy...The constitution of the Court is, of itself, fatal to its moral empire: its real power is commensurate with the penalties it can inflict.<sup>39</sup>

What is more, the Court is a threat to the security of the Establishment. "Decision after decision has given a shock to the old conviction that we cannot pay too dearly for the many blessings of a Church Establishment."<sup>40</sup> Liddon ends with a plea for a spirit of mutual toleration in the Church: High Churchmen do not wish to force Low Churchmen into surplices. Evangelicals, in their turn, should aim to discourage enforcement of an oppressive judgment by the Judicial Committee.<sup>41</sup>

In private, Liddon felt no confidence that there would be restraint where enforcement of the judgment was concerned. This is clear from a letter to Wood in April, 1871, as are his feelings toward a certain member of the Judicial Committee:

The practical result is that the Bishops *will* persecute, if pressed.

You know that the Judicial Committee will not rehear the case. Perhaps it is as well. The Judgment would have been reaffirmed - and as it is, it has been well blown upon. But we have I fear little reason to expect consideration or fairness in high quarters. That the Archbishop of York should have sat again on the Judicial Committee - after the exposure of the £500 affair - would have appeared antecedently impossible.<sup>42</sup>

William Thomson (1819-90), Archbishop of York, owed his early advancement in the Church to the fact that his rigid Protestantism commended him to the Prince Consort.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p33. See P. Hinchliff: *John William Colenso* (London, 1964), p6.

<sup>40</sup> Liddon: *The Purchas Judgment*, p39.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p47. Pusey's letter in the Appendix shows concern that the Judicial Committee's unfairness might encourage disestablishment. For Dean Church's view of the Purchas case and the discussion between Coleridge and Liddon, see R. W. Church, "Sir John Coleridge on the Purchas Case" in *Occasional Papers*, vol. II (London, 1897), pp48ff.

<sup>42</sup> *Halifax*, April 27, 1871. There had been a petition for rehearing the case. See C. Adams: *Principles of the Purchas Case*, p7; also Wood to the *Guardian*, March 8, 1871.

Deficient in theology and wholly lacking in imagination, his acute awareness of his humble origins made him pathologically sensitive to what he conceived to be slights offered to his dignity and authority. In argument, especially through correspondence, he could be rude almost to the point of personal insult.<sup>43</sup> In 1867 the Church Union, through Wood, offered Thomson £500 toward his expenses in the event of an appeal to the Judicial Committee by the Revd Charles Voysey, against whom Thomson had felt obliged to proceed (it must be allowed, reluctantly) in his Consistory Court on a charge of heresy. Thomson wrote a frosty letter declining the offer, and judgment was eventually given against Voysey by the Judicial Committee in February, 1871.<sup>44</sup> Thomson's presence on the Judicial Committee was deeply offensive to Liddon and other High Churchmen who considered, with reason, that he was a prejudiced judge. There was no doubt of his opposition to ritualist clergy, as witness his notable clash with Fr Ommanney of Sheffield over accusations of ritual excesses brought against him (an incident tactfully omitted by his first biographer),<sup>45</sup> and he thereby brought discredit on the Judicial Committee.

In May, Bishop Jackson advised his clergy that he felt bound to act on the Purchas judgment, and expected it to be obeyed in his diocese. Liddon and Gregory published a letter to him repeating their reasons for their inability to accept the judgment. There was public agitation for the bishop to take action. "The *Daily News* has a condemnatory article on me and Gregory," Liddon noted in his diary on June 19. On June 21 he wrote, "*Record* this evening has a pernicious article about the importance of vindicating the dignity of the Bishop of London's office against me and Gregory." The element of farce which could often attend battles over ritual was present that month when Bishop Jackson visited St Paul's Cathedral expecting to be given the use of a cope to wear during the service, the Judicial Committee having declared that a bishop should wear a cope in his own cathedral. Liddon and Gregory vetoed a proposal to provide a cope on the grounds that it would be a recognition of the

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<sup>43</sup> E. H. Thomson: *Life and Letters of William Thomson* (London, 1919) gives a charitable portrait of its subject. H. Kirk-Smith: *William Thomson* (London, 1958) offers a sympathetic but critical view of Thomson and his divided, insecure personality.

<sup>44</sup> Thomson, pp223-5. In this eventful year (1871) Voysey published *An Examination of Canon Liddon's Bampton Lectures on the Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (London, 1871) which could hardly have endeared him to Liddon.

Committee's authority, and Jackson had to bring a cope with him.<sup>46</sup> This event found mention in Liddon's diary, in an entry which captures well the emotions of the time:

The Dean [of Windsor - Gerald Wellesley] thought that the Bishop of London had made a great mistake about the cope, and meant to tell him so. He thought that the Low Church party was alarmed: that our business was simply to say nothing more; and that it was possible there might thus be an end of the difficulty. Walked to his house with the Bishop of Winchester [Wilberforce], who described the stormy meeting of the Bishops last Sunday, when the Bishop of London laid our letter before them. Gloucester and Bristol [Ellicott] advised doing something: "there was much wild talk," said the Bishop of Winchester. He himself said, "Do nothing."<sup>47</sup>

The Bishop of London replied to the two canons on June 28, to the effect that he would prosecute them under the Clergy Discipline Act if they broke the law as they had said they would, and if he was "duly called upon by the authorities of the Cathedral to which we belong to take cognisance of the offence."<sup>48</sup> This qualification was an adroit move on Jackson's part, for he must have realised, as Gregory did, that such a request from the Cathedral Chapter was most unlikely.<sup>49</sup> Writing to Wood, Liddon was not so sanguine:

After reading the article in yesterday's *Standard*, I cannot help thinking that we *shall* be persecuted. The publication of the Bishop of London's letter gave direct encouragement to persecutors; and there are not wanting means for getting over the technical difficulties which protect members of a Cathedral Chapter...Today I was at Lambeth. Gloucester and Bristol, who is generally empresse, carefully avoided me. He evidently vent la guerre...I attribute the article to Lord Cairns' "inspiration" - Tory - Erastian.<sup>50</sup>

He wrote on the matter again five days later:

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<sup>45</sup> Kirk-Smith, p43-5; F. G. Belton: *Ommanney of Sheffield* (London, 1936), Ch. 4. In fairness to Thompson it should be said that both Voysey and Ommanney spoke kindly of him after his death.

<sup>46</sup> Johnston, p151. Dean Mansel of St Paul's was heard to quote drily,  
Then Zion, in her anguish,  
With Babylon must cope. (R. Gregory: *Autobiography*, p115.)

<sup>47</sup> *Diaries*, June 22, 1871.

<sup>48</sup> Johnston, p151.

<sup>49</sup> R. Gregory: *Autobiography*, p115.

<sup>50</sup> *Halifax*, July 13, 1871. Liddon notes, "The *Standard* has a very angry article against us today, virtually advising the Bishop to encourage prosecution." (*Diaries*, July 13, 1871.) C. J. Ellicott (1819-1905), Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, was usually regarded with suspicion by Liddon, perhaps because he had departed from his original High Church principles.

The Bishop will prosecute us if he is pressed: he will leave us alone, if he can. The "Cathedral authorities" to whom he alludes in his letter, include, not merely the Dean and Residentiaries, but, as I imagine, the Prebendaries, if not the Minor Canons. It is at least possible that Mr Auriol and Bishop Anderson, the one of whom is a prebendary and the other Chancellor of St Paul's, while both are active and prominent members of the Church Association, may move in the matter. They must do as they think right. I quite agree with you that we had reached a point at which the alternative to resistance was annihilation. This was perfectly understood on the Puritanical side: and painful as it is, at least to me, to be acting in opposition to the Bishop's wishes, I really do not think that we had any choice.<sup>51</sup>

That action from the Church Association was a possibility is revealed, with a certain humour, in a letter to another correspondent:

The *Record* is very eager for a prosecution; and the lawyer of the Church Association proposed "a friendly suit," in which, if we were beaten, the penalties might be declined. I refused, because the unwillingness of a Civil Court to imprison us for six months is part of the strength of our appeal, and if I was shut up it would give me time for a great deal that I have no chance of doing now, besides answering all applications about preaching for a long time to come.<sup>52</sup>

In the event, no call was made for intervention from the bishop, and questions of ritual returned to a steady, simmering unrest. Before long, however, talk of imprisonment would cease to be a joke, and an entry in Liddon's diary gives a reminder of another issue always hovering in the wings and tied to the ritualist controversy:

A long talk with Lord Salisbury about Disestablishment. He did not think it very near. He thought it better to put Church money in trusts, rather than give it to funds which might be confiscated after all.<sup>53</sup>

Disestablishment would indeed be treated seriously in the ritualist upheavals which lay ahead.

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<sup>51</sup> *Halifax*, July 18, 1871.

<sup>52</sup> Johnston, p150-1.

<sup>53</sup> *Diaries*, July 8, 1871. See P. T. Marsh: *The Victorian Church in Decline* (London, 1969), p137.

## 7. THE PUBLIC WORSHIP REGULATION ACT

In February, 1874, Disraeli and his newly formed cabinet faced a pressing problem. Surprised both by Gladstone's dissolution of Parliament in January and by their own success in the subsequent General Election, they were in search of a political programme for the new Parliament. An item was quickly drawn to their attention by one person whom Disraeli could not disregard - the Queen.<sup>1</sup>

A sure instinct defines Nineteenth Century Britain as the Victorian Era. It was an age filled with people of distinction in every sphere of public life, yet all came to be dominated by the diminutive figure occupying the throne. In Queen Victoria two characters mingled: the imperial (and imperious) monarch, and the determined *hausfrau*. Part of her greatness stemmed from her instinctive awareness that in her nation power would increasingly be placed in the hands of the rising middle class, whose prejudices and aspirations she embodied and then reflected back to them as their royal exemplar.<sup>2</sup> Nowhere was this more the case than in religious matters. There, her likes and dislikes were clear. She approved of agreeable Broad Churchmen like Dean Stanley and Archbishop Tait, who would wish the Established Church to embrace comfortably as many as possible of her subjects. She strongly disapproved of religious enthusiasm, whether from the Evangelicals or the Ritualists, but the latter earned her particular disfavour because they seemed far more to threaten the even tenor of Church of England ways, and perhaps even the Establishment itself, by their air of disobedience with its whiff of Romanism. In 1873 she wrote to Dean Stanley,

...as regards the English Church, which [the Queen] perceives is being greatly threatened with disestablishment, action seems becoming necessary. This disestablishment the Queen would regret. She thinks a *complete Reformation* is what we want. But if *that is impossible*, the Archbishop should have the *power* given him, by *Parliament*, to *stop all* these Ritualistic practices, dressings, bowings, etc., and everything of that kind, and, *above all*, *all* attempts at *confession*. As the Ecclesiastical Courts can afford no *assistance* on this head, let the Bishops ask for powers to put a stop to all these *new* and *very* dangerous

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<sup>1</sup> For full discussion of the passing of the Public Worship Regulation Act, see P. T. Marsh: *The Victorian Church in Decline* (London, 1969), Ch. 7; J. Bentley: *Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 1978), Ch. 3.

<sup>2</sup> E. F. Benson: *As We Were* (London, 1933), pp26-8.

practices, and at the same time, give permission to other protestant Ministers to preach in our churches, and where there is no other church to perform their different services in the same, as is always *done* abroad.<sup>3</sup>

With regard to auricular confession (always calculated to rouse good Protestants to fury), things had been done by the time the Queen wrote this letter.<sup>4</sup> One of the fruits of Tractarianism had been a growth in the use of confession as a spiritual discipline. Early in 1873 nearly five hundred priests signed a petition which in effect asked for the practice to be officially recognised by the Anglican Church, a request which received no support from Tait and the other bishops, who nonetheless felt it proper to appoint a committee to reflect and pronounce on the matter. Such reflection was not desired by Lord Shaftesbury and his fellow rigid Evangelicals, however, and they set to work stirring up public feeling against it, to such effect that Tait named Shaftesbury in an understandably testy comment in the Lords about such behaviour.<sup>5</sup> The Episcopal Declaration on confession appeared in July, 1873, and while it offered no encouragement to the practice of regular confession, it was neither unreasonable nor unfair - a point which Liddon (who had a recognised ministry as a confessor) was not disposed to allow when writing to Wood:

The Bishops are most disheartening. One after another they take up their parable....They cannot of course do anything to repress confession: but they can destroy confidence in themselves and alas! in the Church which they represent. It would be a great thing if they would consent to say nothing.<sup>6</sup>

(It should be noted that not all High Churchmen approved of sacramental confession. Gladstone was firmly opposed, and Liddon informed Wood that "Lord Salisbury has an especial twist on this very subject.")<sup>7</sup>

This affair was only a part of the rising unrest about ritualism and the way the Judicial Committee was dealing with it. In January, 1874, two days before Gladstone's surprise decision to dissolve Parliament, the Queen was badgering him about the situation, and on the necessity,

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<sup>3</sup> G. E. Buckle: *Letters of Queen Victoria*, 2nd Series, Vol. II (London, 1926), p290-1.

<sup>4</sup> *Tait*, II, pp163ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p168-9.

<sup>6</sup> *Halifax*, August 11, 1873.



where Church appointments were concerned, of avoiding anyone "tainted with these totally anti-protestant doctrines." Not the least part of her concern was her Prime Minister, "who is *supposed* to have rather a bias towards High Church views himself." And the letter contained an ominous message:

The Queen urged the Archbishop to propose to the Government some means by which, assisted by the Laity, the Bishops should have the power of checking practices which are most dangerous and objectionable, and totally foreign to the spirit and former usages of the English Church, but which *at present* they have no power to stop.

The Queen must *most earnestly* urge the consideration and, she hopes, adoption of a proposal to Parliament, of some such measure, as the Archbishop will, she knows, propose.<sup>8</sup>

Replying, Gladstone acknowledged with dry humour that he was "from time to time denounced, in some quarters, as a Ritualist, a Papist, and also a Rationalist". However, he added the significant comment that "he never has at any time assumed for himself, or rightly admitted to belong to him, any party designation whatever in religion; inasmuch as the voluntary assumption of such designations would compromise (in his opinion) what he cherishes as the first of earthly blessings, his mental freedom."<sup>9</sup> With regard to legislation to curb ritual excesses, he was of the view that

...if the violent internal controversies, which so greatly strain the framework of the Church, when carried on within, were transferred to the floors of the two Houses, the probable, indeed the almost certain, end would be the total banishment of the subject from the Parliamentary arena, by the disestablishment of the Church itself.<sup>10</sup>

Whether he genuinely anticipated such a result is questionable; but he was urging caution, believing that "wisdom and gentleness...steady respect for the laws and spirit of the Church, and the careful choice of the best men for offices of influence and power, may, under Providence both avert a crisis, and lead to the gradual mitigation of the evils which abound."<sup>11</sup> In practice he

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<sup>7</sup> *Halifax*, June 11, 1877. See H. C. G. Matthew: *Gladstone* (Oxford, 1997), p634n; G. Cecil: *Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury*, vol. II (London, 1921), p53; A. Roberts: *Salisbury* (London, 1999), p78.

<sup>8</sup> Buckle, p302.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p308-9.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p307.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p308.

adhered to this wise and just policy of making Church appointments according to the capacity and suitability of candidates, though it was not an approach calculated to please either the Queen or Liddon. The latter - usually well-disposed toward Gladstone - remarked to Wood that "he is a statesman - under the strongest temptations to make Church interests give way to the exigencies of politics, and with a fatal power of inventing theories on the spur of the moment in order to justify these surrenders."<sup>12</sup> When the saintly High Churchman, Edward King, was appointed to the diocese of Lincoln by Gladstone, Liddon was delighted: but at the same time Frederick Temple was made Bishop of London, causing Liddon to comment acidly, "I suppose Bishop Temple's promotion to London was the price paid to the Queen for permitting this signal blessing [King's appointment] to the Church."<sup>13</sup>

Certainly the Queen, as she told Gladstone, had been complaining to Archbishop Tait of "the liberties taken and the defiance shown by the Clergy of the High Church and Ritualistic party," demanding that "something *must be done*" to check this disrespectful and un-English behaviour.<sup>14</sup> On January 16, 1874, Tait was able to inform her that the bishops had authorised himself and the Archbishop of York to draw up a bill to go to Parliament, with the aim of "empowering the Bishop of each diocese, assisted by certain of the Clergy and Laity carefully selected, to control the services of the several Churches within their jurisdictions."<sup>15</sup>

Tait was not unwilling to serve his Sovereign's wishes in this matter. The previous July he had urged Parliament to increase a bishop's power over his diocese as a means of putting a brake on ritualism. He was not acting out of simple prejudice. Until this period the Church of England had lacked a central organization, and for rulings to be imposed on everyone they had to be enshrined in legislation. This helps to explain Tait's wish for a clerical discipline which could be embodied in law and might expect obedience from all.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, on the ritual question he received strong support from most of his fellow bishops. Thomson of York's opposition to ritualism was, as we have seen, unswerving. Charles Baring of Durham was a stern,

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<sup>12</sup> *Halifax*, January 27, 1885.

<sup>13</sup> *Halifax*, January 31, 1885.

<sup>14</sup> Buckle, p300.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p301.

<sup>16</sup> P. Hinchliff: *Frederick Temple* (Oxford, 1998), pp146, 209.

authoritarian Protestant, whose detestation of High Churchmen and ritual was fanatical to the point of suggesting psychological instability.<sup>17</sup> Other bishops of like Churchmanship adopted a hard and critical approach. Even some more sympathetic to the High Church position (Browne of Winchester, Magee of Peterborough) were no lovers of ritualism. Christopher Wordsworth of Lincoln proved a friend to the ritualists, and that not from any approval of ritual innovation (he wrote that it was "not less an act of pride and disobedience in an *individual* to *introduce* into a Church what is *not* ordered by lawful Authority, than it is to *despise* what *is* prescribed by that Authority")<sup>18</sup>, but from opposition to Tait's proposals, which he considered Erastian - supporting Parliamentary interference in Church legislation. He had allies in Goodwin of Carlisle, Moberly of Salisbury and Mackarness of Oxford; but they were not senior bishops, capable of withstanding Tait's pressure. The death of Bishop Wilberforce in 1873 was a serious loss, for it removed the one prelate whose experience, ability and authority would have compelled the Archbishop to listen respectfully to his views, which would almost certainly have supported caution and moderation.<sup>19</sup> As it was, Tait showed himself at his most high-handed in dealing with episcopal critics of his proposed bill, which he presented to Disraeli in March.

The new Prime Minister, to his contemporaries enigmatic in matters religious as in much else, had little enthusiasm for the bill or for Tait. He was actually sincere in his fairly Low Church Christian allegiance, and a regular worshipper, but he had no interest in intricacies of doctrine, and none of Gladstone's deep theological and ecclesiastical concern.<sup>20</sup> Any comments he had made on such a matter as ritual were "no doubt sincerely based upon an entire indifference with regard to it."<sup>21</sup> Some years later, when the effects of the Public Worship Regulation Act were clear, Wood wrote to Liddon,

I hear on *very good authority* that Lord Beaconsfield says - "He was always against the P.W.R.A., but that it was forced upon him by the Queen and the Archbishop." This is not

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<sup>17</sup> His harsh treatment of the gifted priest musician, John Bacchus Dykes (a firm High Churchman), was particularly discreditable, leading to Dykes' breakdown and death. See J. T. Fowler: *Life and Letters of John Bacchus Dykes* (London, 1897).

<sup>18</sup> C. Wordsworth: *Theophilus Anglicanus* (10<sup>th</sup> ed., London, 1869), p315.

<sup>19</sup> Bentley, p42.

<sup>20</sup> R. Blake: *Disraeli* (London, 1966), p503.

<sup>21</sup> Cecil, p54.

improbable, for it was not a matter he would naturally have cared about. It is significant however his saying so.<sup>22</sup>

Disraeli did not relish Parliamentary time being taken up with Church legislation, and he was aware of the danger of division arising within his own cabinet, which included the High Church Salisbury and the ferociously Low Church Cairns. However, he was a consummate politician, and if the Queen was pressing for action, and Tait had the bill ready, the Tory leader would act. He decided that his best plan was to seek support from Low Churchmen and Evangelicals, even though that would mean dealing with the notoriously prickly and militantly Evangelical Lord Shaftesbury .

The draft bill was not extreme in its proposals. There was no attempt at revising Prayer Book rubrics or condemning auricular confession, such as the Queen had wished. Tait asked that the bishops be given power in law to enforce their decisions on clergymen who they deemed to have gone ritually beyond what was permitted in the Church of England. His scheme was that in each diocese a council should be formed, presided over by the bishop, and consisting of three clerical and five lay members who would be elected quinquennially by their peers, plus the Dean and Archdeacon. The intention was that any complaint made to the bishop involving ritual matters might be referred by him to the council. If they advised action against a clergyman, the bishop would issue such a monition as he thought necessary, and this monition would carry the weight of law unless the priest in question appealed to the Archbishop, who might uphold or annul the bishop's decision. From the Archbishop's decision there would be no appeal.<sup>23</sup>

From the point of providing a basis for legislation, this was hopelessly vague, as Cairns and Salisbury quickly pointed out to Disraeli. Salisbury wrote,

It proposes to give to a Bishop, acting with a council of clergy and churchwardens, a power of forbidding, under pain of sequestration - *something* - but what? May they forbid anything they please? or only anything illegal? The distinction is vital...<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Halifax*, General Correspondence 125-7. Undated, probably 1880.

<sup>23</sup> *Tait*, II, p191.

<sup>24</sup> Cecil, p55; Roberts, pp135ff.

It was indeed, for who was to decide what *was* legal? Moreover, there was the possibility that High Churchmen might use this proposal to bring cases against Low Churchmen who did not adhere to the Prayer Book requirements for worship. Even the Queen was aware of this danger, and she made to Disraeli the outrageous suggestion that while ritualists should be punished for their departures from the Prayer Book order, Low Churchmen should not be, because "she warmly sympathises with the laity in general and with those clergy, who wish to carry on the service according to long-established usage. The Queen therefore earnestly hopes that her Government may equally support any dispensing powers in the Bill that may be added for their protection or suggest others to meet the same object."<sup>25</sup> A bill displaying such partiality was clearly impossible.

Disraeli, anxious for harmony in his Cabinet, proceeded cautiously, but on March 10 discussion was thrown into the public domain when Tait published in *The Times* an outline of his proposed legislation before even the Prime Minister had seen it. The reason for this decision remains obscure. Perhaps he wished to gauge public opinion by a relatively informal statement: perhaps he was actually uncertain about the action he was undertaking, and was feeling his way in a situation where anti-Roman prejudice, highly-charged emotion and forcefully expressed arguments might easily ignite to cause a highly destructive explosion. Whatever Tait's motive, publishing his plans proved a serious miscalculation, annoying Disraeli, infuriating the bishops (who also had not seen the draft of the bill), and alarming all shades of Church opinion. Liddon read the *Times* report, recognised himself and Canon Gregory in the High Church malcontents attacked by the newspaper ("two or three clergymen of distinction have openly announced their intention to disregard the authority of the Privy Council"), and wrote to Wood to discuss what might be done.

...It may occur to you that we had better wait until the Bill is drafted, and can be then criticised in detail and on its merits. But it is, on the other hand, easier to destroy such a creature in the embryonic stage than after birth. Its emergence into print, as a serious legislative proposal, endorsed (unless I am misinformed) by the active or passive concurrence of the entire Episcopate, would of itself be a scandal to our Church of the gravest kind. We saw in the history of the Athanasian Creed controversy that the present Primate, while capable of very audacious attacks upon the Faith and Discipline of the

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<sup>25</sup> G. E. Buckle: *Life of Disraeli*, vol. V (London, 1920), p318.

Church of England, does not venture to encounter a formidable opposition, or, indeed, to do anything that would risk the shell of the Establishment. Perhaps, therefore, if a sufficient number of persons can be convinced that matters are serious, we may escape this threatening mischief.

We have, of course, friends in the present Cabinet. I don't forget the Orange fanaticism of the Lord Chancellor [Cairns was Irish], and, to make a descent, of Lord Sandon. But there are others, as you know, who will help us if they can, although we shall miss Mr Gladstone at the helm. The Archbishop would not have ventured on such an enterprise during the late Government's time.<sup>26</sup>

The *Times'* statement presented Tait's proposals in a manner threatening to High Churchmen. However, Liddon was obliged to admit that not all the fault lay with the enemy:

How I wish, too, that we could do anything to persuade our friends to avoid much which they do and say - much which is in no way necessary - which keeps up constant irritation, and involves them in the suspicion of secret disloyalty to the English Church! Could a meeting of any kind be arranged by Mackonochie, R. West, and others with a view to minimising points of offence, and so removing the excuse (so far as it might be done lawfully) for such legislation as that in question?<sup>27</sup>

This was an attitude born of his Tractarian conviction that doctrine took precedence over ritual. One who knew him testified that "nothing could be more expressive of a deep sense of the Divine presence than was Liddon's own careful, quiet, and reverent manner of celebrating the Holy Eucharist, without any exaggeration of gesture or demonstrative self-consciousness....he was alarmed at what appeared to him unwholesome symptoms and indications of exaggeration, both in doctrine and ceremonial, which might imperil the progress of the whole Catholic movement."<sup>28</sup> This is confirmed by V. S. S. Coles, who describes Liddon at the altar as

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<sup>26</sup> Johnson, p178-9. Mss. Missing from *Halifax*. Lord Sandon had made a speech in Liverpool, in which he said. "I propose that any member of a parish shall have a very easy method of going before the Bishop's court, and I take away all options from the Bishop in matters which have been pronounced not according to the principles of the Established Church." See *Guardian*, March 11, 1874, p299.

<sup>27</sup> Liddon to Wood, March 14, 1874 (Johnston, p179). West was vicar of St Mary Magdalen, Paddington, and not an "advanced" ritualist. Liddon doubtless thought he would be a moderating influence. See T. T. Carter: *Richard Temple West, A Memoir* (London, 1895)

<sup>28</sup> A. B. Donaldson: *Five Great Oxford Leaders* (London, 1900), p273-4.

“showing a desire to combine the associations of reverence which belonged to the old-fashioned ritual common in parish churches 50 years ago, with Catholic tradition.”<sup>29</sup>

Liddon and Pusey wrote to Mackonochie, urging upon him that “we have reason to ask ourselves whether we ever act or speak in a way calculated to cause needless ‘offence’, and so to retard the work of God which we have at heart,” and asking whether “in view of the exaggerated ceremonial and ill-considered language which are sometimes to be found among (so-called) ‘Ritualists,’ that there are grave reasons for anxiety on this head?” They asked him to use his influence with other clergy to advise restraint, “considering how much of recent additions to customary ritual could be abandoned without doing harm.” Mackonochie’s reply was not encouraging, pointing out with some justice the unfairness of criticism which denounced High Churchmen, but left refractory Low Churchmen untouched.<sup>30</sup> Of this dialogue, Lord Salisbury told Disraeli,

I have seen Liddon. He was very moderate: promised me that he and Pusey would write to the chief Ritualists in the most earnest terms to warn them of the danger of their proceedings. This has been done. But he told me that he was being treated as a renegade by a large section of his party.<sup>31</sup>

He would not have been comforted by Mackonochie’s letter which, Liddon told Pusey, “will not do to forward to Lord Salisbury. Why should M. speak of the ‘Mass’? or make the ceremonial demands of the people whom he himself trained the rule for settling a great question?”<sup>32</sup>

If High Churchmen were worried at learning of the proposed legislation, Low Churchmen were little happier. The Church Association demanded that any bill must “secure to the laity their just rights, and...facilitate the repression of Romanising teaching and practices in the Established Church.”<sup>33</sup> *The Rock* spluttered indignantly about ritualistic teaching on the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, “which we denounce as a blasphemous figment”, which must be

<sup>29</sup> V. S. S. Coles: *Memoirs of Liddon addressed in 1899 to J. O. Johnston*. (Liddon Papers, Pusey House). This unpublished document, designed to assist Liddon’s biographer, contains fascinating recollections.

<sup>30</sup> E. A. Towle: *Alexander Herriot Mackonochie* (London, 1890), pp221-6, gives the texts of both letters.

<sup>31</sup> Buckle: *Disraeli*, V, p319.

<sup>32</sup> LP, I, 174, May 7, 1874.

<sup>33</sup> *Guardian*, April 8, 1874, p414.

stifled.<sup>34</sup> Lord Shaftesbury disapproved of any bill which would give more power to the bishops. His fellow Protestant, Cairns, agreed, and set to work redrafting the bill, suggesting that bishops facing a ritual case should be advised by a board drawn up after the provisions of the 1840 Church Discipline Act, and that appeals should go to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The bishops - some of them still opposed to any legislation - uneasily accepted this, which created a ludicrous situation in which "Tait now had a bill never fully endorsed by the bishops and altered at the request of a government which refused to support it publicly."<sup>35</sup> for Disraeli was too canny to risk Cabinet division over such an issue. Meanwhile, a writer to *The Guardian* sounded a note which was to prove prophetic:

I very much wish the Bishops would leave the ritualists alone. They will gain strength by persecution, and they will be embittered and made more violent....If the ritualists are left alone they will separate the good from the bad - what is primitive from what is later corruption. If they are persecuted, they will swallow it all. There lurks under the language and conduct of the anti-ritualists a suspicion that the Court of Final Appeal will decide differently when the questions are again before it. Hence their anxiety to settle them by the Bishop's authority. It is very easy to see they will not succeed, and if this measure is pushed on it will strengthen ritualism.<sup>36</sup>

The form of the bill agreed on would deal only with actual illegalities, beneficed clergymen appealing to the Queen in Council if the Archbishop did not wish a hearing in the provincial court. The bishop's monition to a clergyman would remain in force pending such an appeal. A cleric who ignored such a monition would be inhibited from performing his duties for an indefinite period. The bishop, however, would have complete discretion whether or not to allow a complaint made against a cleric on grounds of ritual to come to his court .

Tait introduced the bill into the Lords on April 20, 1874, and Liddon was present as an observer, listening while the Archbishop attempted to chill Protestant blood with descriptions of ritualistic practices - a statement he was embarrassingly obliged to moderate when corrected on a point of fact. Writing to Lady Salisbury the next day, Liddon (with an unkind allusion to Tait's time as Headmaster of Rugby) observed that

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid. April 1, 1874, p387 .

<sup>35</sup> Bentley, p49 .

<sup>36</sup> *Guardian*, March 25, 1874. p414 .



...[the Archbishop] will be, I suppose, a schoolmaster to the end of the Chapter, imposing discipline in his big school by such legal machinery as he can persuade the State to give him, and apparently ignorant or distrustful of the resources of any spiritual or moral power whatever.<sup>37</sup>

There was little opposition to the bill at this stage, but debates in May and June brought uproar and (largely due to the background machinations of Cairns, with some help from Shaftesbury) a number of amendments, chief among them the proposal to appoint a single lay judge to represent the provinces of Canterbury and York in ritual cases, with a final appeal to the Judicial Committee still permitted. After various skirmishes, the bill passed in the Lords, leaving Tait in the humiliating position of handing to the Commons a bill significantly changed from what he had wished, still not openly supported by the Government, and for which he would face the ire of High Churchmen. Liddon's view of the Archbishop's role in the proceedings was caustic: "If the Primate's attachment to the 'Establishment' were not above suspicion," he wrote to Lord Salisbury, "he would seem to be the worst enemy it has had in this century."<sup>38</sup> A few days later, he wrote to Salisbury again:

The Archbishop of Canterbury, I see, thinks that when this measure has become law, the clergy will trust himself and his brethren. His Grace no doubt has formed a somewhat cynical estimate of the intellect of the profession to which he belongs; but his recent achievements in Parliament are of a character to discourage even the most Quixotic of High Churchmen from expecting consideration, or even justice, at his hands.<sup>39</sup>

The passage of the bill through the Commons saw a massive attack on it from Gladstone, while Disraeli at last declared his hand, with sneers at "the Mass in masquerade." Protestant-minded support for the bill grew strong, though it was nearly wrecked by disagreement over an amendment proposed by a spokesman for the Church Association, which would have allowed an appeal to the Archbishop against a diocesan bishop's veto on a ritual prosecution.

As the climax of events neared, Liddon wrote to Wood from Ireland:

I suppose, however, from what I have learnt since coming here, that the Bill will become law. The question is whether it will be at once put in force on any considerable scale. I am

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<sup>37</sup> Salisbury Papers, April 21, 1874.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. June 5, 1874.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. June 9, 1874.

inclined to hope not. Numbers of people have been supporting the Bill in order to prove to their middle-class Protestant constituents that they wish to be doing something; and before the exact value of what they have done can be appreciated in the light of experience, a new combination of colours, we may hope, will be presented by the political kaleidoscope. I have written to Mr (or rather to Mrs) Gladstone to thank *him* for so generous a speech; and I should be curious to know what our chivalrous friend at Madresfield [Lord Beauchamp] is thinking of *his* political chief. I never believed in Mr Disraeli, and am not disappointed to find that he is prepared to throw anything or anybody to the sharks in order to catch the *popularis aura*.<sup>40</sup>

However, he was not depressed:

Of course, there is no reason for despondency. No legislature can really destroy a religious conviction, except by exterminating its holders. It is historically too late to do that; and we shall live to see the drowned Philistines [*sic*] on the seashore even yet.<sup>41</sup>

The bill was read for a third time on August 5, and on the following day the Queen was congratulating the Archbishop on the success of his work:

To have lost the Bill would have been a triumph to that party which has done so much to undermine the Church, and to poison the minds of the young and of the higher classes, a party for which the Queen cannot deny she has the greatest abhorrence, as she believes them to be *R. Catholics at heart, and very insincere* as to their professions of attachment to the Church.<sup>42</sup>

"May God grant that the peace and lasting good of His Church may follow from our labours!" wrote Tait in his diary - a devout optimism which would prove short-lived.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Halifax, July 21, 1874.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Buckle: *Letters of Queen Victoria*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Series, II, p351.

<sup>43</sup> Tait, II, p235.

## 8. THE AFTERMATH

No clear-minded observer could seriously have imagined that the Public Worship Regulation Act would solve matters where ritualism was concerned. Liddon expressed the gravest forebodings to Pusey:

I wish I could share your feeling that it is anyhow possible to prevent proceedings in the new court. The Archbishop has raised a demon, which he cannot now lay, if he should wish to do so; but in truth he is, I believe, bent upon a policy of proscription....If it were anyhow possible to convince the Primate that he is risking the "Establishment" something might be done: at present he thinks that the Establishment will be made safe by getting rid of the Catholic Element in the Church.<sup>1</sup>

Pusey, however, was not prepared to condemn Tait out of hand:

The Archbishop of Canterbury's sympathies have all along been with the opposite school, from the days of Tract XC. But I think he means kindly to *us*, though aggravated by O. Shipley etc. He has just been going out of his way to visit St Saviour's (where a former governess of Mrs Tait is being treated for cancer) and the sister in charge expressed pleasure, reminded there of his visit to their cholera hospital.<sup>2</sup>

Tait's willingness to visit St Saviour's, a house of the Society of the Holy Trinity, the sisterhood founded by Pusey's close friend, Priscilla Lydia Sellon, would inevitably have warmed Pusey's feelings toward him. We shall later learn more of Tait's attitude toward the Anglican sisterhoods whose revival was a marked feature of the Oxford Movement's influence and Pusey's own work.

However, Liddon had reason for anxiety. Within a fortnight of the Act coming into force, the Church Association was moving to attack the Revd C.J.Ridsdale of Folkstone,<sup>3</sup> a case to which we will return. Meanwhile, also within days of the Act's passing, Liddon came under attack in the press following a sermon at St Paul's. Preaching on August 9 about the cleansing of the Temple, he stated that the judgment of Christ would become apparent "whenever it happens to a

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<sup>1</sup> LP, I, 181, August 25, 1874.

<sup>2</sup> PL, II, 87, August 27, 1874. Orby Shipley was a ritualist clergyman who converted to Roman Catholicism.

<sup>3</sup> J. Bentley: *Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 1978), p97.

great church, or to its guiding minds, to think more of the secular side of its position than they think of the spiritual – more, it may be, of a seat in the senate, and of high social rank, than of the work of God among the people.” He added, “Churches are disestablished and disendowed to the eye of sense, through the action of political parties; to the eye of faith, by His interference who ordereth all things both in heaven and in earth.”<sup>4</sup> In response to criticism he defended himself in a letter to *The Times*:

Will you allow me to state that my language at St Paul's did not, as it was certainly not intended to, imply that the two Primates were actuated by a wish to retain place and power for themselves individually when engaged in their recent advocacy of the Public Worship Bill?...

Men will, however, take a line, when acting for the institution or the order to which they belong, of which, if they were thinking only of themselves, they would be incapable. Whether the material or the spiritual ingredients of a Christian Church are best worth saving is a subject upon which, perhaps, opinions will differ. The present Archbishop of Canterbury has never concealed his sense of the importance of maintaining the *status* and endowments of the Establishment, at almost any cost whatever; and I certainly do not stand alone among English clergymen and laymen in regretting this characteristic of his Grace's mind and policy, or in regarding the Public Worship Act as a very unfortunate illustration of it. You would not agree with my reasons for entertaining this view of a Prelate whose authority, *coeteris paribus*, we are all interested in upholding; but it would surprise me to learn that the *Times* desired to suppress freedom of opinion on the subject of passing events, even in clergymen.<sup>5</sup>

The personal nature of Liddon's comment on Tait, and the letter's asperity of tone, find some explanation in a letter written to Wood shortly after. Remarking that "the extract from my sermon which the *Times* itself had published *could* not have suggested the paraphrase," Liddon then declares his mind on the Archbishop:

It is evident to me...that he is a little alarmed at his own success, and wishes to smooth the irritation which he fears he may have created before he sets to work at "discreetly" encouraging prosecutions. It is therefore necessary in my opinion to reiterate from time to time our thorough dislike of the Bill, and our distrust of the *animus* which will preside at its enforcement, - hinting too, as prudence may suggest, that there are such things as withdrawal of subscriptions from Church objects and disestablishment.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> H. P. Liddon: "Intruders in the Temple" (F. Davis, London, 1874), p177.

<sup>5</sup> *Times*, August 15, 1874.

<sup>6</sup> *Halifax*, August 19, 1874.

Wood expressed his own views in a letter to *The Guardian*:

A victory sometimes is more damaging to those concerned in it than a defeat, and such, if I mistake not, will be the verdict of impartial persons with respect to those who have been chiefly instrumental in passing this measure.<sup>7</sup>

"The *Guardian* I see publishes your letter this week," wrote Liddon on this (as it proved) prophetic piece. "It will, I hope, do good, although I hear that the Archbishops are resolved to go forward."<sup>8</sup> Wood, perhaps taking Liddon's previous advice to heart, wrote to frighten *Guardian* readers:

...those who have the real interests of the Church of England at heart...cannot be much surprised, however much they may deplore it, at secessions from a Church whose rulers appear to be guided by no higher principle than the *vox populi* and the considerations due to a national Establishment.<sup>9</sup>

He could claim some excuse for scare tactics, because on August 21 Lord Ripon had written to inform him of his decision to become a Roman Catholic.<sup>10</sup> This was indeed noteworthy, since Ripon was a leading Liberal, holding the post of President of the Council in Gladstone's first ministry. In addition, he was Grand Master of the English Freemasons. On his reception, he resigned both offices.<sup>11</sup> Wood must have voiced his feelings to Liddon, for the latter replied,

What you say about Lord Ripon must occur to everybody. I have no means of knowing what the Archbishops may think about it. Possibly, with the *Rock* they see in such a catastrophe only another reason for making war on the advanced school, or rather on High Churchmen generally. The London correspondent of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, I observed (who appears to have a bitter grudge against Mr Gladstone) attributed the step to Lord R's "[illegible] Ritualismus" and hinted that it would be a great blow to Mr G and all his belongings. This probably was suggested in London, by persons whose wishes dictated their thoughts, but whose wishes are significant.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Guardian*, August 26, 1874, p1107.

<sup>8</sup> *Halifax*, August 29, 1874.

<sup>9</sup> *Guardian*, September 16, 1874, p1182.

<sup>10</sup> *Halifax* papers, A4/89 Part 1.

<sup>11</sup> The *Guardian*, September 16, 1874, p1181, attributed Lord Ripon's conversion to studying the Roman Catholic position on Freemasonry in order to refute it, and becoming convinced by the Church's arguments.

<sup>12</sup> *Halifax*, September 26, 1874.

That news of this conversion and resignation was thought worthy of such attention by the press is a reminder of the feelings aroused by religious questions in the Nineteenth Century, and of the strength of anti-Roman prejudice which contributed in Britain to opposition to ritualism. This in turn goes some way toward explaining the desire of Anglican authority to keep the seething ritualism pot from boiling over - if necessary, by law.

In October, Gladstone made a contribution to the ritualist debate in the wake of the Act, writing in the *Contemporary Review* on "Ritualism and Ritual."<sup>13</sup> His own anti-Roman views were, understandably, displayed, but on the question of ritual in the Church of England he was discerning and commendably moderate. He described vividly the horrors in worship from which the Oxford Movement had delivered the Church of England,<sup>14</sup> and he made the point that "altars, vestments, lights, (if not even incense)" could be found in the Lutheran Churches of Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Iceland.<sup>15</sup> He pronounced characteristically that "no ritual is too much provided it is subsidiary to the inner work of worship; and all ritual is too much unless it ministers to that purpose."<sup>16</sup>

Liddon would have agreed with this,<sup>17</sup> but, as *The Guardian* observed, it did not solve the problem of the necessity for legislation about ritual, nor the question of whether the Act was likely "to produce the effect desired by its promoters."<sup>18</sup> "Modern life," said the paper, "is certainly in many ways more many-sided and restless than was that of our forefathers; and circumstances which sufficiently provided both order and variety for them may have to be replaced now by something more elastic and accommodating."<sup>19</sup>

A correspondent in *The Guardian* contributed a pungent piece of sarcasm which raised a vital point:

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<sup>13</sup> Reprinted and revised as *The Church of England and Ritualism* (London, 1875).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* pp18ff.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p28.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p9.

<sup>17</sup> See Johnston, p328; also Liddon's sermons "The Sense of Reverence" (*Advent in St Paul's*, vol. II [London, 1889], pp36ff) and "Reverence" (*Easter in St Paul's* [London, 1892], pp323ff).

<sup>18</sup> *Guardian*, September 30, 1874, p1241.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

Our most reverend and right reverend Fathers in God certainly exhibit one strong phase of paternal affection. They do not forget the rod....We have, however, obtained a kind of reprieve for a few months during which the rod is held up *in terrorem* over us, as a painful hint what we may expect if we are bad boys. It is highly important, therefore, that in the meanwhile it should be ascertained and settled what are the offences the rod will visit. At present it seems to me this is very indetermined.<sup>20</sup>

In the months following the Act the Church of England existed in tense anticipation of trouble. Tait pleaded for toleration, and Pusey urged restraint upon the more extreme ritualists. Nevertheless, membership of the English Church Union rose appreciably - a good indication of the mood in the Church.<sup>21</sup> Bishop Magee of Peterborough was in little doubt of what lay ahead:

I fear the result will be episcopal dissidence and practical indiscretions, or accusations of it, here and there, until at last the Puritanism and Erastianism of the House of Commons grows impatient, takes the reins into its own hands, and *upsets the coach!* The determined Erastianism of the Archbishop, the exasperation of the High Church clergy, the dishonesty of the Ritualists, the fanatical bitterness of the Evangelicals and the sublime unprinciple of Dizzy, all point this way; the bishops, too, are sore at the way the Archbishop has over-ridden them in the conduct of the Bill, and sore at the false accusations of the clergy, and will form a very rebellious team for his Grace to drive...<sup>22</sup>

For the remainder of 1874, however, the English Church Union and Wood were more concerned with opposing possible changes to the Prayer Book rubrics by Convocation. This time Liddon, who had suggested that "something ought to be done in the way of promoting a petition to Cantuar praying simply that the Prayerbook of 1662 might be left undisturbed,"<sup>23</sup> was not altogether satisfied with the course taken by the Union. "I confess", he wrote, "I am sorry that the Petition did not confine itself to deprecating any change in the settlement of 1662."<sup>24</sup> Eventually he settled for saying, "It does not do to argue with the master of 40 legions; and as my heart is with you, I must try to get my head too."<sup>25</sup> Whether it was a matter of rubrics or ritual he was still clear that "The best hope, humanly speaking, lies in the Archbishop and the Queen getting

<sup>20</sup> *Guardian*, August 19, 1874, p1076.

<sup>21</sup> P. T. Marsh: *The Victorian Church in Decline* (London, 1969), p291.

<sup>22</sup> J. C. Macdonnell: *Life of Archbishop Magee*, vol. II (London, 1896), p11-12.

<sup>23</sup> *Halifax*, October 2, 1874.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* October 12, 1874.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* October 16, 1874. On the rubrics question see a letter of Pusey to Liddon (PL. II. 91. September 29. 1874) and Liddon's reply (LP. I, 187, September 30, 1874).

alarmed about the Establishment, *if they are getting alarmed.*"<sup>26</sup> The end of the year, though, brought a remarkable turn of events, as Liddon informed Wood:

The Archbishop of Canterbury has written to beg me to come to Addington to talk *freely* in Church matters. This grew out of a conversation I had last week with the Dean of Durham, in which I told him *with entire unreserve* what I thought about the attack on the Athanasian Creed and the proceedings of the last Parliamentary session. *He reported this conversation to the Archbishop*, who certainly shows a Christian spirit, in asking me to see him, after hearing what I said about him.<sup>27</sup>

Dean Lake of Durham had been sufficiently impressed by Liddon's remarks to write Tait a letter both serious and teasing:

I strongly think you would do well to ask [Liddon] to come – stay a day or so at Addington and have some conversation on the present state of Church affairs. I do not think he has always behaved wisely, and perhaps not fairly, to you, but misunderstandings occur in this bad world between the best of men, and Liddon is a fine character, and (what you will think of much more importance) a man of great influence with the High Church. Meanwhile he has the very worst ideas of you, - even worse than I sometimes entertain, thinks you a wild fanatic, alternately guided by Thomson, Stanley and the Church Association, and bent on crushing the High Church party. (This last notion, even the gentle Church entertains.) I laughed loudly at all this rubbish, and almost laughed them out of it; and in the end told Liddon seriously that he ought to see you himself, and know your feelings and policy, and that the present crisis was too important for either of you to let fantasies and antipathies (of which I know you are far too cold to have any) stand in the way of coming to an understanding. Liddon earnestly would like to have a talk with you, and if you could drive to a vagabond like V. Ht.[?] I am sure it would not demean you to send a courteous note to the first of England's preachers.<sup>28</sup>

At the beginning of January, 1875, Liddon went with Dean Church to meet Tait.<sup>29</sup> Of the meeting, no description to Wood survives, but Liddon wrote an account to Dean Lake of Durham, which must be given in full, both for its significance in the struggle over ritualism and for its scarcity value as a friendly word on the Archbishop from Liddon's pen:

<sup>26</sup> *Halifax*, December 14, 1874.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* December 28, 1874.

<sup>28</sup> Lambeth Palace Library, Tait Papers 93, ff.339-341, Xmas Day, 1874. Tait indeed showed generosity in writing to Liddon, since the latter had declined the previous year an invitation to stay at Lambeth and preach. (LP. I, June 25, 1873; *Diaries*, June 20, 1873.) Lake wrote to Tait the same day he spoke with Liddon. (*Diaries*, Xmas Day, 1874.)

<sup>29</sup> For Church's view of this meeting see M. C. Church: *Life and Letters of Dean Church* (London, 1894), p247.



Nothing could be kinder than the Archbishop. We had about three hours' conversation. He, as was natural, gave it its direction, and the consequence was that it did not cover all the ground that was wanted. The main points on which I understood him to insist were (1) the undesirableness of further legislation; (2) the absence of any wish on *his* part to drive High Churchmen out of the Church of England in deference to the Puritanical and rationalistic parties; (3) the anxiety that the courts should be constituted in the best way, and that all should submit to them, whatever they might decide upon.

What struck me most in the interview was the stress which the Archbishop laid on the importance of keeping religious topics out of Parliament. Indeed, when one thinks of *what* ingredients that body is composed, it is inconceivable how anyone to whom our Lord's honour is in any sense dear can have any other feeling on the subject.

We did not get much into detail. The Archbishop expressed his strong objection to vestments - as I understood him, in view rather of the present state of public feeling than of their legal and rubrical warranty. As to the eastward position, I told him a few facts which put it in a different light from that in which it is regarded by the Puritanical party. He was very kind in allowing me to do this...

Altogether I wish that the Archbishop may be able to control the course of events. But - can he?...

What must be the state of mind of men who ostentatiously omit the Athanasian Creed, or who ostentatiously contradict the Baptismal Service, as do many of the Puritanical clergy, and yet raise the cry of disloyalty against Churchmen?<sup>30</sup>

Further points were added when he described the meeting to Pusey, when his tone was not so warm:

...[He said] if it was thought that the new Court of Appeal required modification in any direction, *now* was the time for it. Any suggestions would be patiently considered. He did not himself think that it differed materially from the old Judicial Committee, or that it could be improved with any decided advantage; but others might think this. Now was the time to speak; as the *law of the new court was not so settled by Parliament as to be beyond the reach of change during the next session.*

...Altogether he evidently *meant* to be conciliatory. He was less of the schoolmaster than usual, and very patient in listening to what we had to say. It occurred to me that, in his secret heart, he *might* after all think the Public Worship Bill a mistake, tho' he could not, of course, say this. He evidently felt that it had produced serious alienations from the Episcopal Bench, and wished to repair the breach if he could. He did not advert to the actual mischief with which it threatens us, in worrying law-suits next year. But on the

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<sup>30</sup> K. Lake: *Memorials of William Charles Lake* (London, 1901), p225-6.

whole, we may I think trust, that, for whatever reasons, he will not be a party to pushing matters to extremities – i.e. *if* his present state of mind lasts. Probably that ought not to be taken for granted too readily.<sup>31</sup>

To his diary Liddon confided that Tait “opened the discussion by a long harangue of more than half an hour, and then invited expression of opinion.” He added that Tait “dwelt greatly on ‘the Courts’ – as if that was the true instrument for governing Xtn. Churches.”<sup>32</sup>

Any favourable impression resulting from this meeting was short lived. In March, 1875, the bishops, aware that they must show some sign of common understanding regarding the Act's deployment, issued a public statement. They seemed prepared to tolerate the eastward position, or at least to wait on a further consideration of its legality by the courts, but there could be no question of their sympathising with "advanced" ritual. On this point they required strict obedience to the law, including any decisions which might be made on the question by the courts.<sup>33</sup> Liddon's letters to Wood do not refer to the declaration, but Dean Church told the Bishop of London of his sense of outrage at a statement "very much like the exhortation to repent and confess, addressed by the Inquisition to obstinate heretics, *after* they had delivered up the patients to the secular arm."<sup>34</sup> He thought seriously of resigning his Deanery, but he decided to remain in place and face the possibility of prosecution, for his own very moderate liturgical practice could conceivably have been assaulted under the terms of the Act. His decision was important, for it meant not only that Liddon would have personal support from his senior colleague when defending ritualists, but that those facing prosecution would have as an ally one of the most discerning, cultured and respected Churchmen of the day, and one deeply versed in Anglican theology and ecclesiology.

Liddon's concern in the early part of 1875 was for the courts. The new Court created by the Act was to have as its first lay judge James Plaisted Wilde (1816-99), Lord Penzance - an inept choice, since his undoubted legal skills had been exercised primarily as a judge in divorce cases,

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<sup>31</sup> LP, I, 191, December 30, 1874.

<sup>32</sup> *Diaries*, December 30, 1874.

<sup>33</sup> Marsh, p219-20.

<sup>34</sup> B. A. Smith: *Dean Church* (Oxford, 1958), p184,

making him unacceptable to High Churchmen. He had no expertise in ecclesiastical law.<sup>35</sup> Cases which previously would have gone before the discredited Judicial Committee could now go before Lord Penzance, with the possibility of a subsequent appeal to the Privy Council. Since the Judicature Act of 1873, the Judicial Committee acted as the Final Court of Appeal in such matters, advised by the bishops on it sitting not as judges but as assessors.<sup>36</sup>

Writing in April, Liddon told Wood of conversation with Walter Phillimore, the ecclesiastical lawyer. The background to this letter is chiefly the continuing strife in the affairs of Mackonochie (whose enemies pursued him relentlessly), and the case of the Revd Charles Parnell, vicar of St Margaret's, Princes Road, Liverpool from 1869-76, who was being harassed by the Church Association.<sup>37</sup>

[Phillimore] is for putting off the cases and waiting for the new Court. He thinks that (1) the chances of the new Court reversing the Purchas judgment are much greater than those of its being reviewed by the old Judicial Committee, (2) that if the Judicial Committee goes wrong[?] *after hearing arguments*, the probabilities of a reversal by the new Court are very slight indeed.

I do not like to decide. But, if it could be done I should be for letting Mackonochie withdraw his appeal and then trying Parnell's case in the new Court, if at that stage we can get the cases put off.<sup>38</sup>

Wood's lengthy reply survives. He put his finger immediately on the main problems:

It seems that the question whether it is desirable that the existing cases should be postponed for hearing till the new Court comes into operation, depends on two different considerations. 1st whether the new Court is, to any appreciable degree, more likely to give a satisfactory judgment than the existing Judicial Committee. 2ndly upon the relative power of the two Courts to enforce their decisions - assuming those decisions, which may well happen, to be such as we cannot accept.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Bentley, p82.

<sup>36</sup> Tait, II, pp117-122.

<sup>37</sup> S. Baring-Gould: *The Church Revival* (London, 1914), p250-1.

<sup>38</sup> *Halifax*, April 22, 1875.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* Wood to Liddon, April 22, 1875.

Wood realised that it would be impossible to *enforce* a decision on everyone when it was unsatisfactory to High or Low Churchmen, and he asked whether the way out would be to plead that:

...the matters under dispute are by virtue of the altered Ornaments Rubric of 1662 *legal*, but not obligatory. If some such *permissive* decision is not arrived at, the authorities must either wink at disobedience as they do now, or the Court, which ever it may be, will have to enforce its judgments at the price of depriving each clergyman in turn, and they are to be numbered by hundreds, who refuses to give up the matters above referred to.<sup>40</sup>

Could it be, he reflected, that "there is a great deal to be said in favour, if it comes to a struggle, of fighting the old Court, discredited as it is, rather than the new, which will be a *new broom*?" One thing was certain, "that the 'High Church party' will not be put down, as a whole or in detail, without consequences which must, in the end, be fatal at all events to the Established character of the Church." The question was, which court would give a favourable decision, and which might (if necessary) be successfully resisted. At all cost, he added, High Churchmen must avoid any suggestion of agreeing to abide by decisions of either Court, since neither could claim binding power in spiritual matters. Mackonochie would not recognise the Judicial Committee, while Parnell and others might consent to appear before it, "considering how much less important failure before it would be, than before the New Court", but "there should be no misapprehension as to the light in which we regard either Court."<sup>41</sup> Wood's letter also makes clear the support being given by the English Church Union to those clergymen named and to others. Meanwhile, Liddon was raising the issue of the courts in lofty company:

This morning [he writes to Wood] I have been breakfasting with Lord Salisbury, and he asked me whether it was decided that the cases which are coming on should stand over so as to be brought before the *New Court*. The Lord Chancellor had told him that they *could* be postponed so as not to come before the old Judicial Committee, *if it was desired*.

I guarded myself against answering for others, but said generally that I thought the postponement desirable.

I told Lord Salisbury that Mackonochie would *not* go before the old Judicial Committee. He was very glad to hear it. He said that M's name excited so much prejudice in high

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

quarters, that it was very desirable that the pending issues should be tried in some other case. "Judges are of course impartial, but they cannot help being unconsciously influenced by the prejudices which gather round prominent names."<sup>42</sup>

But, asked Liddon, what did Wood think of the Judicial Committee as the Final Court of Appeal?

The said court will come into existence about June, 1876. It will probably be the old Judicial Committee, *minus* the ecclesiastical element - unless these appeals (an improbable contingency!) should be transferred to the House of Lords, in which case, there *might* be difficulty about keeping the Archbishops out.<sup>43</sup>

At Liddon's request, Wood forwarded this letter to Pusey with a letter of his own to the effect that it might be best for the Parnell case to come before the old court.<sup>44</sup> Pusey told Liddon that he had thought Parnell should appear before the new court, not least because "the Archbishop of York [Thomson], who has prejudged the case, would not be there." However, "what Lord S. says of the prejudice against M. is of much weight. That if the Parnell case could be brought on, it would not only be fresh, but since Liverpool is in his Archbishopric (is it not?), he [Thomson] could not sit." It was best, then, for Parnell to appear before the old court.<sup>45</sup> However, Parnell resigned from St Margaret's in 1876, though not on account of the prosecution.<sup>46</sup>

Early in 1876 the first judgment by Lord Penzance on a ritual case was given, presaging strife. It concerned the Revd C. J. Ridsdale, referred to above.<sup>47</sup> The complaints lodged against him included the eastward position, the use of wafer bread for Holy Communion, wearing eucharistic vestments, and having a crucifix and candles on the rood screen. (The crucifix was a sensitive issue. In 1889 Liddon was involved in controversy over a new reredos in St Paul's which depicted a crucifix.)<sup>48</sup> By an appropriate irony, Ridsdale's church lay within Archbishop Tait's own diocese. Tait made genuine attempts at arbitration, but Ridsdale, believing that the

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<sup>42</sup> *Halifax*, April 30, 1875.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> PL, II, 107, April 22, 1875.

<sup>45</sup> PL, II, 106, April 24, 1875.

<sup>46</sup> G. B. Roberts: *The History of the English Church Union 1859-1894* (London, 1895), p178.

<sup>47</sup> See *Tait*, II, pp236ff.; Marsh, pp220ff.

<sup>48</sup> G. W. E. Russell: *Dr Liddon* (London, 1905), p94-5.

Archbishop would feel himself bound by the Judicial Committee's decisions concerning Mackonochie and Purchas, declined to co-operate. Tait refused to veto the prosecution in the hope that Ridsdale would accept a decision made by the new Court, his willingness to appear before it indicating that he was no extreme ritualist. Ridsdale, however, was clear that he allowed no spiritual jurisdiction to the Court.

On February 3, 1876, Penzance found against Ridsdale on all points. "I have not yet seen the judgment," wrote Liddon to Wood, "but had heard that Lord P. has done what he was instituted to do. It was, I suppose, a foregone conclusion?"<sup>49</sup> Ridsdale at once appealed to the Judicial Committee, as Supreme Court. This required a decision on which bishops should sit as assessors in the Court, and when the Church Union (which had been supporting Ridsdale financially) learned that Tait was to be one of the number, it withdrew its assistance from the appellant.<sup>50</sup>

As President of the English Church Union, Wood was inevitably involved in the background to this case, and would seem to have had personal contact with Tait, for on March 3, 1876, Liddon wrote:

Thank you for your amusing Report of the Conversation with the Archbishop. I agree with your estimate of its real purport. "Soft words and strong measures" is, I suppose, a good motto for an absolute government; the first cost nothing, the second are "business". We have, I fear, little or rather nothing to hope for, while the present Primate is where he is, except that his fears of Disestablishment may teach him to moderate the prejudices which, if indulged, would certainly take small account of us.<sup>51</sup>

In the same letter, Liddon regretted that Tait had been invited to the opening of Keble College chapel:

He *will* make capital out of it for impartiality etc. whereas it really will only strengthen his hands for crushing ritualists *seriatim*. And he will, I expect, make a speech which Mr

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<sup>49</sup> *Halifax*, February 3, 1876.

<sup>50</sup> Lockhart, I, p226; Marsh, p223.

<sup>51</sup> *Halifax*, March 3, 1876.

Keble would have described by a somewhat stern word. However, it is no use, now, to cry over spilt milk.<sup>52</sup>

Nevertheless, he recognised again the need for restraint on the part of ritualist clergy – “I was glad to see the *Church Times* advising people not to do foolish things in the way of Ritual, just for the sake of being extraordinary. These excrescences are only so many vulnerable sides, and they do not secure any counterbalancing good.”<sup>53</sup>

Some could offend in an opposite direction, however. Liddon writes to Wood,

Burton has preached two very fierce sermons against the ritualists; of which the first is called by the undergraduates the "get out" sermon, and the second "the disreputable crew" from expressions which occur in them. He is violent and grotesque; but, for all that he exerts a sort of influence mainly because he is supposed to be a High Churchman...<sup>54</sup>

The Appeal Court (with Tait present) delivered its verdict on Ridsdale in May, 1877, deciding against wafer bread, the crucifix and vestments, but giving grudging acceptance to the eastward position. Had the Purchas judgment granted this last point, much bitter controversy might have been avoided. On reading a report of the judgment, Liddon wrote to Pusey saying, “the Judicial Committee would appear to have sustained its reputation for indifference to justice, wherever justice is at issue with the drift of prevailing prejudices, whether puritanical or unbelieving.”<sup>55</sup> All pointed toward disestablishment, for which Tait must take responsibility. “He has contrived to make the very most of all that, from a religious and spiritual point of view, is least tolerable in our relations to the State.... If we are disestablished, and broken up, I hope that he may live to see the fruit of his primacy, and to repent of it, before he dies.”<sup>56</sup> (Pusey had written to Tait on the importance of what might be decided in the Ridsdale case. He stressed his own faithfulness to

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid. Liddon had withdrawn his acceptance of an invitation to preach at the chapel’s opening on learning of the invitation to Tait. (*Halifax*, February 17, 1876.) Eventually he yielded to pressure from Lord Beauchamp and preached. (ibid. February 17, 1876.) The sermon, “John Keble”, was printed in *Clerical Life and Work* (London, 1894.) An additional difficulty was the Bishop of Oxford’s wish that the chapel be consecrated. This would place it under diocesan control, and Liddon strenuously opposed the plan, supported in this by Sir Robert Phillimore. (LP, II, 1, April 2, 1876; *Diaries*, February 19, 25, 28, 29, 1876.)

<sup>53</sup> *Halifax*, March 3, 1876.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. March 19, 1876. John William Burton (1813-88) was Vicar of St Mary’s, Oxford. He became Dean of Chichester in 1876. (See *Diaries*, February 27, 1876.)

<sup>55</sup> LP, II, 21, May 13, 1877.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

the Prayer Book and his dislike of ritual innovation, claiming that the ritual movement was chiefly a lay one. He challenged Tait to say whether he thought a Parliament containing Dissenters and unbelievers to be a good legislator for the Church.)<sup>57</sup>

Ridsdale submitted, but the manifestly political nature of the judgment caused widespread dissatisfaction, which turned to indignation when word leaked out that the judges had been divided, and that Lord Cairns had resorted to the law to prevent three of them from declaring their view in court.

Ridsdale's submission rested on Tait's willingness, as his bishop, to dispense him from what he felt to be an obligation to wear vestments in obedience to the Ornaments Rubric of the Prayer Book as he understood it. Liddon approved of this course:

I should make no doubt that *if* the Archbishop will say that as a Bishop, he thinks that the Ornaments Rubric was intended to forbid the vestments, Mr Ridsdale ought to submit. The responsibility for such an opinion would not rest with Mr Ridsdale.<sup>58</sup>

In another letter he remarked, with an echo of Wood's earlier letter to *The Guardian*,

As to the Ritualists, first of all, they cannot be put to death, however desirable that consummation might appear. That being so, they have to be reckoned with....There are victories which are fatal to the conqueror; and the Ridsdale decision is likely to be one of them.<sup>59</sup>

Even before the judgment, Liddon had written to Wood questioning Lord Penzance's status as a judge in ecclesiastical cases:

A point which I want to get cleared up is whether Archbishop Tait ever has given Letters Patent to Lord Penzance like those which Sir R. Phillimore gives at length in his Ecclesiastical Law ii.1205. And if he has, what is the date of these Letters Patent? The Archbishop there says to his judge, "We trusting in your *sound doctrine, good morals, purity of conscience*, and in your special fidelity" etc. The Archbishop *signs* this document.

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<sup>57</sup> PL. II, 156, Easter Eve, 1877 [draft].

<sup>58</sup> *Halifax*, June 5, 1877.

<sup>59</sup> Johnston, p215.



The sentence occurs in it, "We do for ourselves and our successors give and grant to you our power and authority legally to inflict any ecclesiastical censures whatever."

Altogether the document is important in its bearing (1) on the Archbishop's responsibility for the personal character of the Dean of Arches, and (2) on the transfer of Jurisdictional powers to the Dean.

It seems to be a more material point - than freedom in appointment?<sup>60</sup>

After the judgment, he was firm in his opinion of the Court of Final Appeal:

When you have (1) a Court like the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, the religious authority of which has been consistently challenged by the best men in the Church of England (Mr Keble denied that it could anyhow be brought under the head of the Fifth Commandment), and (2) a Decision like that about the Vestments which, as Dr Pusey has said, and many of those who least agree with him admit, is based on a non-natural interpretation of the Prayer-book, you cannot proceed to enforce such a Decision of such a Court as "law," without grave risks.<sup>61</sup>

With this background, we may now turn to other ritualist cases which attracted Liddon's attention.

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<sup>60</sup> *Halifax*, February 22, 1877

<sup>61</sup> Johnston, p215-6.

## 9. The Persecutions

### Arthur Tooth

The Ridsdale case might have been brought to a comparatively peaceful conclusion with Tait's help, but by making the Public Worship Regulation Act seem effective it could only encourage such prosecutions, and Tait would not find other ritualist clergy so accommodating as Ridsdale.

A person who was lately staying at Addington [wrote Liddon to Wood] told me that Archbishop Tait persisted in making the whole Church party responsible for "Presbyter Anglicanus" [a pamphleteer clergyman who had converted to Roman Catholicism] - it might have been written by anybody. "You see," his Grace said, "what I have to deal with." The Archbishop, I fear, is not unwilling to be under a misapprehension of this kind; he looks at everything connected with the Church movement through such an atmosphere of Presbyterian prejudice.<sup>1</sup>

By the time this was written, a far more damaging case than Ridsdale's was brewing, involving the Revd Arthur Tooth of St James's Church, Hatcham, in South-East London.<sup>2</sup> Since 1868, Tooth had conducted a highly effective ministry in his parish, bringing considerable numbers of the poor to worship, but his use of vestments, incense, the eastward position, candles, and the introduction of a confessional were enough to bring him to the attention of the Church Association, which began to spy on his services in August, 1875, and in November used three nominal parishioners (none of whom worshipped at St James') to lodge a formal complaint against him under the provisions of the Act.<sup>3</sup>

Tooth demanded that his bishop, Thomas Claughton of Rochester, examine the case himself, rather than send it to a secular court which he (Tooth) would not recognize. The English Church Union was solidly behind him, as were his parishioners. Claughton refused to hear the matter or veto a prosecution, and the case came before Lord Penzance in July, 1876, Tooth refusing to appear. Legally speaking, Penzance was not unfair in his judgment. He excluded charges still *sub judice* in the Ridsdale case, and found against Tooth only on points condemned previously by the

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<sup>1</sup> Halifax, June 15, 1876.

<sup>2</sup> See J. Coombs: *Judgment on Hatcham* (London, 1969); B. Palmer: *Reverend Rebels* (London, 1993), Ch. 4; P. T. Marsh: *The Victorian Church in Decline* (London, 1969), pp225ff.

<sup>3</sup> Palmer, p122-3.

Judicial Committee. Costs were awarded against Tooth and a monition issued requiring the offending practices to be discontinued. Tooth ignored this and was subsequently inhibited by Penzance from performing his clerical duties. He declined to recognize the inhibition, and refused access to the church to clergymen sent by the bishop to conduct services - including Randall Davidson, who will feature later in connection with Liddon and ritualism.

Disgraceful scenes followed when the Church Association hired a mob of roughs to disrupt services, men at half-a-crown, boys at a shilling.<sup>4</sup> Wood wrote to the *Church Times* at the end of 1876 defending Tooth, which earned him a gentle private protest from the Prince of Wales who, despite his high regard for him, and his own High Church sympathies, could not have a Groom of the Bedchamber (a position held by Wood) supporting a lawbreaker.<sup>5</sup> Wood offered the Prince his resignation, which was not accepted.

January 1877 brought further disturbances at St James's, requiring police presence. The *Guardian* pronounced solemnly:

Mr Tooth's proceedings appear to point not only to disestablishment, but to schism. He not only holds his own church by what may be called force against the State, but he denounces those who take his place as *schismatical*. If this denunciation is run out to its logical conclusion...the course of things must establish (as in the time of the Non-jurors) two hostile camps - Mr Tooth and his adherents on the one side, the Bishops and their adherents on the other.<sup>6</sup>

Dean Church, who thought Tooth's position indefensible, was disturbed by the attitudes operating in the courts:

I can only see in the legal decisions, and in the measures which have brought forth their results in the present crisis, a misuse of law such as has before now been known in history, and a policy of injustice towards an unpopular party, which has, I think, as much to say for itself as any other in the Church.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Lockhart, I, p203.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* pp207-211.

<sup>6</sup> *Guardian*, January 10, 1877, p41.

<sup>7</sup> M. C. Church: *Life and Letters of Dean Church* (London, 1894), p253.

Liddon no doubt concurred with this, and was unimpressed by the *Guardian's* comments.

Pray observe [he wrote to Wood] the confusion between State Legislation for the Church of England and the action of the Church of England herself. The writer assumes that the Church of England is responsible for the Judicial Committee of the P[ri]v[ate] C[ouncil]. Whereas all that is best in the Church of England has protested against that tribunal as a final court for deciding cases of doctrine.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, there was an historical consideration which required attention:

The *Guardian* endeavours to decline the question whether in certain circumstances resistance to evil within the Church is not the only chance of improvement. Where would the Reformation have been on the principles of the *Guardian*? The authority which was resisted, altho' not divinely authorised, was much more venerable than the Judicial Committee of the PC. Experience shows that remonstrance against Erastian legislation is worse than useless when addressed to highly-placed personages. It is regarded as pure disloyalty.<sup>9</sup>

The barb against authority was dug in deeper:

Note too what a *petitio principii* lies in the employment of that word "loyalty". "Loyalty" to what, I should like to know. It seems to me that the truest "loyalty" to the reformed Church of England is consistent with resistance to the State Court, when it attempts to discharge any *purely spiritual* function. When Oliver Cromwell was formally installed as Lord Protector, who, I should like to know, was "loyal"? The *Guardian* argues as if *de facto* meant always exactly the same thing as *de jure*.<sup>10</sup>

He concluded,

The *Guardian's* strongest argument is a sort of terror-stricken appeal to the bugbear of Disestablishment. Well, we none of us want it. But Establishment may cost too dear. The *Guardian* seems anxious to prove that it does and must. The *Guardian* has little faith in the Church of England apart from the State's arm of flesh: it is to go to pieces and what not. Who are the most loyal, they who belong to the Church of England because Christ is still with it, or they who belong to it because it is well endowed and has an important social and political position? And the *Guardian* - or rather this writer - is of the latter class.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *Halifax*, January 11, 1877.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

In short - and from Liddon there could be few stronger censures than this - the *Guardian's* article was "better calculated to do the work of the Church of Rome than anything I have heard for a long time."<sup>12</sup>

Rarely can Liddon's feelings - and his uncompromising Anglicanism - have been more openly displayed than in this letter. He is demonstrably grieved and angered at wounds being inflicted on the Church which he not only believes in but also loves.

Whatever his views, events moved rapidly, and in a very ugly manner. The Church Association, invoking a statute of 1813, charged Tooth with contempt of court, an offence carrying the penalty of imprisonment. Consternation followed. The framers of the Act had never envisaged such proceedings, yet Lord Penzance had no alternative but to pronounce Tooth in contempt, his arrest and imprisonment following on January 22. Overnight he achieved the status of a martyr.

Wood and Liddon were among the early visitors to Horsemonger Lane Gaol. Tooth's conditions of imprisonment were not severe, but still uncomfortable, and Wood wrote to his wife, "The Governor of Maidstone is a good Catholic, and longing to have Mr Tooth under his charge in order to treat him with every honour."<sup>13</sup> Liddon went with his sister, Mrs Ambrose, to see Tooth. "He walked up and down with us in the part of the Gaol which is closed in with bars. His brother Mr Alfred Tooth was there with tears in his eyes. I thought Mr Tooth's manner and bearing very quiet and dignified."<sup>14</sup> After his visit he wrote a letter predicting the likely course of future events with almost uncanny accuracy:

If it were not for the suffering of Mr Tooth (and his sick face in that cage in the court of the gaol quite haunts me) I should not regret the continuance of the imprisonment. If it lasts, it will produce a change, I feel sure, in the feeling of the country. The authors of the P.W.R.A. would be only too thankful, depend upon it, to have escaped this fiasco: and we should have a very good chance, I firmly believe, of repealing that Act, at no distant time, if one or two similar cases should occur. *The Rock* says little on the subject: the *Pall Mall* tries to soften it

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> *Halifax*, General Correspondence 120-122, January 12, 1877.

<sup>14</sup> *Diaries*, January 24, 1877.

down: the *Daily News* says that some way out of it must be found: the *Standard* is the most brutal of all, yet it too is clearly frightened. The rage of the *Times* about the number of judges who are sitting in the Ridsdale case, betrays an apprehension that the decision in that case is not unlikely to be swayed by the reaction. Mr Tooth will not have suffered in vain.<sup>15</sup>

A further letter of Liddon's at this time reminds us how much Church affairs were discussed in Victorian society:

Yesterday I had a long talk about Mr Tooth with the President of Magdalen who is greatly concerned at his imprisonment. He used the strongest language in reference to it. He thinks that some address to the Archbishop or the Crown, praying that Mr Tooth might be let out ought to be got up: although on talking the proposal over in detail difficulties seemed to emerge. But his wish to do something was very edifying.<sup>16</sup>

Public disquiet at the Tooth case grew so vocal that the Home Office was privately advised to take action. The authorities persuaded the three original complainants to ask for Tooth's release, on the ground that a curate-in-charge had gained access to St James', Hatcham, thus satisfying the law. Penzance hastened to release Tooth on February 17. However, Tooth still remained inhibited from ministry until he obeyed Penzance's original monition, and he considered taking legal action against Bishop Claughton and his representative, the Revd Benjamin Dale, who had entered the church to conduct services. The Revd P. G. Medd wrote to Liddon, asking him to write to Wood and others to beg Tooth to refrain from the contemplated action:

Whatever moral effects there may be from what Mr Tooth has gone through, would be (surely) entirely forfeited by such a proceeding....All success depends exclusively on our being sufferers only. And to try to get the E.C.U. to discourage it - or, if not that, to keep clear of it....I wish we were more lucky in our representatives. To my knowledge Mr Tooth unwisely (to say the least) resisted, in the most impracticable way, thoroughly friendly actions of the Bishop, in his purely spiritual capacity, as long ago as three years before the P.W.R.A. was dreamed of.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Halifax*, January 28, 1877. Pusey did not entirely agree with Liddon, believing that Penzance's court could claim to be spiritual because it was appointed by the Archbishops, and thinking that "Mr Tooth ought to have submitted to Lord Penzance *under protest*." (*Diaries*, January 26, 1877.)

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* Ash Wednesday, 1877. F. Bulley was President of Magdalen.

<sup>17</sup> *Halifax*, February 1, 1877.

Liddon forwarded this letter to Wood, commenting

Pray consider *this*. I had not heard of the action against the Bishop of Rochester. Surely it is a mistake, for the reason Medd gives. At the same time, Medd is the Bishop's chaplain and is more disposed to write apologetically for him than would be quite natural to an independent person.<sup>18</sup>

Nothing more is heard of this, but on May 13 Tooth acted far more practically by breaking into St James' to conduct worship. The locks had been changed and he did not have keys

Two other events occurred at this date. Firstly, Wood, realising that as President of the English Church Union he must support Tooth, and that further prosecutions were inevitable, again offered his resignation to the Prince of Wales, who accepted it with sincere regret and respect for his old friend.<sup>19</sup> Liddon approved Wood's decision, while lamenting "the removal from the Prince's person of an influence which has no doubt shielded him from much harm."<sup>20</sup> Secondly, Disraeli removed Claughton from Rochester to be bishop of the new diocese of St Albans, which meant that the Tooth case landed on the desk of the unfortunate Archbishop Tait. "I have had a long interview with Mr Tooth," noted Tait on June 14. "I fear I shall not find him so amenable to authority as Mr Ridsdale."<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, the unrest occasioned by Tooth's case continued. "Now that the *delirant reges* of the Judicial Committee is over," wrote Liddon with dry reference to Horace, "the *plectuntur Achivi* has begun in the shape of letters about what to do."<sup>22</sup> No sooner had the question of Tooth been handed to Tait, then new heat was added to the ritualism controversy by Lord Redesdale, who waved before the House of Lords *The Priest in Absolution*, Part II, an edition by the Revd J. C. Chambers of writings by the Abbe Gaume, circulated privately among members of the Society of the Holy Cross (an association of Catholic-minded clergy) with the purpose of assisting priests

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. Liddon's remarks are written on the back of Medd's letter.

<sup>19</sup> Lockhart, I, p213.

<sup>20</sup> *Halifax*, May 19, 1877.

<sup>21</sup> *Tait*, II, p245.

<sup>22</sup> *Halifax*, May 19, 1877. See Horace, *Ep.* 1.2.14.

who heard confessions.<sup>23</sup> Redesdale was outraged at the kind of question which the book suggested might be asked of penitents. Tait could not pretend to sympathize with the practice or the book.<sup>24</sup>

Liddon already had reservations about the Society of the Holy Cross and similar bodies. They helped to keep some clergy within Anglicanism, but “they place a large body of names at the disposal of one or two people, possibly not of the best judgment”.<sup>25</sup> He realised the damage this attack could do to the cause of the ritualist clergy, to the English Church Union, and to the practice of confession in the Anglican Church. He advised Wood:

...let the attack expend its forces as much as might be - unopposed, and then to recall the House to the language of the Prayer Book, taken in its *natural* sense - as sanctioning confession and absolution at any rate within *certain* limits, whatever these limits might be. Then disclaim responsibility for private publications whether issuing from societies or individuals. Ask the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol [Ellicott - a strong opponent of ritualists] how far *he* would like to be made responsible for all the crudities, heresies, irreverences which are to be found in the publications of the Puritanical School. And wind up by insisting that private *religious* practices like confession had better be treated somewhere else than in that House, especially at a time when the country was occupied with grave questions of high policy, etc., etc.

I have never seen *The Priest in Absolution*, and therefore I cannot say how far it would be *safe* to defend it. It may e.g. say that confession is of universal obligation. Or it may advise penitents to pray to the Blessed Virgin. In either of these cases it could not be defended on Church of England grounds: and of course, a great many propositions might occur in an elaborate work on such a subject which would be open to question.<sup>26</sup>

Altogether, I should be disposed to keep clear of the *book*, and to take refuge in the *subject*, as defined by the prayer book. I should myself like to try to handle the question of "the non-natural interpretation of documents" for the benefit of the Primate.<sup>27</sup>

Wood wrote to the press on the matter. Liddon approved, remarking, "You might have strengthened your argument by saying that the Bible which is so diligently circulated by the British & Foreign Bible Society contains both histories and precepts which are open to exactly

<sup>23</sup> J. C. Chambers: *The Priest in Absolution*, Part II (Privately printed, [1870]).

<sup>24</sup> *Tait*, II, pp171ff; J. Embry: *The Catholic Movement and the Society of the Holy Cross* (London, 1931), p106-8.

<sup>25</sup> LP, I, 148, August 26, 1873.

<sup>26</sup> The book actually steered a careful course, intending adherence to Anglican formularies.

<sup>27</sup> *Halifax*, June 11, 1877.



the same sort of criticism as *The Priest in Absolution*, and a great many of them too."<sup>28</sup> Given Liddon's devotion to scripture, his willingness to use such a comparison in the cause of irony reveals the strength of his conviction concerning the place of sacramental confession in the English Church. Yet he privately confessed, "I doubt the spiritual wisdom of printing this kind of question. Some general principles are better."<sup>29</sup> "It is clear", he added gloomily, "that Lord Redesdale's motion has answered its purpose in stirring up an extra amount of ignorant ferocity against High Churchmen."<sup>30</sup> Pusey responded to the situation with an English edition of the Abbe Gaume's *Advice on Hearing Confessions*, prefaced by an immense introduction on "English authorities on confession".<sup>31</sup>

The disturbance begun by Redesdale did not affect Tooth, however, due to an extraordinary turn of events. The English Church Union's lawyers suddenly spotted that his original trial might be rendered invalid on a legal technicality, and they lodged an appeal to the court of Queen's Bench. In November, the Queen's Bench justices upheld the appeal, quashing all the proceedings against Tooth.<sup>32</sup> To add to the jubilation of High Churchmen, the Lord Chief Justice stated clearly that Lord Penzance's court was (as Liddon and others maintained) solely a creation of the Public Worship Regulation Act, and not related to the old Court of Arches. This, the *Guardian* pointed out, was "of more serious import than the escape of Mr Tooth, or the mortification of his opponents"; it would "place beyond dispute ...the true character in law of the Act of 1874", and would "undoubtedly lend strength to the demand made in so many quarters for a reconsideration of the Act, and give new arguments and reasons why such reconsideration should be attempted."<sup>33</sup> Liddon agreed with this:

Certainly the decision *in re* Mr Tooth is a most singular and welcome termination of all that has preceded it. I have had a hearty laugh over it...both as a humourous incident, and as a great administrative *fiasco*....

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<sup>28</sup> Halifax, July 18, 1877.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. June 19, 1877.

<sup>31</sup> E. B. Pusey: *Advice for those who exercise the ministry of reconciliation through confession and absolution* (Oxford, 1878).

<sup>32</sup> Palmer gives the date as November 6, almost certainly the date the case was briefly postponed. The judgment is not mentioned in the *Guardian* until November 21.

<sup>33</sup> *Guardian*, November 21, 1877, p1608.

The really valuable result is the *obiter dictum* of the judges as to the creation of the new jurisdiction by the P.W.R.A.. A serious effort now ought to be made to get this act repealed. It is impossible to go on in a state of dead-lock: and the spiritual reasons which were urged by the Archbishop for subscription to the Court have been dissipated by the Lord Chief Justice. If the Archbishop was really more anxious to keep things as they are, than to make war on the ritualists, he would himself bring in a Bill to repeal this unfortunate Act, and to substitute for it a simplified and invigorated revival of the old Ecclesiastical Courts, Diocesan and Provincial. But it is, I suppose, unreasonable to expect anything of the kind....<sup>34</sup>

To complete the discomfiture of his opponents, Tooth was now entitled to prosecute his original accusers and Lord Penzance for false imprisonment - a step he was too exhausted and (in the main) charitable to take. To prevent further disturbances in his parish he resigned the benefice.<sup>35</sup> He lived until 1931, long enough to be feted at a gathering in 1927 as a hero of the ritualist struggle. Next to him on that occasion was the elderly Lord Halifax - Charles Wood.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Halifax*, November 23, 1877.

<sup>35</sup> This did not end the story of St James' troubles. See Coombs, *op. cit.*

<sup>36</sup> Lockhart, II, p354.

## 10. Further Prosecutions

The appointment of the Evangelical Bishop Thorold to Rochester was not a good omen of peace. In a *Pastoral Letter* of November, 1878, he made clear his views:

My own individual method of personally and officially dealing with those of the clergy who feel conscientiously unable either to obey the courts of the realm or to accept the private monition of the bishop is isolation. These brethren of ours are outside the law, and it is their own act that has placed them there.<sup>1</sup>

Of this letter Liddon told Wood, “Dr Pusey said to me ‘what beautiful premises, but *what* a conclusion!’”<sup>2</sup> He comforted one of Thorold’s erring clergymen with the word, “So I hear, my dear friend, that your bishop has isolated you; never mind, I have always read that religion flourished best in islands.”<sup>3</sup> His opinion of Thorold was expressed early in 1878:

Bishop Thorold is a Puritan partisan, of a fierce type, and has already done a great deal of mischief. Really the Church is not stronger for the multiplication of such prelates as this: on the whole utter neglect is better than active intolerance.<sup>4</sup>

This letter also mentions troubles at St Raphael’s Church, Bristol, where Liddon frequently worshipped when staying with relatives. The chaplain to the church was the Revd Arthur Ward. He had been appointed in 1859 to the Seamen’s Orphanage and to St Raphael’s close by. There he oversaw the foundation of one of the early religious communities for women in the Church of England, the Sisters of Charity, who cared for the poor and for orphans. Ward was acquainted with other priests in the Church of England who had founded communities for women; W. J. Butler of Wantage, J. M. Neale of East Grinstead, and Canon Carter of Clewer (see below).<sup>5</sup> His ministry was highly effective, but in a decidedly Protestant city his ritual made him the subject of attack, leading to a monition from his bishop, C. J. Ellicott, issued on January 2, 1878.<sup>6</sup> Ward’s position was precarious, since he was not an incumbent and would have no recourse to appeal should his licence from the bishop be withdrawn, and so the founder of St Raphael’s, Canon R. H. W. Miles, wrote a strong letter to Ellicott, asking him to go and see the quality of Ward’s pastoral work. He also raised pertinent questions. Why was the cross allowed in churches, but not the crucifix? Why were pictures of the Stations of the Cross considered offensive? (The bishop had objected to both.) “If the fear of Roman corruptions is to deprive us of these aids to

<sup>1</sup> C. H. Simpkinson: *The Life and Work of Bishop Thorold* (London, 1896) p119.

<sup>2</sup> *Halifax*, December 16, 1878.

<sup>3</sup> Simpkinson, p121-2.

<sup>4</sup> *Halifax*, February 14, 1878.

<sup>5</sup> P. Anson: *The Call of the Cloister* (London, 1955), pp414ff.

devotion,” wrote Miles, “we shall end again with bare naked walls and those principles of Puritanism that sooner or later lead to infidelity or general scepticism.”<sup>7</sup>

The bishop’s reply was short, justifying himself by reference to the law despite Miles’ asking whether the bishops were become mere arbiters of the secular courts.<sup>8</sup> Ellicott was not a man to see that a more colourful ritual might be the most effective means of mission among Ward’s poor people.<sup>9</sup> He had already declared during his 1874 Triennial Visitation to his diocese that following the Public Worship Regulation Act bishops “will not be able to arrest its course in cases where the public feeling of a parish is decidedly roused, and the law has been set at nought,” though they would “doubtless use all their powers to moderate and restrain all embittered and sectarian action.”<sup>10</sup> He used little moderation toward St Raphael’s, perhaps sensing that his own position was not strong. He had not previously demanded changes in the church’s liturgy, and the complaints he had received did not reflect the mind of regular worshippers. His treatment of Ward and the churchwardens was offensively high-handed, considering that Ward (to whom Ellicott refused even to give the names of his accusers) willingly moderated his practice excepting on the points of vestments, altar lights and a mixed chalice. Without these he refused to celebrate Holy Communion.<sup>11</sup>

“Poor Mr Ward seems to have been treated with some extra-cruelty,” wrote Liddon to Wood. “I have tried to impress this on the Dr [Pusey], who has been courted by the Bishop of G[loucester] & B[ristol] in past years, and does not know what that unhappy prelate has come to be – at least of late.”<sup>12</sup> The next day he commented, “If the Bishop wishes to set matters right at St Raphael’s – he has perhaps a first duty to perform – and that is to express his regret to Mr Ward for the letters which he had permitted himself to write to him? They seemed to me cruel and insulting – considering all Mr Ward has done.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *The Guardian*, January 9, 1878, p48.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, January 23, 1878, p120.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> For an unflattering picture of Ellicott, see G. E. Buckle: *The Letters of Queen Victoria* (2<sup>nd</sup> Series), I, (London, 1926) p545. He had expressed his views on ritualism forcefully in an article on “The Church of England, Present and Future” in *The Nineteenth Century*, vol.I, no.1, March, 1877. – a fascinating example of the lack of understanding by an Establishment bishop of the issues involved. It was strongly attacked in the same journal by J. G. Rogers (vol.I, no.3, May, 1877). Ellicott loftily restated his position in “The Ridsdale Judgment” (vol.I, no.5, July, 1877).

<sup>10</sup> *The Guardian*, October 28, 1874, p1389.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, January 30, 1878, p152; February 6, 1878, p184.

<sup>12</sup> *Halifax*, February 14, 1878. Ellicott had written to Pusey in 1865, thanking him for his first *Eirenicon*, looking at possibilities for Church unity. (*Pusey*, IV, p117-8.)

<sup>13</sup> *Halifax*, February 15, 1878.

The case followed a course becoming familiar, with claims, counter-claims, a letter of support to the bishop from 40 members of the Bristol Clerical Association, and an anonymous pamphlet of protest to him which found its way to Liddon, who said to Wood,

I think I must be indebted to you for *Church Grievances; a letter to the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol*. Whoever wrote it has written it well. It is exceedingly clear, and - alas - well deserved. That case of St Raphael's is really very cruel: and the spectacle of this flock of puritanical clergymen, many of whom do little or nothing for their parishioners, memorializing the bishop about his persecution of Mr Ward, is one of the most unlovely things we have witnessed for a long time.<sup>14</sup>

Liddon's complaint at the sight of Low Churchmen who did not obey the rubrics of the Prayer Book invoking State law against High Churchmen was to be taken up by an increasing number of voices. He would not live to see the outcome of the Ward case, and makes no further reference to it in his Wood correspondence, presumably because matters reached stalemate. Ward's licence was withdrawn (though he continued as Warden of the Sisters, and watched his community steadily increase in numbers) and St Raphael's was closed for fifteen years. Ellicott's reputation was not enhanced, nor were his struggles with the ritualist clergy finished.<sup>15</sup>

Accusations against clergy were increasing across the country, leading Liddon to leave the year 1878 with the question, "If there should be a general election, would it not be well to remind electors, who are also good churchmen, to pledge their representatives to vote for the repeal of the P.W.R.A.?"<sup>16</sup> The case of Canon Carter of Clewer brought matters nearer home for him, since he knew personally the priest who had founded a sisterhood in his Clewer parish.<sup>17</sup> Carter has been described as "one of the best of the Tractarian clergy, gentle, ethereal, not at all angular. No one could call him an awkward or truculent ritualist."<sup>18</sup> He was a "sober, somewhat ponderous pastor,"<sup>19</sup> but he was acquainted with the original Tractarian fathers, Keble, Newman and Pusey, and also with other leading Churchmen (including Liddon and Dean Church), as well as with Gladstone. The work of the House of Mercy – the beginning of the Community of St

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., February 26, 1878.

<sup>15</sup> See John Baghot-de la Bere: *Has The Law Been Used Lawfully?* (No publisher, 1884), a pamphlet written in protest to Ellicott; also Lockhart, I, p225-6. The congregation at St Raphael's continued to support the sisterhood and the orphanage. The brother of the sisters' superior criticised Ellicott for giving them no assistance, refusing to be their episcopal visitor (the bishop who would be their link with the powers of government in the Church and who would, if necessary, defend them), and for declining even to call on them. (*The Guardian*, May 8, 1878, p650.)

<sup>16</sup> *Halifax*, December 18, 1878.

<sup>17</sup> See V. Bonham: *A Joyous Service. The Clewer Sisters & Their Work* (Windsor, 1989); also A. M. Allchin: *The Silent Rebellion* (London, 1958), Ch.4.

<sup>18</sup> O. Chadwick: *The Victorian Church*, II, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., London, 1972) p350.

<sup>19</sup> Bonham, p9.

John the Baptist in Clewer – was originally the very Victorian one of reclaiming “fallen women”. At their head, under Carter’s direction, was a redoubtable widow, Harriet Monsell. By an ironic coincidence, she was a cousin by marriage to Archbishop Tait. She was quite capable of administering a spirited rebuke to him over his position on ritualism, but they held each other in affection and respect.<sup>20</sup>

Carter’s achievement in guiding the nascent community was remarkable. He cared for a large parish, and after an undistinguished undergraduate career at Oxford worked hard to educate himself in theology and the principles of the Religious Life, which enabled him to create the community’s rules. He published many devotional works, and taught the principles of the Tractarians, especially sacramental confession, frequent communion, and devotion to the sacramental presence of Christ in the Eucharist. He was not extravagant in ritual. He wore vestments, used the mixed chalice and lighted candles, made the sign of the cross when blessing, and elevated the bread and wine after the consecration in Holy Communion, but these were enough to make him a ready target for prosecution, which was attempted in 1877 but vetoed by his bishop, J. F. Mackarness of Oxford on the ground that the complaint did not come from parishioners. A further attempt was made by the Church Association in 1879, using not the Public Worship Regulation Act but the 1840 Clergy Discipline Act which did not allow such a veto. Mackarness still refused to permit a prosecution, so the Church Association applied to the Queen’s Bench for a *mandamus* compelling him to approve the suit. This was granted, but the bishop appealed to the House of Lords where his plea was upheld – a point of importance, since it made a bishop’s power of veto complete.<sup>21</sup> Before the granted *mandamus* or the bishop’s appeal, however, Carter had to decide whether he would obey a direct request for ritual modifications from his own bishop. At various times he requested advice from friends, among them Dean Church, Dr Bright and Liddon. Each produced a characteristic response; Church, careful and urging conciliation;<sup>22</sup> Bright, (in a phrase of Liddon’s)<sup>23</sup> thrown into “an ecstasy of criticism” of the points at issue;<sup>24</sup> Liddon, brief, clear and logical:

I have been thinking your letter over. I should make submission to the bishop’s judgment depend on his willingness to state publicly (1) that his application to you was quite independent of the P.W.R.A.; and (2) that the advice he would give you would be in no

<sup>20</sup> Tait, II, p275-6. I am grateful to Prof. A. M. Allchin for allowing me to see his unpublished essay, *Living by Hope: the gift and achievement of Harriet Monsell*.

<sup>21</sup> C. C. Mackarness: *Memorials of the Episcopate of John Fielder Mackarness, D.D.* (Oxford, 1892) pp86-8.

<sup>22</sup> W. H. Hutchings: *Life and Letters of Thomas Thellusson Carter* (London, 1903), p152.

<sup>23</sup> Halifax, November 29, 1879.

<sup>24</sup> Hutchings, pp162-4.

way influenced by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. If he consents to this, we must, I think, admit that, however plain the meaning of a rubric may be, a bishop might decide on the expediency or in expediency of reviving it, if it had been for a long time obsolete.

If the bishop's decision involved you in inconsistency, I should resign. Resignation would leave you free for your main work at the House of Mercy, and would untie your hands in some ways. It would also teach the bishops what is involved in their cultus of the State....

I am too probably advising what may involve great difficulties of income. Pray understand me as writing in the abstract, and as feeling that there may be considerations which I do not sufficiently recognize.<sup>25</sup>

This letter, most unfortunately, is undated. Liddon's letters to Wood tell another story, involving difference of opinion between himself and Pusey over Carter's serious consideration of resigning his living:

The case is complicated by Dr Pusey's having written to Mr Carter on Sunday, advising him to resign.<sup>26</sup> I did not hear of this until the letter had gone.

Mr Carter is coming here [Christ Church] to preach this evening and Dr Pusey will see him. I have begged Dr P. to reconsider his advice to Mr C., but I don't think he likes doing this. And, as you will understand, *I* must feel my way. But so far as I can see into the matter, I agree with you in thinking the resignation a disaster: it would simply oil the chariot wheels of Pharaoh, and so enable him to get up out of the sea.

The Bishop of Oxford is an odd mixture. On the present occasion he has I think shown courage and generosity: but these good qualities are inconsistent, in their present exercise, with his support of Archbishop Tait's policy as a whole, and with his recent language about the E.C.U.<sup>27</sup>

Liddon's diary for March 5, 1879, does not mention a meeting with Carter; but it certainly took place, for he wrote to Wood:

...I did not understand him to have made up his mind; but he left me with the impression that he would not resign his living.

The opinion that the resignation of his living would be as mischievous as his going to Rome is, I hope, inaccurate....No doubt his resignation would imply a great deal – but something very far short of, or rather differing in kind from, that which would be implied in his leaving the communion of the English Church.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p162.

<sup>26</sup> For this letter see PL, II, 229. March 2, 1879.

<sup>27</sup> Halifax, March 5, 1879. Mackarness had been a member of the E.C.U., leaving it in 1869. (See Mackarness, p95)

<sup>28</sup> Halifax, March 7, 1879. Quoted by Johnston, p268, with some omissions.

Liddon felt, however, that Wood had been too severe on Mackarness:

I do not quite follow your judgment of the Bishop of Oxford. Considering that he is not a serious High Churchman of Mr Keble's type, and that his is a cold and narrow mind, greatly wanting in imagination, I think he has on the whole acted with much courage. Do you not invest him with ideal attributes, and then feel disappointment at his not corresponding to them? Certainly his language about the E.C.U. was regrettable, both in itself and as inconsistent with his own past career; but in order to do justice to his appearance in court the other day, we have to ask ourselves, Which of the Bishops would have stopped proceedings at all? Possibly Ely; but who else? Not, I fear, Peterborough or Salisbury, or St Albans, or even Lincoln. I may be wrong.<sup>29</sup>

That conversion to Rome should be rumoured of so firm an Anglican as Carter was absurd, but in the heated atmosphere of the time it could be harmful enough, and Liddon wished it stifled. Another anxiety will be mentioned shortly. In any case, Carter's visit left Pusey and Liddon with differing impressions:

I had a long talk with the Dr on Friday. He thought that Mr Carter "secretly" agreed with himself: and that a very effective letter *could* be written to the Bishop of Oxford – exhibiting the circumstances and kind of pressure under which C. resigned his cure. Indeed, Dr P. dwelt on *this* aspect of the resignation: - as an "opportunity". However, I do not think that he will press it...<sup>30</sup>

From this it seems likely that the undated letter to Carter, quoted by his biographer, was written sometime later, when Liddon had come to accept Pusey's viewpoint. Carter held out until the following year, but anticipating further conflict, he resigned despite the success of Mackarness' appeal to the Lords. "The result of the Clewer appeal is a great relief," said Liddon to Wood. "But Mr Carter's resignation *is* serious. His over-sensitive consideration for the difficulties of the Bishop of Oxford has I suppose led to it. It will cause a great deal of perplexity and distress – all round us."<sup>31</sup> On Easter Day he wrote to Carter, "begging him to take some opportunity of explaining his motives to the general world, so as to obviate disasters. The Bishop *ought* to decline to receive such a resignation."<sup>32</sup> His greatest fear, emerging in a letter to the *Times* on April 3, was that priests in a similar position to Carter's might follow his example and resign, rather than remaining to continue the struggle against the injustice of the Public Worship Act.

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<sup>29</sup> *Halifax*, March 7, 1879.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* March 8, 1879.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, Easter Eve, 1880.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, Easter Tuesday, 1880.



hence his pressing Carter to explain his motives publicly.<sup>33</sup> This is made clear in comments to Wood:

The Bishop [of Oxford] seems to me (while abounding in practical ability of a certain kind, and very anxious indeed to promote any reasonable results that can be labelled “work” among his clergy) to be singularly insensible to all that stirs true moral enthusiasm, and in particular, not to know a great man when he sees him. He has no eye for such a character as Mr Carter’s...[This was a gross injustice to Mackarness.<sup>34</sup>]

I have written [Carter] five letters, so that he must be tired of seeing my handwriting. I want him to explain the grounds of his resignation more at length, as (1) necessitated by his relations with the bishop, and (2) as involving no change whatever in his loyalty to the Church of England and (3) as being so peculiar to his whole personal circumstances and history as not to constitute a precedent for other people.<sup>35</sup>

Carter tried to make clear that his case should not establish a precedent, not wholly satisfying more fervent ritualists by this – notably some clergy of the Society of the Holy Cross.<sup>36</sup> He remained in Clewer as Warden of the Sisterhood until his death in 1901. Contrary to the course suggested by Pusey (and seemingly by Liddon in the above letter), he publicly denied that the bishop had put any pressure on him to resign.<sup>37</sup> His adherence to the Church of England through trying times eventually made him a figure of widespread respect.

### The Dale Case

Canon Carter was never in danger of imprisonment. This was not the case with the Revd T. Pelham Dale of St Vedast’s Church in London.<sup>38</sup> The familiar tale had been played out. Inhibited by the Bishop of London in 1877, Dale had escaped on a legal technicality, but in 1880 the Church Association prosecuted him and, when Dale ignored an inhibition pronounced by Lord Penzance, pressed for his imprisonment.<sup>39</sup> Faced with the scandal of another priest in gaol, Archbishop Tait (who – presumably as a consequence of Mackarness’ securing in the Lords the episcopal right of veto – had quietly approached some of the ritualist clergy about a possible return to his original notion of leaving ritual cases to the judgment of the bishops concerned,

<sup>33</sup> Hutchings, p175-6.

<sup>34</sup> See Hutchings, p174-5.

<sup>35</sup> *Halifax*, April 1, 1880.

<sup>36</sup> P. M. Rampton: *The Thought and Work of Thomas Thellusson Carter of Clewer* (unpublished PhD thesis, King’s College, London, 1984), p114-5.

<sup>37</sup> Hutchings, p151.

<sup>38</sup> See H. P. Dale (ed.): *The Life and Letters of Thomas Pelham Dale* (2 vols. London, 1894.)

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, I, pp260ff.

without recourse to the secular courts<sup>40</sup>) urged the Church Association not to ask for imprisonment. He failed in this, as he did when asking Dale to compromise and Lord Penzance not to consign Dale to prison.<sup>41</sup> Penzance was bound by the law, but Tait was beginning to appreciate the damaging results of the Public Worship Act. Henry Scott Holland, who visited Tait, told Liddon that the Archbishop was “greatly moved at the deadlock in Church matters. But he has no policy worth mentioning to relieve consciences.”<sup>42</sup>

Dale was arrested on October 30 and taken to Holloway Prison. Liddon wrote to support him.<sup>43</sup> Tait publicly condemned the Church Association’s action in a letter to the *Times*. Liddon was not impressed by this, telling Wood,

The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London [have] both done their best to persuade the St Vedast’s Churchwardens *not* to apply for Mr Dale’s imprisonment. I fear that in the Archbishop’s case this was only because he hoped to accomplish his end by a less insidious process, as appears from his letter today.<sup>44</sup>

This was not wholly unfair, since Tait’s letter stated that the Act reflected the views of the Church on ritual, and that Dale was much to blame for his predicament in not obeying his bishop.<sup>45</sup> However, Liddon’s sense of how events would move after the Act (to which we have referred) made him confident when he wrote to the choir-master of St Vedast’s:

On the subject of Mr Dale’s imprisonment, if my sympathies were with the persons who have promoted it, I should regard such an event as a very great misfortune. For...Mr Dale will not forfeit the consideration and affection which his life and character deservedly command on account of an incident which, in all probability, the more far-sighted as well as the more considerate of his opponents already regard with very great regret. Certainly they have good reason to do so.<sup>46</sup>

They had indeed. Popular opinion swung in Dale’s favour, and not all from naturally sympathetic quarters. The congregation of C. H. Spurgeon, the famous non-conformist preacher, sent flowers to the prison, whilst another Free Churchman expressed witheringly to the Church Association what many felt – “You mistake religious passion and religious hate for divine grace!

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<sup>40</sup> P. T. Marsh: *The Victorian Church in Decline* (London, 1969) p264.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* p265.

<sup>42</sup> *Diaries*, February 12, 1870.

<sup>43</sup> *Diaries*, November 1, 1880.

<sup>44</sup> *Halifax*, November 13, 1880.

<sup>45</sup> *The Times*, November 13, 1880. For a pamphlet defending Dale, see W. J. E. Bennet: *Is Thomas Dale, Priest of the English Church, now a prisoner in Holloway Gaol, Right or Wrong?* (London, 1880), which discusses Tait’s criticisms of Dale.

<sup>46</sup> Dale, I, p288-9.

Your whole wisdom is ‘earthly, sensual, devilish,’ and the liberties of Englishmen are unsafe in your hands.”<sup>47</sup> Sermons were preached on the injustice done to Dale, some comparing him to the Seventeenth Century bishops who suffered deprivation and imprisonment for refusing to deny their oaths of allegiance to James II.<sup>48</sup> One of the most cogent not only attacked the status of Lord Penzance and his court, but pointed out the increasingly ludicrous situation revealed at a celebration of the Eucharist where “one of the best and most popular of our bishops took the eastward position, for which Mr Dale is imprisoned. Another Bishop wrote to the *Times* last week to say he wore vestments always. Who will touch them? And if they are let alone, why is Mr Dale imprisoned?”<sup>49</sup>

In London on November 19 a large English Church Union meeting in Dale’s defence heard a letter from Liddon to Wood lamenting a situation which “would never have arisen if Church courts had been established with a clear title to exercise Spiritual Authority, and able, therefore, to reach the conscience, as well as the pocket or the person of an instructed and believing Clergyman.” “Conscience is an explosive force with which wise governments, whether in Church or State, do not provoke needless encounters,” Liddon remarked. “Mr Dale’s persecutors might have been expected to remember that even the genius of Bunyan derives a fresh lustre from the associations of Bedford jail.”<sup>50</sup> His diary for November 29 mentions a similar meeting held in Oxford.

The London meeting was reported in a somewhat ill-tempered leading article in *The Guardian*, which noted that Penzance had been required to commit to prison not only Dale but also the Revd R. W. Enraght of Holy Trinity, Bordesley, and the Revd S. F. Green of St John’s, Miles Platting. “So,” said the paper, “we now have three beneficed clergymen imprisoned because they obstinately refuse to recognize the authority of Lord Penzance.”<sup>51</sup> Such a question of principle would not usually interest the general public, added the writer, but the spectacle of “an aged and respected clergyman apprehended like a common felon, dragged away from his home, and locked up in a prison cell” could hardly escape notice, especially when “repeated twice over

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<sup>47</sup> Dale, I, p284, 306. Christian leaders of this era often showed creditable freedom from narrow denominationalism in their personal dealings with each other. For example, Liddon and the distinguished Birmingham Congregationalist, R. W. Dale, corresponded and sent each other volumes of their sermons. Spurgeon was respected by notable Anglicans, including Archbishop Benson of Canterbury and Gladstone. Many Free Churchmen would have deplored the interference of the State in Church matters, whatever their views on ritual questions.

<sup>48</sup> e.g. T. Arthur Curties: *For Conscience Sake*. (Leicester, 1880) “Mr Dale has gone to prison...in defence of ‘religious liberty.’ ”

<sup>49</sup> T. W. Belcher: *Is Christ the Head of His Church in England?* (London, 1880), p28.

<sup>50</sup> *The Church Union Gazette*, December 11, 1880, p298.

<sup>51</sup> *The Guardian*, November 24, 1880, p1616.

three weeks subsequently.” Ungraciously but perceptively, the leader commented. “the ritualists are not at all disheartened or discouraged by this situation, but the Act remains on the statute book, and so long as it does, clergymen will risk imprisonment rather than submit, and will earn public sympathy.”<sup>52</sup>

How would matters end? asked *The Guardian*. “If public opinion will not back the State law sufficiently to make it effective, the alternative, and the only alternative, must be that the State will inevitably decline to legislate at all on the subjects in question; in other words, will disestablish the Church.”<sup>53</sup> – which reveals again the disturbing possibility which in many minds seemed to be lurking behind the ritualism debate.

The leader attacked both the ritualists and members of the English Church Union for their unwillingness to specify “better machinery for ascertaining and enforcing the law,” implying that they wished every man to be a law unto himself so that chaos might result. Against this background, “the only real ray of light that the meeting afforded came forth from Canon Liddon’s letter...Here is something like the voice of good sense and sober reason. And it is, again, something to observe that Canon Liddon desiderates Church Courts ‘with a clear title to exercise spiritual authority,’ and ‘able to reach the conscience as well as the pocket or the person of a clergyman.’ But *dolus latet in generalibus*. If Canon Liddon will propose a mode for constituting such Courts...then will he indeed have rendered a signal service to the Church and to the country, and have contributed most materially to loosen the knots of our present difficulties.”<sup>54</sup>

Liddon could not refuse this challenge. Perhaps nettled by the leader’s tone, he replied:

...it is difficult to see the use of projecting schemes which, if noticed at all, would only furnish materials for fancy criticism. Since the death of Bishop Wilberforce there has been no one in the higher places of the Church who has combined anything like commanding influence with an intelligent sympathy for difficulties, such as those which are occasioned to sincere and believing Churchmen by the existing Court of Final Appeal.<sup>55</sup>

His own proposal is familiar: that the Court of Final Appeal be composed of bishops elected by the entire English episcopate, with legal assessors to assist them. This should present no

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<sup>52</sup> *Guardian*, November 24, 1880, p1616

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* December 1, 1880, p1665.

problems for the State, since bishops are nominated by the Prime Minister, nor for the Crown. “since, like the Judicial Committee, it would advise the Crown in order to procure from the Crown *coercive* jurisdiction” It might well command the approval of Anglican laity, and “so long as a Parliament, which has ceased to be composed of Churchmen or of Christians, consents to interest itself in the affairs of the English Church, any such proposal for the well-being of that Church, not inconsistent with its recognised doctrines or government, might at least hope to be entertained by a body of just and generous Englishmen.”<sup>56</sup>

These suggestions were sound enough, but flatly contradicted, as Liddon knew, the approach which had led Tait and other bishops to promote the Public Worship Act. He added a paragraph expressive of his own feelings and those of the best High Churchmen:

It is, indeed, only too probable that such a court as I am contemplating would not seldom and bitterly disappoint the hopes of High Churchmen. Everybody knows what is the average theological temper of the English Episcopate; the most recent accession to its ranks [Ryle of Liverpool] was an active and leading member of the Church Association. Still, principle is principle; and I, for one, could not question the spiritual authority of an Episcopal Court of Appeal, exercising its own judgment on the formularies of the Church, without impeaching principles which, for me at least, have been throughout my life beyond discussion. If ever a time should unhappily come when I found it impossible to accept the decisions of such a court, without doing violence to my conscience, I should give it no trouble whatever. I should know that the Church, as distinct from the State, of England had spoken; and I should at once resign my place among its ministers.<sup>57</sup>

From one quarter Liddon’s suggestions met at once with rejection. “You see [he wrote to Wood] that the *Church Times* throws the Episcopal Court of Final Appeal overboard. It should propose something instead.”<sup>58</sup> However, Tait’s son-in-law, Randall Davidson, was impressed by Liddon’s letter.<sup>59</sup>

In a letter to *The Spectator*, Liddon again attacked the unequal treatment meted out to High and Low Churchmen:

Mr Dale’s situation...suggests painful reflections as to the administration of the Church’s discipline in obedience to the terrorising dictates of an implacable and crude fanaticism,

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<sup>56</sup>*Guardian*, December 1, 1880, p1666. A similar perspective of Parliament was voiced by Cardinal Newman regarding the 1883 Affirmation Bill, designed to permit the atheist Charles Bradlaugh to take his seat. (See I. Ker: *John Henry Newman*, p733-4.) Perhaps Liddon and Newman both erred in the direction of excessive scepticism concerning the personal faith of MP’s.

<sup>57</sup>*The Guardian*, December 1, 1880, p1666.

<sup>58</sup>Johnston, p270, dated Christmas Day, 1880. Holograph missing from *Halifax*.

<sup>59</sup>*Diaries*, December 2, 1880.

with the result that one clergyman may omit a Church Creed at his discretion, while another is locked up like a felon for wearing a vestment too many. It suggests grave questions, too, as to the wisdom of the ecclesiastical statesmanship which, in a passing moment of ferocity and panic, placed the Public Worship Regulation Bill on the statute-book.<sup>60</sup>

At this point, Dean Church joined the fray, with a letter to *The Times* on December 16, 1880. The issue, he asserted, was not whether the ritualists were malcontents and law breakers, but the nature of the Church of which they were ministers. If the Church of England was nothing more than a State Church, deriving its authority and power from Parliament, then it followed logically that “the Ritualists are indeed rebels, perhaps more inexcusable than any who are troubling the Queen’s peace in Ireland.”<sup>61</sup> But it would also follow that “the English Church is not what religious men of all schools, Churchmen and Nonconformists, believe a Church to be.”<sup>62</sup> Church was sure that the majority of Anglican clergy would say “that such a State Church was not the Church which they believed themselves to be serving and defending.”<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, “if the Church be supposed to have an existence and powers of its own, besides what the State gives it – and however closely joined with the State, to be something which the State, though it may claim to regulate, can neither create nor destroy – then the debate is open whether the conditions of union and co-operation have been observed on either side. Whether the Ritualist contention, in particular, is right or wrong is another matter.”<sup>64</sup>

“The Dean’s letter will produce a sensation,” said Liddon to Wood before it was published. “It goes to the root of things. He would [like] to put it in the *Spectator*, but I begged him to publish it in the *Times*.”<sup>65</sup> Such a letter, with its shrewd appeal to clergy of all schools of thought other than the merely Erastian, could not be ignored. *The Guardian* called it “in more respects than one remarkable and important...a very striking token of the tension and perplexity of many minds amongst decided and thoughtful Churchmen just at present.”<sup>66</sup> The personal authority of the writer added to its impact. “When the Dean of St Paul’s writes as he does,” said *The Guardian* (making some amends for its earlier leader) “it is quite apparent that it is not merely

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<sup>60</sup> Dale, II, pp56-8.

<sup>61</sup> M. C. Church: *The Life and Letters of Dean Church* (London, 1894) p285.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p284.

<sup>65</sup> *Halifax*, December 16, 1880.

<sup>66</sup> *Guardian*, December 22, 1880, p1780.

with wrong-headed and narrow-minded sticklers for mediaevalisms that the Archbishop and Bishops and Lord Penzance have to deal.”<sup>67</sup>

Church’s was a very Tractarian viewpoint, for there were those who would certainly have claimed that the Church of England was indeed a State Church: but he had hit his intended target. He respected Tait, but was sure his approach to the ritualists was folly, influenced too much by unrepresentative views expressed in the press.<sup>68</sup> Concerning the Court of Final Appeal, the Dean was at one with Liddon, who that December took the unusual step of preaching four topical sermons in St Paul’s, speedily printed as *Thoughts on Present Church Troubles*. Rarely did he refer to contemporary issues when preaching, and the reference in these addresses to the ritualist controversy seems today excessively oblique, excepting a splendid bolt of sarcasm aimed at those who in his view weaken faith in the Bible and the doctrine of eternal punishment for the damned, but raise an indignant cry over “the crime for which our modern wisdom practically reserves its sternest condemnations, the crime of wearing a vestment too many or a vestment too few.” After all, “this error may perchance expose you to ruder punishments than any which are at the disposal of a spiritual society.”<sup>69</sup> His preface to the printed sermons pulls no punches, however, condemning the imprisonment of Dale and the Revd R. W. Enraght, and pointing out that the clergy would be naturally disposed to respect a court of justice and a judge (i.e. Penzance) and so it is a pressing question why they refuse to do so.<sup>70</sup> The problem is that they can not recognise the authority of the old Provincial Courts of Canterbury and York in either the Judicial Committee or Lord Penzance.

What is to be done? Firstly, the Prayer Book rubrics must be applied equally to all. Secondly, Evangelicals must recognise that their own principles are brought into disrepute by the actions of the Church Association, and that infidelity is encouraged by the sight of Christians fighting each other. Thirdly, the Public Worship regulation Act must be repealed and the Church’s courts made acceptable to all. Finally, Liddon makes his familiar point that the Supreme Court of Appeal should be reconstituted so as to consist of bishops with lawyers to advise them.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup> *Guardian*, December 22, 1880, p1781.

<sup>68</sup> Church, p282.

<sup>69</sup> H. P. Liddon: *Thought on Present Church Troubles* (London, 1881), p59.

<sup>70</sup> Liddon, p x-xi. Enraght, vicar of Holy Trinity, Bordesley, was imprisoned on the flimsiest grounds in November, 1880. (See *Diaries*, November 27, 1880; Marsh, p266.) His case produced one of the most offensive incidents in such prosecutions when a wafer consecrated by Enraght during Holy Communion was produced in court as evidence, and then stored with documents until Tait obtained it and “reverently consumed” it. (See Marsh, p232; *Tait*, II, p265.) It is surprising that Liddon makes no reference to the case in letters to Wood.

<sup>71</sup> Liddon, p xxxiii.

Meanwhile, Dale remained in prison. His situation did provide one moment of much needed light relief when Mrs Pelham Dale, strong in her husband's cause, went to see Liddon for advice. They were both startled to hear a servant's voice outside the room exclaim, "Pelham, you beast!" Liddon, it transpired, named some of his pet cats after ritual prosecution victims.<sup>72</sup>

The English Church Union applied to the Queen's Bench for a *habeus corpus* on the ground of a mistake concerning the original writ. Dale came to the court (presided over by Lord Coleridge) on December 6, and Liddon was there to watch:

From what I heard, I gathered that it was the opinion of barristers there that Dale would be let out...but that Lord Penzance would be upheld. Whereas, the destruction of that last-named Idol is the thing most to be desired.

The Bishop of London did *not* (for the first time) come to the *Last Judgment* this evening at St Paul's. I presume he thought the atmosphere would be unsympathetic. Lord Coleridge was in the Choir and, apparently, very devout.<sup>73</sup>

After a lengthy hearing, Dale was offered the respite of release on bail until the judgment, and Liddon encouraged acceptance of this on grounds of health.<sup>74</sup> The decision went against Dale and he returned to prison, but an appeal brought his release. At this point, he was offered another living in the Lincoln diocese. Exhausted and battered by his experience, and with no certainty that he would not be imprisoned again, he accepted.

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<sup>72</sup> Lockhart, II, p8.

<sup>73</sup> *Halifax*, December 7, 1880. The *Last Judgment* was an oratorio by Louis Spohr.

<sup>74</sup> Dale, II, p64-6.



## 11. Final Ritual Cases

A speech in mid-December, 1880, showed Tait moving to inhibit prosecutions of clergy. Acknowledging the unsatisfactory situation in the Church concerning the status of courts, he complained that “no one that I am aware of has come forward, as representing those who are dissatisfied, to advocate a scheme of practicable reform such as appears likely to command the general assent of our clergy and laity....If they are anxious for certain important changes in our existing constitution let them state explicitly what they are...their suggestions will be respectfully and calmly considered.”<sup>1</sup>

Early January, 1881, brought a response in a Memorial presented by Dean Church and signed by thirty-seven others, including Liddon who had sent the text to Pusey for comment, but not asking him to sign it since “you speak alone with much greater effect.”<sup>2</sup> Nearly five thousand clergy added their names.<sup>3</sup> The Memorial voiced a desire for “a distinctly avowed policy of toleration and forbearance, on the part of our ecclesiastical superiors, in dealing with questions of Ritual,” something which was “demanded alike by justice and by the best interests of religion.” All Church parties must be treated equally if rigid adherence to Prayer Book rubrics was required. Wide diversities of ceremonial must be tolerated for the good of the Church. Ecclesiastical courts must be so constituted as to have a claim on the conscience of all clergy.<sup>4</sup>

You will see [wrote Liddon to Pusey] by *this* morning’s paper that the bolt is shot. Jupiter [the *Times*] does not like it....*The Times* objects to us, *inter alia*, on the ground that to tolerate Ritual is to tolerate “The Mass”. *The Times* forgets the Bennett decision [on the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist]. The doctrine is already tolerated; why make such a fuss about the ceremonial?...*The Times* writes about “Puseyism”, as if it were a thing of a past age. Its impertinent use of this nickname gives you an opportunity, if you should think well, of interposing from above, and giving it a little lecture on recent Church History.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Tait*, II, p424. Had he overlooked Liddon’s letter to *The Guardian*?

<sup>2</sup> LP, II, 139, January 9, 1881. See *Diaries*, January 1, 3, 10, 12, 1881.

<sup>3</sup> This number is given in *Tait*, II, p424, and in B. A. Smith’s *Dean Church* (Oxford, 1958) p188. However, P. T. Marsh: *The Victorian Church in Decline* (London, 1969) p268. says “nearly four thousand.”

<sup>4</sup> *Tait*, II, p425.

<sup>5</sup> LP, II, 142, January 12, 1881.

There was, inevitably a counter-memorial,<sup>6</sup> but Tait had the evidence he wanted to voice his concern to the bishops at Convocation in February. Writing to Wood before this, Liddon had been pessimistic:

[The bishops] may, of course, wreck the *Church of England*, if they are inspired by the Evil One to do so. But the probability is that they will do better if they have real power than they do now. All men are better for being trusted. Even our cats do not scratch, except when they are afraid of people, or when they think that people are afraid of them. I do not think that we have much, if any, chance of an Episcopal Final Court.<sup>7</sup>

However, he was proved wrong. The bishops in Convocation were in several cases bearing petitions from groups in their dioceses requesting that something be done about the ecclesiastical courts. Their deliberations coupled a sombre recognition that ritual development must be faced, with an almost comically grim determination that nothing of a Romish tendency should be allowed.<sup>8</sup> But they gave cautious support for the idea already in Tait's mind of a Royal Commission on ecclesiastical judicature, which would exert a calming influence on the overheated Church atmosphere while avoiding a damaging debate in Parliament. Tait achieved the feat of getting the Government (Gladstone) and Opposition (Disraeli, Salisbury) to endorse the plan.

Liddon heard what was in the air before Convocation met. Sir Robert Phillimore told him, "Mr Gladstone was never in better spirits about the Church... a Royal Commission about the Courts is to be issued: the cabinet divided at their last meeting." Liddon mused, "Whether this will help the Church or not depends entirely on the composition of the Commission."<sup>9</sup> "I had heard of the Ritual Commission," he told Wood, "but under promise of saying nothing. *Everything* depends on the people who comprise it. Mr Gladstone will no doubt do his best. But what about the Home Secretary, who will, I suppose, have a large voice in the matter? As you say, we did not ask for it: and it *may* be a great blessing to the Church."<sup>10</sup> More sanguine, Dean Church suggested to

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<sup>6</sup> *Tait*, II, p426, claims this received "an almost equal number of signatures", but Marsh, p268, says it was signed by only three hundred people. There were also private letters. Liddon told Wood "Burgon has sent me a *fierce* 'Letter to the Primate' which he has been moved to write by our very mild Address. He seems to live in an atmosphere of suspicion, which narrows and embitters what might have been a generous and noble character." [*Halifax*, February 6, 1881]

<sup>7</sup> *Halifax*, January 13, 1881.

<sup>8</sup> *The Chronicle of Convocation* (London, 1881), February 8, 1881, pp7ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Diaries*, January 24, 1881.

<sup>10</sup> *Halifax*, February 4, 1881. The Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt, was "a partisan Liberal bruiser" (R. Jenkins: *Gladstone* (London, 1995), p485, an academic lawyer who illustrated Dean Church's opinion that the legal mind was naturally Erastian. ( Smith, p192.)

Gladstone names for the Commission, remembering that Tait (inevitably the Chairman) “manages business in his own way with great adroitness.”<sup>11</sup> An excellent performance from Tait in the Lords earned approval for the Commission, but Liddon, predictably, was dissatisfied when its membership was announced, telling Wood, “I *fear* that Mr Gladstone has been quite ‘managed’ by the Archbishop. The Commission is too plainly his in all its essential features.”<sup>12</sup> This was unjust. He would not have rejoiced to see Lord Penzance and B. F. Westcott on the Commission, and he was perhaps disappointed that his own name did not appear, since he knew it had been urged strongly on Gladstone by Sir Robert Phillimore.<sup>13</sup> But the presence of Phillimore himself, and of the great historian William Stubbs, should have reassured him. On the other hand, Phillimore’s account to Liddon of the Commissioners when they commenced work brought little comfort:

The first sitting of the Commission on Ecclesiastical Courts had elected [the] Archbishop of Canterbury for Chairman. Lord Coleridge had talked the greater part of the time about the fees; as if that was the vital point to be considered. The others had all said one after another that they were quite ignorant of the subject: except Stubbs, who had hinted that the Reports of the Austrian ambassador to his government *might* throw some light on debated questions.<sup>14</sup>

(Phillimore’s son Walter also doubted the Commission’s success – “The Lord Chancellor was bent on putting only elderly and safe men upon it.”<sup>15</sup> Did his father hear of this?) It is difficult to imagine what names would have wholly satisfied Liddon, and the Commission was a genuine attempt to examine grievances and find some peace for the Church of England which, even as he wrote, was facing the most notorious imprisonment of a parish priest resulting from a ritual prosecution, that of S. F. Green.

In the light of what has been said about certain of the Church of England’s bishops and ritualism, it is important to grasp how difficult a position they found themselves in by the beginning of 1881. We have seen that a majority of them supported the Public Worship Regulation Bill in principle. They knew that not all complaints of changes in a church’s ritual were unjustified or motivated by ill-will, and they could not help being touched by the prevailing social fear of “Papal aggression” which led to the ritualists, and the Tractarians generally, being thought to be

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<sup>11</sup> Smith, p189.

<sup>12</sup> *Halifax*, April 8, 1881.

<sup>13</sup> *Diaries*. March 25, 1881.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* June 6, 1881. The Commission’s published *Report* (1883) gives no detailed account of this meeting.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* March 26, 1881.

smuggling Romanism into the English Church. Nonetheless, now that the Act's consequences were being visited upon them, they were much less enthusiastic about its wisdom. They had not foreseen the imprisonment of priests, nor the fervour of the Church Association in prosecuting – at the time of Dale's case the Association had seventeen such suits in process<sup>16</sup> – and it was becoming ever clearer to them that the ritualists would not submit to intimidation. Advances in ritual were going to continue, even in “moderate” parishes, because ceremonial was meeting a need, especially in the slum parishes where the ritualist clergy were the most willing to work selflessly. Something must be done concerning the Church courts, and bishops needed to become Fathers-in-God to their clergy and people, and not merely law enforcers.<sup>17</sup>

The bishops who have figured in our study of ritual cases are representative of many others. None was keen on ritualism,<sup>18</sup> but their private convictions were not always so rigid as some (e.g. Liddon) supposed. Tait deplored ritual innovation, yet Dean Church could write to the Bishop of Salisbury that “[the Archbishop] had Mr Carter down at Addington [his official residence], and they got on together delightfully.”<sup>19</sup> We have noted his respect for Mackonochie, and his liking for Mother Harriet Monsell of Clewer. When Mother Harriet's health required her to move to Folkestone in 1876, her new home was blessed by Tait, who also celebrated the Eucharist and gave communion to her and her Sisters. That he did this when the case was proceeding against the vicar of St Peter's, Folkestone, C. J. Ridsdale, is an indication that he was more tolerant of variety within the Church of England than has sometimes been allowed.<sup>20</sup>

John Jackson, Bishop of London, was in the thick of the troubles. He has been called “a colourless Evangelical,”<sup>21</sup> as well as “chilling and unfatherly in manner, but a truly devout Evangelical.”<sup>22</sup> He was an administrator with a legal mind, and we have recorded Liddon's brush

<sup>16</sup> J. Coombs: *Judgment at Hatcham* (London, 1969), p48.

<sup>17</sup> O. Chadwick: *The Victorian Church*, II (London, 1972), p347-8. The power of ritualism is shown in the fact that even Free Churchmen were affected by it, revealing the same divisions in support or opposition. (Ibid. p325-7.)

<sup>18</sup> M. Reynolds in *Martyr of Ritualism* (London, 1965), p223 is wrong in calling Mackarness “sympathetic to the Ritualists.” In the question of Carter and the bishops' veto, he acted purely in the interests of justice. His known lack of sympathy with ritualism therefore gave added force to his action. (Chadwick, II, p351.)

<sup>19</sup> M. C. Church: *Life and Letters of Dean Church*, p286.

<sup>20</sup> A. M. Allchin: *Living by Hope: the gift and achievement of Harriet Monsell* (unpublished), p16. It may be argued that for the sake of the work of the sisterhoods, which in general he valued highly, Tait tolerated their place in the widening influence of Tractarianism. He was clear, however, that he wished their common life and devotions to be such as were permitted to Anglicans. (See *Tait*, I. p464.)

<sup>21</sup> Reynolds, p150.

<sup>22</sup> G. W. E. Russell: *Saint Alban the Martyr, Holborn* (London, 1913), p126.

with him over the eastward position. Yet he was to prove unexpectedly flexible, joining Tait in vetoing prosecutions, and writing to the Chairman of the Church Association in 1883 to say,

If there are those, who, knowing as I do, the good and self-denying work done among the poor and ignorant by such men as Mr Mackonochie and the late Mr Lowder [of St Peter's, London Docks], are yet, on account of differences in discipline and doctrine (the seriousness of which I do not wish to extenuate) unable to appreciate it or afraid to acknowledge it, I cannot sympathize with them; I can only pity them.<sup>23</sup>

After his death he earned the rare distinction (for a bishop) of a comparatively warm tribute from Liddon, who said to Wood,

Of the late Bishop of London, as far as character goes, one thinks happily. He was without the scornfulness which another great prelate [Tait], oddly, seemed to mistake for logic: he was simple, humble, tender. It was not his fault that he was brought up in a system which taught him that Puritanism is the Gospel of Christ, and...that he never quite escaped from this sad illusion.<sup>24</sup>

Even Thorold and Ellicott were to show that they could adapt. In Thorold's case, the experience of being attacked by a crowd after going to inform a certain congregation that he was appointing a new vicar who would scrap ritual, was calculated to stiffen his sinew.<sup>25</sup> Yet his own Evangelical convictions soon made him acknowledge the religious and pastoral devotion of his ritualist clergy, working in the toughest parishes. His previous policy of "isolation" came to an end.<sup>26</sup> Later, as Bishop of Winchester, he showed true appreciation of the work of the Revd Robert Dolling in the slums of Portsmouth, despite Dolling's "advanced" ritual.

Ellicott, dry and legalistic, also attempted an isolation policy toward ritualists. In 1872 he refused to take action against the vicar of All Saints' Church, Clifton (although he invited others to do so), but he declined to licence curates to the church, or to confirm in it, until 1889.<sup>27</sup> Yet in his mind also changes very slowly took place, to be made complete by the most famous of all ritual trials, that of Bishop King in 1890.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p203.

<sup>24</sup> *Halifax*, January 27, 1885.

<sup>25</sup> C. H. Simpkinson: *The Life and Work of Bishop Thorold* (London, 1896), p127-8. The church was St Paul's, Lorrimore Square.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp143-6.

<sup>27</sup> J. F. Briscoe & H. F. B. Mackay: *A Tractarian at Work. A Memoir of Dean Randall* (London, 1932), pp140ff. Also P. G. Cobb: *The Oxford Movement in Nineteenth Century Bristol* (Bristol, 1988), pp21-3.

<sup>28</sup> Cobb, p25-6.

Changing circumstances, and the threat of division in the Church, forced a steady shift in episcopal attitudes which should be borne in mind as we deal with the later ritual cases in which Liddon was involved, among them the notorious Miles Platting prosecution.<sup>29</sup> This story is rightly called “a perfect paradigm of the ritual controversy.”<sup>30</sup>

The Revd Sidney Fairthorne Green had worked hard in St John’s Church, Miles Platting, a slum suburb of Manchester, since 1869. 1870 brought James Fraser to the diocese as Bishop. He was a no-nonsense and reasonable Broad Churchman. In the light of what followed it is interesting to note that Liddon was one who wrote urging him to accept the see.<sup>31</sup> By nature tolerant, Fraser was no supporter of ritualism, and his experience in Manchester, with its large population of Roman Catholic Irish immigrants, hardened his attitude against anything in his diocese smacking of Catholicism.<sup>32</sup> In 1874 he made it clear that he supported the aims of the Public Worship Regulation Act, dismissing the reservations felt by some regarding the secular nature of the Court of Final Appeal – among them the Revd H. Cowgill, whom Fraser had refused to ordain to the curacy of Miles Platting.

Green’s troubles with his bishop began in 1871 over the question of the mixed chalice. For the time being, he backed down; but by 1877 he had resumed the practice, also using vestments and incense. Fraser wrote to him, and his defence was plausible and ingenious.<sup>33</sup> The incense, he stressed, was burned *before* services, not during them, and in justification for his actions he pleaded a familiar case:

In this most trying neighbourhood, with absolutely nothing which can remind men of the beauties of Nature, where even common grass will not grow, and with a dismal uninviting Church, I have sought, I confess it, to press into the service of the Church

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<sup>29</sup> For detailed treatment of this case, see J. Bentley: *Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 1978), pp105ff; Marsh, pp275ff; T. Hughes: *James Fraser, Second Bishop of Manchester* (London, 1887), Ch. 7; J. W. Diggle: *The Lancashire Life of Bishop Fraser* (London, 1891), Ch. 16.

<sup>30</sup> Marsh, p275.

<sup>31</sup> Diggle, p44-5. This letter shows Liddon at his best, not minimising differences of opinion, but clear that despite them he believes Fraser the best candidate for Manchester. Diggle (p26) describes Fraser as “pre-eminently an Evangelical High Churchman with Broad Church sympathies”, which covers every point of the ecclesiastical compass.

<sup>32</sup> Bentley, p106.

<sup>33</sup> “What objectionable doctrine the vestment symbolizes I never could discover. All books say that it symbolizes Charity. This seems harmless enough. The idea we have in our church, however, is simply to add beauty and dignity to the services....The effluvia from the chemical works are sometimes very disagreeable, and the church itself, moreover, is occasionally not very sweet, and incense seems to answer the required purpose of purifying it.” Diggle, p399.

everything which adds cheerfulness and beauty to it. My design has been to give the people something to *love*....I think that people of the upper classes have no idea of the way in which the poor love the Church when they once grasp what to be a Churchman means.<sup>34</sup>

In May, 1878, Fraser received a semi-literate petition from 320 putative parishioners at Miles Platting, requesting action over Green's ritual practices. He rejected it on the ground that many of the signatures were in the same hand; but following his correspondence with a representative of the petitioners the case was taken up by the Church Association which made a formal complaint to the bishop in December, accusing Green of eleven illegalities.<sup>35</sup> Fraser asked Green for concessions. Green refused. The genuine congregation of St John's begged Fraser to veto proceedings, as did Green, but Fraser replied that the law must be upheld regardless of his personal feelings. He deplored the prosecution, and when St John's was broken into and damage done in April, 1879, he wrote at once to condemn the action and to give support, but he could not see his way to using his power of veto and perhaps thereby encouraging defiance of a bishop's rule in his diocese.<sup>36</sup> Lord Penzance heard the case in June, 1879, found Green guilty, and pronounced a monition which Green (who had refused to appear) ignored. Accordingly, Penzance inhibited him for three months and ordered him to pay costs. The English Church Union, which naturally supported Green, complained to the Home Secretary at Penzance's evident collusion with the prosecution lawyers over the question of costs.<sup>37</sup>

In November, 1880, Green, who had disregarded the inhibition and refused to pay, was declared in contempt of court. Liddon wrote to Wood voicing his opinion of Fraser, who had allowed matters to come to such a pass:

[He is] a Liberal bishop who prepares to govern his clergy by imprisonment...Alas! He was made for better things but popularity is his god, and all his higher chances in the way of Character have been sacrificed at its shrine. To me who have known and loved him for many years it is a personal sorrow.<sup>38</sup>

On March 19, 1881, Green was arrested and taken to Lancaster Gaol. Once again it was an absurdity characteristic of the Act's consequences that he was imprisoned not for his ritual but

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p400. Letter dated May 17, 1877. Hughes dates it in 1878.

<sup>35</sup> Bentley, p108-9.

<sup>36</sup> Hughes, p260-1.

<sup>37</sup> Lockhart, I, p228.

<sup>38</sup> Halifax, November 22, 1880.

for contempt of court, a factor which would cause immense problems in securing his release, contempt being a grave offence.

Indignation was widespread at the imprisonment of another priest, and the Church Association lost much support by the perceived vindictiveness with which it demanded the sale of Green's household goods to meet the costs of the case, effectively throwing his wife and children on to the street.<sup>39</sup> Wood (as President of the Church Union) and Green were in contact, but even the Union's lawyers could find no technicality to justify Green's release. Wood evidently sent a letter of Green's to Liddon, who commented, "I return Mr Green. Everything that I see of his makes me like him more and more." With some return of kindly feeling for Green's bishop, he added, "What a misery for poor Bishop Fraser to have had a hand in imprisoning such a man!"<sup>40</sup> Wood visited the prisoner in April, 1881, finding him "*most touching* and good."<sup>41</sup> He also approached five or six peers, "begging them to ask questions in the House of Lords about Mr Green, and Lancaster gaol,"<sup>42</sup> and he thought of approaching Gladstone on the matter.<sup>43</sup>

The situation was embarrassing all round. No-one wanted Green in gaol achieving martyr's status – throughout his imprisonment an advertisement appeared in every issue of the *Church Times* requesting the Church's prayers for him, "IN PRISON FOR OBEDIENCE TO THE CHURCH'S LAW"<sup>44</sup> – but nobody was clear how to release him. Neither Green nor Fraser would yield on the question of the Court of Final Appeal, and in any case, Green was in contempt of court. In August, 1881, Lord Beauchamp attempted, by his Ecclesiastical Courts Regulation Bill, to achieve automatic release after six months for anyone guilty of contempt of an ecclesiastical court. "Punishment should bear some proportion to the offence," he said, "and if Mr Green should remain in prison for three years, or all his life, a punishment would be inflicted revolting to the consciences of men. It is the indefiniteness of the punishment which makes it so severe and cruel."<sup>45</sup> This well-intentioned measure was supported by Tait, who stated his desire for "any process by which, saving the majesty of the law, and the duty of the clergy to obey the

<sup>39</sup> Most of his possessions were bought by the English Church Union to be restored to him, along with £222 toward his legal expenses. (Bentley, p112.) Marsh notes that Green's effects had to be sold before his living could be sequestered (p276).

<sup>40</sup> *Halifax*, April 21, 1881. Fraser had spoken "very affectionately" to Liddon at a dinner in London. (*Diaries*, April 18, 1881.)

<sup>41</sup> Lockhart, I, p230.

<sup>42</sup> *Diaries*, June 29, 1881.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* August 3, 1881.

<sup>44</sup> B. Palmer: *Reverend Rebels*, p15.

<sup>45</sup> *Hansard*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, CCLXIV (1881), p1350.



law, Mr Green may be liberated.”<sup>46</sup> The Bill foundered in the Commons, however, for lack of members present. Liddon, having discussed the Bill with Beauchamp,<sup>47</sup> had reservations about it, as he told Wood:

I am uncomfortable about the real effect of Lord Beauchamp’s Bill. I scarcely like to say this; as his whole line about it has been so generous and admirable, that it seems ungrateful. But since reading his speech at length, I cannot help feeling that the Bill will by one of its Clauses incidentally rehabilitate the P.W.R.A.; and that the conviction that this is the case as secured the co-operation of the Archbishop of Canterbury....

Surely it would be better to let Mr Green stay in prison than to release him at the cost of reinvigorating that miserable Act. It seems brutal to write this; and yet Mr Green, I should think, would agree. After all, war has its hazards, and his lot has been a singularly hard one: but there are worse things than continued suffering, and one of them is getting out of it at the cost of the cause for which you are fighting.

I am possibly all wrong about this; but in the absence of anybody to talk it over with, I write you my thoughts.<sup>48</sup>

Opposition to the Bill came from those who thought it made light of the law. “What a very violent letter is that of Sir Edmund Beckett in *The Times* of today!” commented Liddon. “The tone of it is brutal. Sir Edmund does not notice the glaring injustice of leaving Dr Pusey out of gaol, if others are shut up to satisfy ‘the majesty of the law’.”<sup>49</sup> He might have included his own name, as Pusey observed to Wood:

[Mr Green’s] might have been my own case, if the persecuting party had been consistent. For the same Judgment which forbade wearing and using what the letter of the Prayer-book directs, forbade also our celebrating the Holy Eucharist as our Blessed Lord celebrated it, in wine mingled with water. I did it, and called the attention of the persecuting party to my doing it....Had the persecutors obtained a sentence against me...I must have been writing this in the Castle at Oxford. I challenged them to do their worst.

I only mention my own case, because it looks so selfish to talk quietly about Mr Green’s remaining in Lancaster Castle, while one’s self is in God’s free air, unless one had had to face the same result; and not I only, but he too, to whom throngs are listening in hushed silence in St Paul’s.<sup>50</sup>

Behind the scenes, efforts at resolving the Miles Platting problem continued. Liddon sent “a petition in favour of Mr Green” to Queen Victoria, which was acknowledged by her private

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p1362.

<sup>47</sup> *Diaries*, August 10, 1881.

<sup>48</sup> *Halifax*, August 15, 1881.

<sup>49</sup> *Halifax*, August 18, 1881.

secretary, Sir Henry Ponsonby.<sup>51</sup> Under pressure from Tait, both Fraser and Archbishop Thomson of York tried unsuccessfully to persuade Green to change his mind.<sup>52</sup> Even Gladstone, prompted by Fraser, asked his Home Secretary whether Green might be released on medical grounds. Harcourt replied that it was difficult to plead such a case for a man whose weight had increased while in prison.<sup>53</sup>

Fraser's position was awkward. Not only was Green in prison, but the Church Association lost no time in pointing out to him that Harry Cowgill, whom he had refused to ordain, had been ordained elsewhere and then functioned as Green's curate without the bishop's licence, and was continuing the services at St John's. Furthermore, the Dean of Manchester Cathedral, Benjamin Cowie, a moderate High Churchman who was aiming to raise the standard of worship in his church, chose this moment to advance the claim of vestments during the Diocesan Conference. He had already displeased Fraser by inviting a more determined High Churchman, W. J. Knox Little, to preach at the Cathedral,<sup>54</sup> and had made public his views that Green should earn respect for "submitting himself to the penalties which an unconstitutional court has inflicted upon him....Compelling men to do violence to what they believe to be an obligation by imprisonment and confiscation has not, in times past, been found to be the more excellent way."<sup>55</sup> He had also told Liddon and Edward King privately that he thought Fraser had been "very hasty" in allowing the prosecution.<sup>56</sup>

Liddon kept his eye on the Green case and the problem of contempt of court, remarking to Wood that a published letter from Sir Walter Phillimore showed "that the Crown *can* pardon contempt of court. And, this seems to imply, that, if only Sir W. Harcourt is squeezed enough it *will*."<sup>57</sup> He took a holiday abroad early in September, with some twinges of guilt – "I feel half ashamed of myself for going off for a time while Mr Green is shut up in Lancaster Gaol. But one would not get him out by staying at home; and a run abroad is really 'business' in view of work."<sup>58</sup> However, in October he, Gladstone, Wood, and W. J. Knox Little who preached in Manchester

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<sup>50</sup> *Pusey*, IV, p366.

<sup>51</sup> *Diaries*, August 12, 1881.

<sup>52</sup> See Hughes, pp 264-7; E. H. Thomson: *The Life and Letters of William Thomson* (London, 1919) pp 200-2.

<sup>53</sup> Bentley, p111.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* p107.

<sup>55</sup> *Guardian*, July 6, 1881, p957; a letter of Cowie to the Rector of St Luke's, Heywood, dated June 22.

<sup>56</sup> *Diaries*, June 8, 1881.

<sup>57</sup> *Halifax*, September 2, 1881.

<sup>58</sup> *Halifax*, September 5, 1881.

Cathedral, were caught up in a contretemps connected with Green's imprisonment. That month, Knox Little was recommended for a canonry of Worcester Cathedral at the same time as John Oakley, another High Churchman, was put forward for the Deanery of Carlisle. Before the appointments were confirmed, both made public statements defending Green. Knox Little virtually encouraged law breaking, which was highly embarrassing to Gladstone who, as Prime Minister, had supported his name.<sup>59</sup> His annoyance was expressed to Dean Church, who told Liddon.<sup>60</sup>

Knox Little was a friend of Wood's family. He would hear the deathbed confession of Lord Halifax, Wood's father, and he became the vicar of Holy Angels, Hoar Cross, the magnificent Staffordshire church built by Wood's formidable sister, Mrs Meynell Ingram.<sup>61</sup> Dean Wellesley of Windsor urged Gladstone to withdraw the names of both Oakley and Knox Little. Dean Church defended them to him, suggesting that Knox Little's words had been uttered to a newspaper reporter under the emotion of a visit to Green in prison. Liddon wrote to Wood, asking "Could anything be done in the way of persuading Knox Little to write such a letter as might satisfy – or approximately satisfy – Mr Gladstone?"<sup>62</sup> He had spoken to Church, he told Wood:

I wish you could see the Dean of St Paul's. You would feel that the situation is serious. If we admit to ourselves that Mr Gladstone makes more of the incident than we could wish, we have to remember (1) his relations to the Queen (2) his relations to *some* of his colleagues (3) the questions that will certainly be asked when the House of Commons meets. If Knox Little does not write something that will disarm Mr Gladstone, Mr Gladstone will very possibly, or probably, write to him, something that will sooner or later emerge into publicity. For Knox Little's own sake, and in view of the future which we had hoped for him, it is of real importance to get the matter set at rest soon and finally, if it can be.<sup>63</sup>

He felt that Knox Little, without sacrificing his principles regarding Green's case, could apologise to Gladstone for his lack of consideration for the Prime Minister's position and his

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<sup>59</sup> Smith, p204-5.

<sup>60</sup> *Diaries*, October 7, 12, 1881. One correspondent informed Liddon that pressure had been exerted on Gladstone to consider Knox Little for Worcester on the grounds that he had had "tempting offers from America, and that he might leave England altogether unless he received promotion." (Malcolm MacColl to Liddon, August 27, 1881. *Liddon Papers*, Box I, 21, Pusey House.)

<sup>61</sup> Lockhart, I, p266. See J. S. Curl: *Victorian Churches* (London, 1995) p96-7. Immensely wealthy, she supported the foundation of Pusey House financially. Liddon offered to refund her donation when he felt that Pusey's ideals were being betrayed there by the Principal, Charles Gore. (See G. W. E. Russell: *Dr Liddon*, pp116-9. The letters are included in *Halifax*.)

<sup>62</sup> *Halifax*, General Correspondence 125-127, October 15, 1881.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*.

apparent want of appreciation for Gladstone's generosity in the Worcester nomination. Two days later he could inform Wood, "Knox Little *has* written to Mr Gladstone, though I do not know quite in what terms. But, obviously, there is nothing for you to do: so pray consider my letter unwritten."<sup>64</sup> He added, "No doubt the Irish crisis has something to do with the importance which Mr Gladstone has attributed to Knox Little's language."<sup>65</sup> Gladstone was in the thick of Irish affairs, and early October had seen the sudden arrest and imprisonment without charge in Kilmainham Gaol of the Irish Nationalist leader, Charles Stewart Parnell, so he may indeed have been sensitive to apparent incitement to law breaking.<sup>66</sup> Liddon made a further suggestion that "if there had been no Kilmainham Gaol, Mr Green would have been long since at liberty. The cases are, in truth, different enough. But the analogy is sufficient to lend itself to popular invective against the Government: - as compared with Mr Tooth, Mr Green was 'infelix opportunitate' of going to prison."<sup>67</sup> This is curious comment, since Green had been imprisoned months before Parnell, but presumably Liddon thought that the Government would be condemned for appearing to support arbitrary and unjust imprisonment.

Knox Little, having told Liddon that "nothing would induce him to resign his canonry", changed his mind the following day and offered his resignation in a letter Liddon begged him not to send. Instead, he wrote a further apology to Gladstone, which Liddon requested the statesman to accept.<sup>68</sup> This led Wood to write somewhat severely of Gladstone to Liddon:

On reflecting over the Knox Little incident, I have come to this conclusion. K.L. ought never to have said what he did. It was a blunder. Mr G. ought not to have noticed it, or written and spoken as he did. But if Mr G. was in a difficulty – he might have written frankly to K.L., told him how he was situated, and asked K.L. to help him out of it. Under such circumstances, one would have resigned at once and done anything and borne anything to save Mr G. the slightest inconvenience.

As it was Mr G., considering his own opinions, and his knowledge of K.L.'s, made, after his wont, distinctions which did not really exist as a basis for speaking and writing in a way that was really inconsistent with any offer of promotion to K.L. at all....

It seems to me that in all this we have another instance of the sort of trouble into which Mr G. gets by his capacity for intellectually justifying any conclusions he may

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<sup>64</sup> *Halifax*, October 17, 1881.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> See H. C. G. Matthew: *Gladstone 1809 – 1898* (Oxford, 1997) p450.

<sup>67</sup> *Halifax*, October 17, 1881.

<sup>68</sup> *Diaries*, October 19, 20, 21, 1881.

unconsciously wish to arrive at – and by his failing to see how necessary it is to correct such conclusions by a reference to the way in which they strike ordinary people.<sup>69</sup>

Liddon replied,

Are you not rather hard on Mr G.? Might he not have said to himself: “I know what I am doing in nominating Knox Little but I can trust his consideration and tact sufficiently not to put me into a difficulty”? Knox Little’s error, as I think, was not his warm hearted feelings about Mr Green in which, of course, I sympathise, but his failure to remember that there are times and occasions when generosity in one direction involve hardship or injustice in another, and is therefore, for the time, out of our reach. Knox Little was like those good people who give their money wholesale to eminent negroes, and forget the needs of their own parish, or of persons who have established a claim on them.<sup>70</sup>

Then his sense of humour breaks out with reference to a joke he shared with Wood. “Meanwhile when I have to be publicly executed – in whatever capacity – I shall look to you for some useful hints.”<sup>71</sup>

Gladstone rose above personal considerations, accepted Knox Little’s apology, and saw to it that he obtained his canonry in Worcester, where he did good work and enjoyed the respect and friendship of the distinguished scholar (later Bishop of London) Mandell Creighton.<sup>72</sup>

Meanwhile, Green languished in prison, though receiving supportive visitors. As well as Wood, he received a visit from Fr Benson, founder of the Society of St John the Evangelist, the first stable and flourishing Anglican community for men.<sup>73</sup> At the end of November, 1881, Fraser sought to ease matters by delivering a general Admonition to his clergy that ritual in his diocese should not exceed that of the cathedral. Green was immovable. The Admonition did not resolve the question of courts.<sup>74</sup> Fraser was said to be so distressed by the case as to be considering resignation.<sup>75</sup> Archbishop Tait sympathised with Fraser, and entered more fully into the search for a resolution. Wood was in contact with Tait’s chaplain, his son-in-law, Randall Davidson,

<sup>69</sup> *Halifax* General Correspondence 125-7, October 26, 1881. He had previously told Liddon in conversation that he thought Gladstone was behaving badly in the matter. (*Diaries*, October 18, 1881.)

<sup>70</sup> *Halifax*, October 27, 1881.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* Wood commented on the letter quoted above, “I always wished him to be Archbishop of Canterbury and to have his head cut off.” (*Halifax*, General Correspondence 125-7, October 26, 1881.)

<sup>72</sup> L. Creighton: *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton*, vol. I (London, 1904), p311-313. On Knox Little’s work at Worcester, see P. Barrett: *Barchester. English Cathedral Life in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1993) pp 124, 136-7. It is surprising that this very detailed study makes no reference to the controversy surrounding Knox Little’s appointment.

<sup>73</sup> G. Congreve & W. H. Longridge: *Letters of Richard Meux Benson* (London, 1916) p153.

<sup>74</sup> Diggle, p415.

<sup>75</sup> *Diaries*, November 4, 1881.

who must have suggested that the difficulty in releasing Green lay with the stern upholders of the law, for Liddon, having seen Davidson's letter, wrote,

I do not like Mr Davidson's letter. I doubt much the truth of what he hints as to the "Erastian laymen": but if he is right, they must do their best or their worst. The Archbishop can very well prevent their doing anything at all; and he ought not to be permitted to represent them as self-managing comets moving in spheres quite beyond *his* range of influence.

Mr Davidson's letter is an attempt to avoid confessing the *great* mistake which the Archbishop has made, and to throw the responsibility of getting out of it upon other people.

The promoters of the Public Worship Act have had their "innings" in the imprisonment of Mr Green for *nine* months. I cannot see that they are entitled to his submission into the bargain.

Nor can I think that if Mr Green comes out now, it will be right to do nothing to express our sense of the injustice to which he has been subjected. I hope that there will be a general subscription for a good Testimonial, and I shall subscribe to it what I can afford....

And, as you know, I should be for *very great concessions in all ritual matters to bona fide Episcopal authority*, if it is honestly separable from indirect recognition of the jurisdiction of secular courts. Our principles oblige us to this, as it seems to me.<sup>76</sup>

Davidson must have written to Wood again, for at the opening of the new year Liddon returned to the attack:

It is impossible not to suspect the Archbishop of a disposition to entangle Mr Green in some admission – and then of throwing him overboard. This is severe language; but it is warranted by any recollection of what took place, during the attack on the Athanasian Creed, in the Archbishop's treatment of the Oxford professors. Mr Davidson forgets that the whole difficulty is the result of his father-in-law's P.W.R.A. and that a different tone from that which (with an odd sort of assumption for so young a man) he takes in his letter, would be more in keeping with the facts of the case.

If it is useless to apply to the Government (and in view of *Sir W. Harcourt*, I can well believe that it is), the Archbishop might write a public letter to the Church Association, which would go far to compel them to assent to Mr Green's release. He ought to do this, because he has always acted as the champion and exponent of their Puritan principles. But, he must see, that he cannot reasonably expect Mr Green to speak or act in a sense

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<sup>76</sup> *Halifax*, December 20, 1881. Randall Davidson (1848-1930) succeeded to the Archbishopric of Canterbury, 1903-28. See G. K. A. Bell: *Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. (London, 1952). *Tait*, II, p453n. makes clear that Tait thought Fraser could have vetoed the prosecution of Green because the complainants refused to meet with the bishop.

which would imply that the rejection of Lord Penzance's jurisdiction, for which he was originally sent to prison, was an entire error.<sup>77</sup>

In fact, Tait acted as Liddon wished, approaching the Government (unsuccessfully) about possible intervention, and the Church Association (unsuccessfully) about requesting Green's release.<sup>78</sup> Liddon was evidently coming to a mind with Lord Beauchamp, for he told Wood, "There seems to me to be *no* prospect of getting Mr Green out of prison which will not involve almost greater mischief, *except* the passage through Parliament at the beginning of the Session, of a *short act*, limiting imprisonment for contempt of court in all cases to three months, and saying nothing whatever about deprivation etc. etc. in the case of clergymen guilty of 'contempt'".<sup>79</sup> Events ground on until even Liddon felt that further words on the case would be counter-productive. "Dr Pusey told me some few days ago that he was thinking of writing a letter about Mr Green [he informed Wood]; but I will take an opportunity of speaking to him again about doing so. You would know how far there is a danger of destroying the effect of such letters by multiplying them. Probably in Dr Pusey's case there is no such danger."<sup>80</sup> On August 16, 1882, Green's benefice became officially vacant under the terms of the Public Worship Regulation Act, and after careful work by Lord Selbourne, and quiet yielding by Bishop Fraser, Green was released on November 4 as being no longer the rector of St John's, Miles Platting.<sup>81</sup> He had been in prison for nearly twenty months.

Liddon's letters to Wood make no mention of Green's release, but by that date his mind was filled with the loss of Pusey, who had died on September 16, and with the responsibility for writing his biography. His sense of bereavement was acute. Even by the end of the year he could not bear to speak on Pusey in public.<sup>82</sup> Then, on December 1, came the death of Archbishop Tait. Desperately trying to repair the damage resulting from his Public Worship Regulation Act

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<sup>77</sup> *Halifax*, January 3, 1882. Liddon adds, "Enclosed is a *bitter* letter from Dodgson of Christ Church [from the *St James Gazette*]. It shows what is being thought and said by people of that kind." Dodgson ("Lewis Carroll"), though friendly with Liddon, did not share his churchmanship. Davidson replied to Wood on January 7. (*Tait*, II, p463-4.)

<sup>78</sup> *Tait*, II, p456. Hughes, *op. cit.*, p270, suggests that the Church Association might have responded positively to Tait had the inviolability of the law been guaranteed. Green's position made this impossible.

<sup>79</sup> *Halifax*, January 5, 1882.

<sup>80</sup> *Halifax*, March 4, 1882. For detailed treatment of events see Diggle, pp414-8; Marsh, p278-9.

<sup>81</sup> This did not end problems. There remained the thorny question of agreeing a replacement. See Bentley, p111; Hughes, pp272-284; *Diaries*, December 20, 1882.) In January, 1883, Wood wrote to Liddon saying he was "very unhappy about Miles Platting". (*Halifax*, General Correspondence 129-131, January 11, 1883.)

(whose failure he was great enough to admit), Tait spent his last days attempting to resolve the case of Fr Mackonochie who, after long battles, was threatened with deprivation at St Alban's, Holborn. He appealed to Mackonochie to resign in the interests of Church peace, and after reflection Mackonochie consented, on the understanding that other work in the diocese of London would be offered to him.

There was widespread feeling that this resolution reflected credit on both men. It softened the animosity of many High Churchmen toward the dead Archbishop, and even disposed them to contribute toward a memorial for him. Liddon's stern view of Tait was unrelenting.<sup>83</sup> Three days after Tait's death, he wrote to Wood, "All that can be said is that the late Archbishop *had* a conscientious desire to do something on a scale worthy of his great position – only, unfortunately, his unhappy education was fatal to any true sense of *what* to do."<sup>84</sup> Concerning the proposed memorial, he wrote,

That the late Archbishop's friends, and the general public, which looks at these matters from the point of view of the daily press, should wish to promote an enterprise of the kind is perfectly natural. And we High Churchmen must feel grateful to him for what he did on his death-bed to promote the peace of the Church in the matter of Mackonochie and Suckling.

But is this a reason for a "Memorial"? Was not the act on his death-bed an attempt to undo one part of the wrong which he had done to the Church – I do not say intentionally – in his life?... Was not the whole drift and purpose of the late Archbishop's life hostile to principles which we hold dear? And if so, what is the moral value of our share in a Memorial to him? Is it not a mere piece of social good-nature – just as much as leaving a visiting card on a person with whom we have little in common, but with whom we wish, for whatever reason, to keep on good terms? And will not a Memorial of this sort destroy the *moral* value of other Memorials which are intended to express deep and heartfelt gratitude to God for the works and examples of the saintly dead?<sup>85</sup>

Even the veteran High Church campaigner, Archdeacon Denison, was supporting the memorial, doubtless hoping to influence what was done:

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<sup>82</sup> *Halifax*, Advent Sunday and December 1, 1882. His major public tribute was preached in St Margaret's, Prince's Road, Liverpool, on January 20, 1884. (See Liddon: *Clerical Life and Work* (London, 1894), Sermon XIV.)

<sup>83</sup> M. Reynolds: *Martyr of Ritualism* (London, 1965), pp250-254, takes a much less kindly view of Tait's action in the Mackonochie case than do other writers. This should be considered when reading Liddon's estimate of him.

<sup>84</sup> *Halifax*, December 4, 1882.

<sup>85</sup> *Halifax*, January 10, 1883. The final sentence is clearly a reference to the Pusey House, which was intended as a memorial to Pusey. The Revd Robert Suckling succeeded Mackonochie at St Alban's.



But he seems to forget [wrote Liddon] that the real value of everything of this kind is that *it expresses a moral judgment*; and that, in years to come, such a memorial, and the names of those who supported it will be pointed out, not as representing an effort to create a useful or philanthropic institution, but as an expression of the judgment of his contemporaries upon the Life and Work of Archbishop Tait. I cannot but fear that there is some risk of insincerity – if we mean our language and our principles – in thus easily falling in with an undoubtedly popular movement. We may well feel and say very much that is kind and respectful about the personal character and bearing of the late Primate; but his public acts belong to history, and to ignore them, in deference to a passing feeling created by his recent decease, is surely open to question for more reasons than one.<sup>86</sup>

Wood replied that Denison

...has been constantly writing to me about this Memorial to the late Archbishop. He is so generous and good – but he is also very impulsive – and like you, though really grateful to the Archbishop for many things, especially for this last attempt to undo former mistakes, I cannot forget the past, or how much there was in his career which it is difficult even to excuse....though I shall probably send a small subscription to the Memorial to the Archbishop, whatever it is, I do not intend to trouble myself more about it.

If you have not seen it I send you a sermon from the Dean of Durham which says all that can be said about the Archbishop in the best way – and perhaps a little more than all.<sup>87</sup>

Liddon was implacable in his reply. Unlike his previous letter, there was no question of this one being used by his biographer:

Thank you for Dean Lake's sermon. What he says about Archbishop Tait's personal character is, I dare say, true *as far as it goes*. But even as to character his scornfulness was a main cover for his shallowness – a shallowness quite noteworthy in a generally able man. And, during a large part of his career, he seemed to me to be totally devoid of the instinct of *natural* justice.

But a memorial is a tribute to services rendered to the Church. What has he done – except in the way of mending his own mistakes? Alas! He certainly *has* helped the Church of England on the downward road that leads to repudiation of all faith and principle whatever, more effectively than any one who has been in high places in our day.

It is one thing to draw a veil over the mistakes of those who have gone before the Eternal Judge. It is another to rank them with the courageous and self-denying servants of Christ. To do this is to destroy the moral value of all public judgments upon men within the Church; to suggest, possibly, that in the Church those judgments are determined by the social and material considerations which prevail in the world. I do not see how I *could* take any part in this Tait memorial without a secret consciousness of insincerity. As you

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. This passage is omitted in the quotation from the letter in Johnston, p280.

<sup>87</sup> Halifax, General Correspondence 129-131, January 11, 1883. Denison withdrew from the Tait Memorial Committee. (*Diaries*, January 17, 20, 1883.)

see I go rather further than you; not, thereby, meaning to find fault with “the final subscription”; but only to say why, as at present minded, I shall not send one.<sup>88</sup>

Another sermon referring to Tait earned a brisk dismissal – “The language...about greatness and goodness is much too exaggerated to bear the wear and tear of reflection and time,”<sup>89</sup> while a *Guardian* report on Convocation received the comment, “the hollow eulogies on poor Archbishop Tait are a sample of the worth of public official language.”<sup>90</sup>

1882 was a busy year. The Ecclesiastical Courts Commission was at work, and Liddon appeared before it on March 16. Archbishop Thomson of York was in the chair, and the tension between him and Liddon still rises from the written record of the meeting.<sup>91</sup> It was no dissatisfaction to the latter when Thomson was embroiled in controversy over the ritual of G. C. Ommaney at St Matthew’s, Sheffield, later in the year.<sup>92</sup> Liddon allowed that “one cannot but be very sorry for the Archbishop of York,” but continued,

If, as is probable, the Archbishop is really in the hands of the silly and bitter Puritanical clergy who appear to have all or about all of the churches in Sheffield, he will not really be satisfied until Mr Ommaney has given way on doctrine as well as ceremonial matters. That is a very different affair. Even in “law” Mr Ommaney can intrench himself behind the Bennett decision, and proclaim all that body of Revealed Truth about the Eucharist which is rejected by the Puritanical party. This would be the prudent course – to economize in ceremonial and to take the aggressive in the pulpit. In a place like Sheffield, if done with any earnestness and ability, it would soon tell. The Puritan clergy *know* that their way of dealing with the baptismal service, the visitation service, and the ordinal is profoundly dishonest; Mr Spurgeon has told them so as plainly as have sound Churchmen; and if this could be made clear to thoughtful people in Sheffield it would soon prepare the way for better things in worship etc.<sup>93</sup>

The following year, when even Thomson’s anti-ritualism was not sufficient to satisfy persecutors, Liddon’s delight was undisguised – “Do you see that the Archbishop of York is being clawed by that very Churchwarden who had previously afflicted Mr Ommaney?”<sup>94</sup> The

<sup>88</sup> *Halifax*, January 12, 1883.

<sup>89</sup> *Halifax*, January 30, 1883.

<sup>90</sup> *Diaries*, April 11, 1883.

<sup>91</sup> *Report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into The Constitution and working of the Ecclesiastical Courts*, vol. II (London, 1883), pp359-368. The rigorous examination of Liddon affords a rare opportunity to hear him in dialogue. In fairness to Thomson it should be said that Sir Robert Phillimore had expressed to Liddon his surprise at the Archbishop’s impartiality on the Commission. (*Diaries*, June 27, 1881.)

<sup>92</sup> See H. Kirk-Smith: *William Thomson, Archbishop of York* (London, 1958) pp43-5; F. H. Belton (Ed.): *Ommaney of Sheffield* (London, 1936), Ch. 4.

<sup>93</sup> *Halifax*, August 29, 1882.

<sup>94</sup> *Halifax*, June 23, 1883.

Archbishop received further mauling from Liddon and Wood after the appearance of the Report of the Ecclesiastical Courts Commission in July, 1883 – a work distinguished by Stubb's historical notes, and vitiated by dissension among the commissioners. (Fourteen of them expressed disagreements on various points, and Lord Penzance submitted a separate Report.)<sup>95</sup>

The Report of the Commission is I see out [wrote Wood to Liddon]. In case you have not yet got it I send you *the protests*. Please read and ponder the Archbishop of York's and Lord Coleridge's together. Lord C's language is very distressing. I don't exactly wish him any harm, but after this he must be ranked among our most bitter foes. That he should agree with the Archbishop of York does not surprise me – that he should use the language he does fills me with surprise. Is it that the Archbishop has encouraged him to say things that prelate wanted said but did not exactly wish to say himself?<sup>96</sup>

Liddon had already learned of the Report while abroad and commented, "I fear, from what he said, Lord Coleridge has been the great difficulty. He has been co-operating with the Archbishop of York."<sup>97</sup>

As was to be expected, the Report was the subject of discussion at the Church Congress in Reading in October. Wood was present, and protested that "it is impossible for churchmen to endorse a proposal which practically leaves the decision of all doctrine and discipline, including, of course, deprivation from the cure of souls, in the hands of the State."<sup>98</sup> He attempted to apply a brake to events – "Half our mistakes and troubles with regard to ecclesiastical matters in the past have arisen from legislation passed in a hurry and founded on mistaken views about ecclesiastical affairs."<sup>99</sup> Shrewder were the remarks of A. J. B. Beresford Hope, who feared not haste but failure to achieve legislation at all, given the moral gain from the Report – "It has slain the Judicial Committee; it has slain the Public Worship Regulation Act; it has slain the Spiritual Judge who refused to take the spiritual appointment of his own spiritual appointer."<sup>100</sup> Liddon had no such optimism:

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<sup>95</sup> S. L. Ollard & G. Crosse (eds.): *A Dictionary of English Church History* (London, 1912), "Royal Commissions", p127.

<sup>96</sup> *Halifax*, General Correspondence, 129-131, August 13, 1883.

<sup>97</sup> *Halifax*, General Correspondence, 129-131, July 31, 1883. Coleridge had reservations about the Commission's recommendation that the assent of the diocesan bishop must be required for any proceedings to be initiated against a clergyman. He was not alone in this. (*Report*, vol. I. p. lxii.)

<sup>98</sup> *Report of the Church Congress (Reading), 1883* (London, 1883), p520.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.* p521.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* p523.

I agree in deprecating Legislation, - at any rate in not inviting it. We cannot consistently invite any legislation, which adopts as a basis the Recommendations of the Report in respect of the *Final Court of Appeal*.

There is of course the danger of assisting such legislation by vehement opposition to it: but it seems to me that a quiet, dogged attitude of settled disinclination, if sufficiently widespread, may make movement difficult.<sup>101</sup>

In the event, none of the Report's recommendations became law.

### The Bell Cox Case

Archbishop Tait's death bed work with Mackonochie did have the effect of damping the flames of persecution, although Thomson of York worked steadily to cast out the taint of ritualism from his diocese, as is revealed in a letter of Wood's to Liddon obviously written in genuine distress:

I was at Masborough a suburb of Rotherham – on Thursday – and the poor priest who has done wonders among the miners - actually burst into tears at what the Archbishop of York was about to do there. How can we see people who have been taught the whole faith and practise it, colliers, miners, all once the lowest and the worst, but now reclaimed and going to confession and leading devout lives, handed over to the merest negative Protestantism – It is, as my Friend said, for the Church system and the Sacraments are what holds them, just giving them back to Satan – It is a most *serious* matter....

I should like to show you some letters I have, including one from a miner which makes me cry.<sup>102</sup>

There were also fanatics who could be inflamed by even the most modest ceremonial, as happened in St Paul's Cathedral on Easter Eve, 1883, when a man shouting, "Protestants to the rescue" rushed at the Altar and threw the cross and candlesticks to the ground before being restrained by Canon Gregory and two choir men.<sup>103</sup> A month later, another disturbance caused Liddon to write, "the fanaticism seems to be spreading."<sup>104</sup> There was a further outrage on Good Friday, 1885, at an early celebration of Holy Communion. Liddon wrote,

The Dean was celebrating; served by Barff, who did not mean to communicate. During *the Church Militant prayer*, a young man rushed at the credence and swept all the cruets off it, then at the Altar, and dashed the chalice right across the Chapel. Barff pinioned [?] the young man down to the ground, and Gregory, I rather think, filled his mouth; he was then

<sup>101</sup> *Halifax*, October 2, 1883.

<sup>102</sup> *Halifax*, General Correspondence, 134-137, March 8, 1885.

<sup>103</sup> *Diaries*, March 24, 1883. See also *Halifax*, Easter Eve, 1883.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* April 24, 1883.

given to the police. He had a Bible, and said he was “saved” and had come to deliver people from mummeries and superstitions.

Tomorrow he goes before the Lord Mayor.

The Dean was dreadfully upset; but went on at the end of a quarter of an hour and completed the service.<sup>105</sup>

Wood was duly horrified:

I am indeed thankful that the outrage took place when it did, and not later [i.e. after the Consecration] – but the whole thing is too horrid to think about. What a light such creatures and their acts throw about the fanatics of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Protestantism is an unlovely thing – and when it is not downright wicked is so extraordinarily silly – I think the longer I live, the more I renounce it, and everything connected with it.<sup>106</sup>

In general, however, Tait’s desire for peace, and the disturbance accompanying the Miles Platting case, discouraged litigation until 1887, when the first bishop of the newly created diocese of Liverpool, John Charles Ryle (1816-1900) permitted a prosecution against the vicar of St Margaret’s, Toxteth Park, James Bell Cox.

Ryle has been called “an anachronism, keeping alive the controversies of the 1870’s.”<sup>107</sup> A stern Protestant, with considerable appeal as a popular writer and speaker, his consecration to Liverpool had drawn from Liddon the comment,

...we can only hope that age and want of the higher forms of intellectual power may limit his capacities of doing harm. What a rough touch it is! Just like the sentences in his tracts, which swing through theological difficulties, of the existence of which the writer is too evidently unconscious.<sup>108</sup>

Ryle, it appears, was no favourite of Disraeli’s, who as Prime Minister had placed him in Liverpool. Lady Salisbury told Liddon that “Lord Beaconsfield greatly disliked the appointment of

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<sup>105</sup> *Halifax*, April 3 (Good Friday), 1885. That there should be such a celebration on Good Friday reveals how far from “advanced” ritual the Cathedral and its Dean were. Strong High Churchmen would have disapproved of communion on so penitential a day, and Liddon adds, “I was not present; as I do not communicate on Good Friday for obvious reasons; and do not like to vex the Dean by not doing so when he is celebrating on such a day.”

<sup>106</sup> *Halifax*, General Correspondence, 134-137, Easter Day, 1885.

<sup>107</sup> Bentley, p114. See pp114-6 for the Bell Cox case.

<sup>108</sup> *Halifax*, September 24, 1880. Wood was no happier at the appointment, and displeased with his father-in-law, Lord Devon, because “he is *not* angry about Canon Ryle!” (*Halifax*, General Correspondence, 125-7, April 17, 1880.

Dr Ryle to Liverpool, but that it was forced on him by the Members for the Borough.”<sup>109</sup> Liddon also learned from some Liverpoolians that “the new Bishop of Liverpool is quite a failure: is not a man to influence his clergy, and is narrow in his whole conception of administering the diocese.”<sup>110</sup>

Ryle was a sworn foe to ritualism, which he designated “a Romeward movement and a departure from the Reformation”,<sup>111</sup> and he was profoundly disappointed that the Report on ecclesiastical courts provided no more effective means for suppressing this heresy without imprisonment.

The charges made against Bell Cox by the Liverpool Church Association were twelve, and all familiar to us. Ryle requested modifications in ritual; Bell Cox refused. The Church Association persisted in its action against the priest, and Ryle refused to veto the prosecution although he had no enthusiasm for such a case, and had consulted the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Edward White Benson, on the matter. His refusal to veto the prosecution rested, as it had done with Fraser of Manchester, on the belief that he had no authority to condone law breaking.

Bell Cox’s case was heard by Lord Penzance in the absence of the defendant, who refused to recognise the court. Suspended from office for six months, Bell Cox ignored the suspension, and on May 4, 1887, he was imprisoned in Walton Gaol for contempt of court. It seemed like Miles Platting again; but this time a technical flaw was discovered and Bell Cox was released after seventeen days.<sup>112</sup> Anger was felt by many people (among them Dean Church) that Ryle should have threatened the fragile peace of the Church by permitting this prosecution.<sup>113</sup> Archbishop Benson expressed what was undoubtedly a widespread opinion:

It is most wretched, since these litigations renewed themselves, to feel that every position or attitude or act is watched with rigour and more the more trivial it is. It is eating away the soul of public worship. Many clergymen must feel deadened by the sense that every act in

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<sup>109</sup> *Diaries*, May 2, 1881.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.* June 7, 1881.

<sup>111</sup> P. Toon & M. Smout: *John Charles Ryle, Evangelical Bishop* (Cambridge, 1976), p88.

<sup>112</sup> This did not end matters. The prosecutor appealed, and the Court of Appeal found in his favour. Bell Cox then appealed to the House of Lords, which after nine months confirmed his release. See Toon & Smout, p89; S. Baring-Gould: *The Church Revival* (London, 1914), p252-3. As late as 1891 the prosecutor was arguing the length of time a monition remained enforceable. (See English Church Union Papers. Box 34, Pusey House.)

<sup>113</sup> See Church’s powerful letter on the subject to Archbishop Benson. (M. C. Church: *Life and Letters of Dean Church*, p322-4.)

public worship is a sort of trivial act of war in the estimation of some who should be fellow-worshippers if they are anything.<sup>114</sup>

Liddon had responded to this case before the imprisonment. St Margaret's had a reputation for High Churchmanship before Bell Cox became vicar, and we have noted that Liddon preached there.<sup>115</sup> In March, Wood showed him a letter on the matter from Randall Davidson, now the Dean of Windsor. Liddon was quite prepared to extend his low estimate of Tait to the deceased Archbishop's son-in-law:

I return the young Dean of Windsor's grotesque letter. Grotesque: because he writes as if he were quite certainly talking straight out of the Oracle. The intent of the letter appears to me to consist in the possibility that it *may* retail very august conversation.

If the letter has *any* argument in it, it assumes as a major premiss that no human law is, in any circumstances to be resisted – an assumption which would make short work of the Apostles and Martyrs. If this assumption is *not* made, then the case of the Irish, and the case of Mr Cox must each be argued on its own merits; and it is at least conceivable that in resisting the law the Irish may be wrong and Mr Cox may be right. And, if this should be so, a further question would arise, viz., whether those whose consciences oblige them – much against their wills – to resist what is wrongly called “law” ought to disobey their consciences, lest they should encourage other persons, who disobey unquestioned law, from motives into which conscience does not enter – at least prominently? If this is so, then the Apostles ought not to have disobeyed the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, lest they give encouragement to the *sicarii* who are denounced by Horace and Cicero.

Ought not more attention to be given to logic before people are made Deans?<sup>116</sup>

Having delivered this somewhat convoluted judgment, Liddon realised that perhaps he ought to confirm one point:

The Dean of Windsor I suppose mistakes Mr Cox's motives in resisting the Bishop of Liverpool? He resists, because the Bishop of Liverpool proclaims himself an agent of Lord Penzance?<sup>117</sup>

Davidson compromised himself further in Liddon's and Wood's eyes by a speech made at a meeting of Convocation on May 12, 1887, while Bell Cox was in prison, seemingly for an indefinite period. Davidson expressed his sympathy for the imprisoned priest, but added that his

<sup>114</sup> A. C. Benson: *The Life of Edward White Benson*, II (London, 1899), p243.

<sup>115</sup> It also had benefited from the unofficial work done there by a recently ordained Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford – Charles Gore. See G. L. Prestige: *The Life of Charles Gore* (London, 1935), pp28 and 39. Prestige says that Bell Cox's imprisonment commended the church to Gore; but he implies that Gore first went there in 1879 or 1880, before Bell Cox became vicar (p28-9).

<sup>116</sup> *Halifax*, March 19, 1887.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

case was not entirely comparable with those of Tooth and Green, who had gone to prison aiming to bring such prosecutions to an end and to point out the shortcomings of the ecclesiastical courts. Times were changing, however, and such a stance was not demanded in this case. Furthermore, Bell Cox and his advisors must bear some responsibility for the situation, which could have been avoided if he had placed his resignation “under protest” in the bishop’s hands.<sup>118</sup> Obviously Davidson had the examples of Canon Carter and Fr Mackonochie in mind here. He also observed that the Church Association had “entirely repudiated the prosecution, though the individual prosecutor happens in this instance to have employed the solicitor who acts for the association.”<sup>119</sup>

I quite agree with you about Bell Cox in Convocation [wrote Liddon to Wood]. It was miserable. The Dean of Windsor is very adroit; and, for the rest, he is like Zedekiah the son of Chemariah, and Eusebius of Nicomedia. These persons always have their representatives in the Church: but the Church of England has had a very large share of them, it must be owned.<sup>120</sup>

Nor could Liddon resist a further stab at Davidson eight days later. “The Dean of Windsor has been staying with the Warden [of Pusey House]. Gore preached the Gospel to him, but without effecting any marked results. This Dean has all the airs of a nuncio, only not from the See of Peter.”<sup>121</sup>

Even as the Bell Cox case was being resolved, the most famous of all Nineteenth Century ritual prosecutions was about to begin.

### The Trial of Bishop King

The Church of England’s bishops realised that a policy of consistent use of their veto to prevent prosecutions raised the possibility that one of their number might be prosecuted for tolerating law breaking.<sup>122</sup> In June, 1888, the Church Association took the step of proceeding against a

<sup>118</sup> *Chronicle of Convocation, 1887* (London, 1887), pp164-8.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* p166.

<sup>120</sup> *Halifax*, May 27, 1887. The reference is presumably to Zedekiah’s weak and vacillating character and (more unkindly) to the Arian bishop Eusebius’s influence with the family of the Emperor Constantine. Queen Victoria relied greatly on Davidson’s opinion.

<sup>121</sup> *Halifax*, June 4, 1887.

<sup>122</sup> O. Chadwick: *The Victorian Church*, II, p349.



bishop, their target being Edward King of Lincoln. This story has been so often told that the merest sketch of it will suffice here.<sup>123</sup>

Edward King became bishop of Lincoln in 1885. When the offer was made he was unaware that Liddon, his Christ Church neighbour, had been sounded on the possibility of accepting a bishopric and declined it.<sup>124</sup> When Liddon learned of King's appointment he wrote to him at once:

I am indeed delighted and thankful. It is the first of Mr Gladstone's Episcopal appointments since that to the see of Ely, for which one can say "Thank God" with one's whole heart. When I think of Oxford and all that your removal must mean – I cannot get on any further; only let me say that I am glad indeed, for the sake of the Church at large, that this consideration did *not* make you hesitate to accept.<sup>125</sup>

On April 25, 1881, he preached at King's consecration in St Paul's a sermon designed to fire the spirits of High Churchmen as well as to glorify the episcopal office.<sup>126</sup> The two men were good friends, and Liddon's diaries contain frequent references to meetings with King when the latter was resident at Christ Church. Yet King, from his time at Cuddesdon when Liddon was Vice-Principal, was aware of his neighbour's tendency to rigidity in theological and ecclesiastical matters.<sup>127</sup> An example of their differences of outlook is found in Liddon's diary for 1883. The Vice-Chancellor of Oxford had proposed that the University should send an Address of Congratulation to the Emperor of Germany on the four hundredth anniversary of Luther's birth. Among those opposed to the suggestion were Liddon and William Bright, both of whom signed a petition to the Proctors requesting them to veto it.<sup>128</sup> King would not sign, however, prompting Liddon to write, "Just the element of practical weakness which is always observable in King."<sup>129</sup> That King was wise not to waste time and energy fighting so minor a skirmish did not occur to him.

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<sup>123</sup> For useful accounts of the case, see J. A. Newton: *Search for a Saint* (London, 1977), Ch. 7; G. Rowell: *The Vision Glorious* (Oxford, 1983), pp152ff.; Bentley, pp116ff.; Chadwick, II, p353-4; G. W. E. Russell: *Edward King* (London, 1912), Ch. 5.

<sup>124</sup> *Diaries*, January 23, 1885. He had some reservations about declining. (*Diaries*, February 1, 1885) Newton is incorrect in saying (p73) that the Lincoln bishopric was offered to Liddon. Gladstone had considered him for Exeter; but after consultation with Dean Church and Archbishop Benson he omitted his name altogether. (H. C. G. Matthew: *The Gladstone Diaries*, vol. XI [Oxford, 1990], pp272-3; 283.)

<sup>125</sup> Russell, p87.

<sup>126</sup> H. P. Liddon: "A Father in God", in *Clerical Life and Work* (London, 1894).

<sup>127</sup> O. Chadwick: *The Founding of Cuddesdon* (Oxford, 1954), p80.

<sup>128</sup> *Diaries*, November 8, 1883.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.* November 9, 1883.

King's saintly character soon made its impact in Lincolnshire, so a move against him by the Church Association earned them unpopularity. They did not accuse him of permitting law breaking, but of breaking it himself in a service at St Peter-at-Gowts, Lincoln, in December, 1887, by using altar lights, the mixed chalice, the eastward position, the sign of the cross at the absolution and the blessing, allowing the Agnus Dei to be sung after the consecration, and by reverently consuming the remaining consecrated elements after communion and ritually washing the vessels.

The complaint made by the Association to Archbishop Benson was significant not because the familiar charges were made against a bishop (King had in any case simply complied with the custom for worship at St Peter's), but by the threat made to Church-State relations. As one writer has said,

Benson was placed in a serious dilemma by the action of the Church Association. If he refused to act in the matter, he ran the risk of being ordered to act by the Judicial Committee, and he would seem to be running away from his responsibilities. On the other hand, if he heard the case and gave a judgment, there was a risk that the Church Association might appeal against his decision and have it overruled by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.<sup>130</sup>

To this was added the problem of whether Benson, if he tried the case, would feel bound by previous judgments of the Judicial Committee.<sup>131</sup> Liddon met with King while on holiday in Lucerne in 1888, and they discussed the situation. "[King] did not know what the Archbishop might do (wrote Liddon). Thought that he might dismiss the case. But learned that he might be tempted to lay down an Anglican Ritual which would practically adopt the Privy Council's principles."<sup>132</sup> But did the Archbishop have the legal jurisdiction to try the case? Benson was at first dubious on this point, but the Judicial Committee told him that he had jurisdiction, and so he decided to put King on trial, even though the outcome was fraught with dangerous possibilities.

High Churchmen were not pleased. Wood voiced their indignation in a speech to the English Church Union, claiming that Benson should have vetoed the proceedings at the outset.<sup>133</sup> Neither was Liddon happy, but he had had doubts about Benson from the time his name was mentioned as a possible successor to Tait. In 1885 he wrote to Wood,

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<sup>130</sup> Newton, p98.

<sup>131</sup> Lord Elton: *Edward King and Our Times* (London, 1958), p93.

<sup>132</sup> *Diaries*, September 21, 1888.

<sup>133</sup> Lockhart, II, p21-2.

I wish I could have felt that I was wrong about the Primate. But he is an antiquarian, with no fixed principles – or rather with a very earnest desire to stand well with many incompatible creeds, all at once. He is of course in a very difficult position.<sup>134</sup>

(In extenuation, be it said that Liddon had reason for a soured temper when writing this letter:

I have been quite laid up with trouble with my few remaining teeth of which I had five taken out the day before yesterday. As only four now remain, this particular experience cannot be repeated in this present life. Meanwhile Art is slowly endeavouring to repair the failure of Nature...<sup>135</sup>

Nor was he alone in his suspicion of Benson. King's biographer was of the opinion that the Archbishop "loved ritual as long as it did not express doctrine."<sup>136</sup>)

The truth, as Benson's son and biographer acknowledged, was that the Archbishop and Liddon "were by nature essentially dissimilar. To the eager practical temperament of the Archbishop the subtle metaphysical element in Canon Liddon's mind was wholly antagonistic."<sup>137</sup> By the time of the Lincoln case they had already disagreed over the question of the revival of a Protestant Bishopric in Jerusalem,<sup>138</sup> and in Liddon's view it cannot have helped matters that Benson, preparing for the trial, was relying heavily on help from Randall Davidson. Before matters got seriously underway, Liddon wrote to Bishop Lightfoot in Durham, enlisting his support for an attempt at persuading Benson to reject the prosecution:

The Archbishop is presumably approached, qua Archbishop, and presumably as having a large discretionary jurisdiction, not necessarily controlled by recent legal decisions. It is most earnestly to be hoped that he may exercise this by dismissing the charges as "frivolous." That such a person as the Bishop of Lincoln should be exposed to the vexation of legal proceedings is a serious misfortune to the Church – much more serious than to the Bishop himself, who would probably regard it simply as an opportunity for growth in Christian graces. But, as a consequence of his rare and rich gift of spiritual sympathy, the number of people in all classes of society who look up to him with a strong personal respect and affection, is probably quite unrivalled in the case of any other prominent churchman of the same type, and the mere apprehension of his being attacked

<sup>134</sup> *Halifax*, May 9, 1885.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.* Art was not wholly successful. Writing to Mrs Meynell Ingram, Wood said. "I saw Liddon and had a little walk with him. He is *better* but only looking *so-so*. I believe his teeth, he has a new set, are a trial to him." (*Halifax*, General Correspondence, 134-137, October 22, 1885.)

<sup>136</sup> Russell, p164.

<sup>137</sup> Benson, II. p168.

<sup>138</sup> Johnston, Ch. 12.

is already creating widespread disquietude. Anything like a condemnation would be followed by consequences which I do not venture to anticipate.<sup>139</sup>

Lightfoot replied that Benson would weigh matters carefully before deciding his course of action, and that King's friends should remind him of his own responsibilities toward the Church.<sup>140</sup>

When Benson decided upon a trial, Bright, Gore and Liddon urged King to protest at the Archbishop's summons. Their concern was that an appeal from the Archbishop's decision might be made to the Judicial Committee, whose authority in such cases they were determined not to allow. Liddon wrote to Bright on January 18, 1889,

The dear Bishop does not appear to me fully to realize the historical importance of this case – the sense in which it, beyond any previous case, will form a *precedent*. That *he* should recognize, or appear to recognize, the jurisdiction of the Judicial Committee – if it be, as it may be, inevitable – will be a fact of grave significance. If anything could be done in the way of explanatory protest, to break its force, it will be of the greatest value.

When you write to the Bishop, pray tell him that I do *not* delight in war.<sup>141</sup>

That moves were afoot to try to prevent the case coming to trial is clear from another letter written by Liddon early in 1889:

The Dean of Peterborough is anxious to get up a “conference” between the persecutors and friends of the Bishop of Lincoln in order to see whether anything can be done to put a stop to what he calls the “scandal” of the prosecution.

His letters to me are written, I am bound to say in a spirit for which I did not give him credit; and I have tried to go with him as far as I could.

But I have asked him whether anybody at the Conference could answer for the conduct of the Prosecution, or could undertake to bind it by the resolutions of the Conference. And to this I have as yet no reply.

I have also ascertained from the Bishop of Lincoln (as indeed was to be expected) that he does not see how he could make concessions without sacrificing principle.

The Conference then could scarcely hope to lead to any such result as would, at least immediately, influence the course of events. But it might, the Dean suggests, express regret at the prosecutions. There again, I doubt whether the Low Church people would

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<sup>139</sup> Benson, II, p323.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid. p324.

<sup>141</sup> Russell, p155

meet us in conference for such a purpose as this: but I do not like to throw cold water on what is so well meant.<sup>142</sup>

This plan came to nothing. In the event, the weight of opinion that he should request trial by the Archbishop and the other provincial bishops in Convocation prevailed with King, especially since the ecclesiastical lawyers also supported it.<sup>143</sup> Liddon noted in his diary that King had visited Oxford to discuss matters with himself and others, including Bright, Gore and Francis Paget (the Dean of Christ Church). “Long discussion as to whether there should be an objection taken to the Archbishop’s Court of Audience in favour of Convocation. I thought there should be for some 4 reasons: Paget not. But the meeting generally went with me.”<sup>144</sup> The next day he wrote to Wood, “The more I think of it, the clearer it is to me that, as a broad question of principle, and in view of his example upon the future of the Church, the Bishop is right in reading this appeal to the Comprovincial Bishops, with the Primate.”<sup>145</sup> An hour after completing this letter he was writing again, telling Wood that Paget had also agreed to support King, though doubting his course of action.<sup>146</sup>

The trial began at Lambeth on February 12, 1889, and King made his formal protest before handing everything over to his lawyers.<sup>147</sup> Wood went to Lambeth to support him, and must have described the scene to Liddon, who replied,

The Archbishop somehow seems to bury great issues out of sight (at any rate) of his own mind, beneath a mass of drapery and phrases: and the great ecclesiastical ladies who flit about in the surrounding atmosphere add an element of grotesqueness to the whole thing which makes it difficult to keep its great seriousness steadily in view.<sup>148</sup>

In his diary, Liddon observed that after the opening everything had been postponed until March 12, “when the case will be heard on its merits. What case – the Jurisdiction or the Ritual?”<sup>149</sup> The

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<sup>142</sup> *Halifax*, January 24, 1889.

<sup>143</sup> Russell, p163.

<sup>144</sup> *Diaries*, February 5, 1889.

<sup>145</sup> *Halifax*, February 6, 1889.

<sup>146</sup> *Halifax*, February 6, 1889, ii. This letter, bearing the same date as a letter of King’s, declaring his decision to act on advice to protest to Benson (Russell, p 162-3), confirms that Paget was not wholehearted in his commitment to the protest. However, he strongly supported the Defence Fund set up to aid King. His personal regard for King inspired the dedication to him of his *Studies in the Christian Character* (1895).

<sup>147</sup> For impressions of the opening of the trial from the Archbishop and Davidson, see Benson, II, p339-340, and Bell, p134-5.

<sup>148</sup> *Halifax*, February 14, 1889. Perhaps more sniping at Davidson, who had taken his wife, sister-in-law and a friend to see the opening of proceedings. (Bell, p134).

<sup>149</sup> *Diaries*, February 12, 1889.

trial was a great burden to King, who nonetheless fulfilled Liddon's prophecy about growth in Christian graces. Liddon, however, makes little further mention of the case in his letters to Wood, doubtless because his attention was being wholly absorbed by *Lux Mundi*, the volume of essays edited by Charles Gore, which appeared that year. Gore's own essay on scriptural inspiration was a severe blow to Liddon, who felt it a capitulation to rationalising Old Testament criticism. "There is no getting over the fact," he told Wood, "that between Gore's position in that Essay and Dr Pusey's teaching on these very subjects there is nothing short of absolute contradiction."<sup>150</sup> The topic pressed on him with particular force, since Old Testament criticism featured in the Bampton Lectures of T. K. Cheyne in 1889, which greatly offended him.<sup>151</sup> Pusey's successor, S. R. Driver, also approved of the critical method, causing Liddon to sigh, "I felt thankful that Dr P had *not* known who his successor was to be."<sup>152</sup> He heard with gloom a talk on Old Testament criticism given by Driver at Keble College in 1889,<sup>153</sup> and was made yet more unhappy when conversation with younger men whom he liked revealed that they did not share his opposition to the new biblical criticism.<sup>154</sup>

It was not merely the content of Gore's essay which grieved him, but that "the world thinks it *piquant* that such a book should have issued from the Pusey House."<sup>155</sup> The linking of such views with the memorial to Pusey's name wounded him deeply, and his misery was deepened by the fact that he had a genuine affection for Gore.<sup>156</sup> In addition, his health, strained by the task of writing Pusey's biography, was giving cause for concern. "I hear nothing that can be relied on as to the Archbishop's judgment in the Bishop of Lincoln's case," he wrote to Wood, adding, "I have not been well, and have fallen into the hands of Dr Ogle, to whom I am now in subjection. He wants me to go abroad: but this is obviously impossible."<sup>157</sup>

There is one more reference to the King trial in Liddon's letters to Wood. In early June, 1890, he wrote wearily,

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<sup>150</sup> *Halifax*, January 14, 1890.

<sup>151</sup> *Diaries*, March 10, 17, 1889.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.* February 8, 1883.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.* May 21, 1889.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.* May 25, 27, 30, 1889.

<sup>155</sup> *Halifax*, February 19, 1890. For discussion of Gore's essay, see B. M. G. Reardon: *From Coleridge to Gore* (London, 1971), pp444ff.

<sup>156</sup> *Halifax*, December 6, 1889.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.* March 7, 1890.

No reports have reached me about the Archbishop's decision in the Lincoln case. Efforts have been made to get clergy – myself and others – to pledge themselves to subscription to whatever may be decided. Of course anybody would *wish* to submit to such a spiritual court: but, in such a matter one might “protest too much”. Such protests remove one motive which the Archbishop might have against inclining to the Puritan side; because they would assure him of the submission of Churchmen beforehand. And – though I will not anticipate the application of the maxim – in the case of all spiritual tribunals, *short of a really oecumenical Court*, there may arise reasons for refusing submission. Anyhow the invitation seemed to me to be a mistake.<sup>158</sup>

The final judgment, mostly in King's favour was given on November 21, 1890. It effectively ended the dismal catalogue of ritual prosecutions, and established the primatial authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury by his willingness to override previous decisions of the Judicial Committee. Still more important, its wealth of historical reference demonstrated that the Anglican Church was no mere creation of Henry VIII, but at one with the earlier English Church. It even softened the attitude of Bishop Ellicott of Gloucester and Bristol, who in 1893 finally consecrated St Raphael's, Bristol, with Arthur Ward as its incumbent. Charles Wood, Lord Halifax, was an honoured guest on that occasion.<sup>159</sup> The Lincoln Judgment came too late to gladden Liddon's heart, however. Afflicted with an agonisingly painful but undiagnosed illness, he died suddenly on September 9, 1890.<sup>160</sup> By the end of that year not only Liddon, but also Cardinal Newman, Dean Church and Archbishop Thomson were all dead, and a new era was opening for Anglican High Churchmen.

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid, June 2, 1890.

<sup>159</sup> S. Baring-Gould: *The Church Revival*, p 256.

<sup>160</sup> His death certificate mentions gout in the neck muscles and syncope – unexplained heart failure. (Copy. General Register Office, March 17, 1997.) A letter from his sister, Mrs Poole King, to Wood confirms that “all the doctors thought his recovery almost a certainty.” (*Halifax*, September 11, 1890.)

## 12. Conclusion

*When people feel threatened and anxious they become more rigid, and when in doubt they tend to become dogmatic; and then they lose their own vitality. They use the remnants of traditional values to build a protective encasement and then shrink behind it; or they make an outright panicky retreat into the past.<sup>1</sup>*

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This study has shown how active and distinguished a figure Henry Parry Liddon was in the religious and ecclesiastical issues of his time. We must conclude by asking what manner of man he was, and the reason for his rapid neglect after his death.

His greatest fame was as a preacher, but few sermons compel attention even shortly after their delivery. There were powerful Victorian sermons spoken and printed, but only the student is likely to explore them today. Perhaps Newman alone, as an Anglican, provided doctrinal sermons of such psychological insight, expressed in prose of unique suppleness, that they invite more than scholarly interest. Liddon was not a preacher of Newman's stamp. His sermons are clear in thought and structure, but his concern was to expound doctrine and refute error, not to be original in theology, or to analyse human motive with Newman's perception. Liddon's sermons read easily enough, but rarely move the reader. Their impact on their audience resulted primarily from Liddon's passionate conviction and memorable delivery.<sup>2</sup> His many volumes of sermons do not keep his name alive.

None of Liddon's contemporaries doubted his grasp of the Christian theological heritage, nor the quality of his mind. He is justifiably said to have possessed "an abler theological mind than anyone in the [Oxford] Movement except Newman and J. B. Mozley."<sup>3</sup> It is Liddon's employment of that mind which must disappoint us today. Theologically he was wholly unoriginal, not simply by nature but by determination.<sup>4</sup> He acknowledged that theological terminology might require adjustment in course of time, but he was adamant that orthodox

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<sup>1</sup> Rollo May in W. Sykes: *Visions of Love* (Bible Reading Fellowship, Oxford, 1992), p90.

<sup>2</sup> Confirmed by Mrs Humphrey Ward in her striking memory of Liddon in *A Writer's Recollections* (London, 1919), p138-140.

<sup>3</sup> O. Chadwick: *The Mind of the Oxford Movement* (London, 1960), p60.

<sup>4</sup> H. Scott Holland, "Henry Parry Liddon" in *Dictionary of National Biography*, xxxiii (London, 1893), p225.



doctrine must be unchanging. He told Wood, “In theological matters time and delay are of the greatest importance: the greatest enemy is precipitancy. In order to see what propositions involve you *must* have time.”<sup>5</sup> “[Liddon] read much,” commented Scott Holland, “but his central position was unaffected by new discoveries. There was no assimilation of them with the texture of his thought.”<sup>6</sup>

Even allowing that Liddon’s character was innately conservative, his theological mentor, Pusey, must bear some responsibility for fixing his mind in so inflexible a form. In debate or controversy Liddon’s method was very much Pusey’s – to try to bludgeon his opponent into submission by sheer weight of accumulated historical and theological witnesses. Such historic testimony is essential in theological discussion, but alone it can never satisfy those who ask why history should always have the deciding voice in the counsels of the Church as she faces new situations. By adopting such a procedure, Liddon became increasingly unable to address the concerns of a younger generation. Ironically enough, in this he was as powerless as Jowett and others whose liberalism he distrusted – “If Liddon could only offer them a Christianity impossible to believe, and Dr Jowett a Christianity not worth believing, what were young men to do?”<sup>7</sup> Liddon’s criticisms of Gore’s *Lux Mundi* essay on scriptural inspiration give an example of this failure. He restated the position of his Bampton lectures, unchanged by time. Some of his points were sound; but by holding to Christ’s *human* omniscience as well as to His divinity, Liddon refused to acknowledge the questions and unsettlement brought by biblical criticism. Gore, whatever the weaknesses of his case, was prepared to grapple with them; and in refusing to see the dilemma in Liddon’s bald terms he spoke to those in perplexity when Liddon could not.<sup>8</sup>

Nor was biblical criticism the only learning to unsettle minds. The questioning of scripture, of Christianity and of religious belief itself from students of the natural sciences was gathering strength. In 1890, as *Lux Mundi* pained Liddon and others, Thomas Huxley published an essay on “The Lights of the Church and the Light of Science” in *The Nineteenth Century*.<sup>9</sup> There he stated unequivocally that “Christian theology must stand or fall with the historical

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<sup>5</sup> *Halifax*, March 10, 1890.

<sup>6</sup> D. N. B. xxxiii, p225.

<sup>7</sup> G. L. Prestige: *Charles Gore* (London, 1935), p119.

<sup>8</sup> On this matter Liddon was also at odds with Gladstone who had written with some sympathy towards biblical criticism in a paper on *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture* (the title of a book of essays published by Gladstone in 1890). See the correspondence between Liddon, Gore, Canon Carter, Malcolm MacColl and others in *The Spectator*, April 5, 12, 19, 1890.

trustworthiness of the Jewish Scriptures.” In defence of the statement, he quoted a sermon of Liddon’s which had reiterated his customary argument that “Christ set the seal of His infallible sanction on the whole of the Old Testament”, and (with clear reference to *Lux Mundi*), “the trustworthiness of the Old Testament is, in fact, inseparable from the trustworthiness of our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>10</sup> Huxley assailed this position from a scientific standpoint. Today his assault is undermined by his adopting an approach to the Bible scarcely less literal than Liddon’s own. Huxley’s failure to understand literary conventions and symbols (“types”) is exposed by his sneers at Gore’s *Lux Mundi* essay. Nevertheless, his challenge was one which required meeting, for, as he rightly anticipated, the scientific questioning of the apparent *facts* found in the scriptures would fuel a major debate for the rising generation. Liddon could not admit the reality of the questions, accusing Huxley of “writing in this airy abstract fashion about *evidence* for miracles, and about the relative unimportance of miracles when contrasted with moral duty etc. etc.”<sup>11</sup>

The correspondence we have examined reveals clearly what Liddon’s associates called the “Latin” cast of his mind.<sup>12</sup> Clarity and logic were his watchwords. Theological vagueness was anathema to him. Contrasting the minds of Lightfoot and Westcott, he quoted the latter to the effect that “Dr Lightfoot tries to state everything as definitely as he can, and I as indefinitely as I can.” Liddon commented, “conceive the effect of this on such a subject matter as theology.”<sup>13</sup> Given what he accepted as the truth of orthodox doctrine, he argued for it with rigour. He did not see that others could not always accept his premises, and therefore could not accept his conclusions. (“Liddon never convinced you if you did not agree with him”, wrote a contemporary.)<sup>14</sup> Nor was he sufficiently aware of the limits of logic, and how its inappropriate employment could lead to distorted perception, or erroneous forecasting of events, or actual injustice toward individuals.<sup>15</sup> These qualities are seen in his letters to Wood, notably his unfairness in the case of Archbishop Tait, which requires comment.

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<sup>9</sup> Reprinted in T. H. Huxley: *Science and Hebrew Tradition* (London, 1893).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p208-9. Liddon’s sermon, *The Worth of the Old Testament* (London, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1890) was published separately by popular request.

<sup>11</sup> *Halifax*, November 12, 1887. Contrast with this, for example, the respectful but serious grappling with Huxley’s agnosticism by the distinguished editor of the *Spectator*, R. H. Hutton. See R. H. Hutton: “The Great Agnostic” in his *Aspects of Religious and Scientific Thought* (London, 1899).

<sup>12</sup> G. W. E. Russell: *Dr Liddon* (London, 1905), p188.

<sup>13</sup> *Halifax*, October 29, 1885.

<sup>14</sup> Johnston, p262.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p395, part of a generous but clear-sighted estimate of Liddon by Francis Paget.

Like many eminent Victorians, Liddon possessed a commendable ability for remaining on friendly terms with those whose views he denounced. He disagreed with Jowett; yet we find him dining at his table. He disagreed with Lightfoot, yet his respect for Lightfoot's integrity and simplicity of character never wavered. He disagreed with Dean Stanley repeatedly, yet after Stanley's death he wrote of him affectionately, if critically.<sup>16</sup> Tait was an exception to this general rule. We have seen how hostile to him (and in an unusually personal way) Liddon was. It was not simply a question of Tait's theology, which was less wayward or Broad Church than, say, Stanley's. What irked Liddon was that as Archbishop, Tait seemed committed to the ideal of a National Church, capable of embracing a wide spectrum of opinion but unsympathetic to liturgical development or High Church teaching.<sup>17</sup> This contrasted strongly with Liddon's view of the Church Catholic which he expressed clearly in a letter to Wood:

Of course, in one sense the Catholic Church is comprehensive: it provides a home for all tendencies which, in their exaggeration lead to heresy; and it controls and harmonises, while thus recognising them. But this is different from the Vulgar Liberal idea of Comprehension, which would make the Church a collection of heterogeneous faiths united by no higher tie than is supplied by financial prudence or at best attachment to a great national institution of strictly human and parliamentary origin, after the manner of Mr T. Hughes.

I suppose the principle on which *we* go on, side by side with the Puritanical and Latitudinarian sections, is, that we hope to win them to those parts of the Divine Truth which they at present ignore, or reject.<sup>18</sup>

Tait certainly desired a National Church, but as we have seen, his views were not so narrow as Liddon believed. Liddon may have convinced himself that Tait wished for an English Church little different from what Matthew Arnold called a "great national society for the promotion of what is commonly called *goodness*...through the means of the Christian religion and the Bible",<sup>19</sup> but he was unjust.<sup>20</sup> Tait sincerely desired people to be brought to the worship of God through the ministry of the Church. He was convinced that the Tractarians (especially their Ritualist offspring) made belief more difficult for the generality of British citizens by going beyond Anglican formularies and suggesting an inclination to Roman Catholicism. Liddon

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<sup>16</sup> Johnston, p274-5.

<sup>17</sup> See E. Carpenter: *Cantuar* (London, 1971) pp339ff.

<sup>18</sup> *Halifax*, August 29, 1878. Thomas Hughes, author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, was a militant Christian Socialist.

<sup>19</sup> *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold* ed. R. H. Super, vol. VIII (Michigan, 1972), p65.

<sup>20</sup> Liddon believed -mistakenly but significantly - that there was a family friendship between the Tait's and the Arnolds. (Letter of Liddon to Tait, Lambeth Palace Library, **Tait Papers**, ff.40-41.)

thought Tait unprincipled and pragmatic. Lurking behind his antagonism was the Tractarian tradition of opposition to State interference in Church affairs going back to Keble's 1833 Assize sermon which effectively launched the Oxford Movement, but also his High Church tendency to deny that true Anglicanism could embrace differing emphases in outlook. This is made clear in a letter to Wood:

The doctrine of the "three schools" in the Church of England, all interesting, and admirable, is hard to reconcile with the nature and obligations of a Revelation from God. It cannot be equally agreeable to Him to say that Baptismal Regeneration, for instance, is a truth which He has revealed, and that it is a falsehood which obscures the true sense of His Revelation. The attempts to combine contradictories as "two sides of truth", only result in injuring the sense of truth in those who make them. No doubt, Church history shows that large patches of error may exist for long periods of time within the Catholic Communion. St Cyril of Jerusalem deliberately allowed the *homoiousion* in the hope that it would ripen, by God's grace, into the Catholic *homoousion*. But then he did not advise Semi-Arianism as "a school of thought", an interesting variety of religious speculation parallel to and having equal rights with the Catholic Creed: he simply regarded it as an error from which souls were to be converted, and he laboured for their conversion.<sup>21</sup>

This was logical but unrealistic, revealing Liddon's curiously deficient sense of the provisional aspect of doctrinal statements.

Tait tried sincerely to accommodate Pusey and Liddon, but nothing could shake Liddon's perception of him as a betrayer of the Church placed in the highest office. Even Pusey saw the irrationality colouring Liddon's outlook, and twitted him, "[Lord Beaconsfield] and the Archbishop seem like two bogies to you. I hope they do not come like a night-mare and disturb your sleep."<sup>22</sup> Liddon's general opinion of bishops was admittedly low. He wrote to Pusey:

With the Bishops, as a body, saying and doing what they say and do, the younger High Church clergy feel that the old title "father in God" has lost all its meaning. It would be very hard to associate that title with anything *personal* in the present Archbishop of Canterbury [Tait], whatever one may think of his office. And in the case of such bishops as York [Thomson], Durham [Baring], Gloucester & Bristol [Ellicott], nothing is looked for but high-handed injustice, or violent denunciations. The bishops themselves, of course, are thinking about the Establishment, and about that large half of the country which does *not* belong to the Church of England, and whose votes *will* determine the fate of its temporalities. The sacrifice of the High Church clergy is acceptable to the whole body of Dissenters and to more than half of the Church of

<sup>21</sup> Halifax, January 27, 1885.

<sup>22</sup> PL, II, 163, August 19, 1877.

England; and we cannot wonder that Bishops who have no belief whatever in Church principles should be willing to make it.<sup>23</sup>

To Tait, then, no quarter would be given. How ironic, therefore, that Liddon's usual disposition not to sacrifice friendships to disagreements was one fully shared by Tait.<sup>24</sup>

Pusey's influence over Liddon was well known. Toward the end of Liddon's life, when he was immersed in Pusey's biography, his friends became seriously disturbed at his apparent loss of any objective or critical sense where Pusey and his opinions were concerned.<sup>25</sup> Edward King begged him to abandon the biography.<sup>26</sup> This situation fostered an enduring legend that Liddon was merely Pusey's mouthpiece. Our present study has shown that such a view is unsound. Liddon *was* capable of disagreement with his teacher, and perhaps a shared theological vocabulary hid from both men the truth that they were actually very different personalities. Pusey's emotional, even passionate, devotion to God and the Church, for example, was distinct from Liddon's cooler logic.

Where Pusey's influence may be regretted is in the rigidity which he helped to impart to Liddon's mind. Owen Chadwick laments that Pusey made the young Liddon old before his time in theological and ascetical outlook.<sup>27</sup> Also, it was inevitable that Liddon should imbibe Pusey's antagonism to the biblical criticism coming from Germany.<sup>28</sup> We have seen how this refusal to admit possible merits in such scholarship rendered him impotent to help a younger generation.

Pusey's influence is clear, but we should remember that Liddon was also shaped by Keble, who, at Bishop Wilberforce's insistence, replaced Pusey as his confessor and spiritual advisor when he went to Cuddesdon. Keble did not share Liddon's liking for logic in religious matters, but Liddon's determined rejection of theological novelty certainly reflects advice given by

<sup>23</sup> PL, I, 148, August 26, 1873. We have seen that this estimate of Dissenting opinion was wrong.

<sup>24</sup> *Tait*, I, pp294ff. P. Hinchliff: *Frederick Temple* (Oxford, 1998), p79.

<sup>25</sup> T. B. Strong, "Dr Liddon at Christ Church" in *Henry Parry Liddon, A Centenary Memoir* (London, 1929), p11.

<sup>26</sup> King to Liddon, November 21, 1885. This letter is in Liddon's diary for that year.

<sup>27</sup> O. Chadwick: *The Founding of Cuddesdon* (Oxford, 1954), p43. A footnote instances Liddon's ludicrously inappropriate words of comfort to a distressed child.

<sup>28</sup> C. Matthew, "Edward Bouverie Pusey", *JTS*, n.s. XXXII (1981), suggests that Pusey's rejection of German scholarship might have had political roots. However, Pusey, writing to Professor William Ince, says simply, "I saw that it must come, and that we were not prepared to meet it." (PL, II, 206, November 18, 1878.) This important letter stresses that the Oxford Movement was "intensely practical", aiming to use the Anglican divines and Church Fathers "to restore (as far as man could) *primitive*, definite faith and doctrine, and earnest practice."

Keble to Newman about preaching.<sup>29</sup> From Keble also he would have learned suspicion of German biblical criticism. Keble's conservatism was marked, as was Liddon's, and there is a curious (though not absolute) parallel between Keble's reverence for his father's opinions and Liddon's reverence for those of Pusey and those of Keble himself.

Newman's influence on Liddon was necessarily less marked. He had left Oxford on his way to Rome just before Liddon went up, though his memory, and the anguish of his friends at his conversion, long haunted the place. Liddon first met Newman in 1871 and always respected him, not least for his connection with Pusey.<sup>30</sup> But not even Newman could persuade him to accept the Roman claims. He rejected Newman's theory of doctrinal development (which he believed could lead to unbelief as much as to Rome, whose claims to authority he thought the theory undermined), and also Newman's use of it to defend teaching on a subject such as the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. "I have been struck this morning," he told Wood, by the unsuccessful attempt of even Newman's genius to make out a case for the Immaculate Conception from the Fathers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, and from a passage within apocalypse, a case for the cultus – and *he* certainly would not be content with a shadowy inference if he could command a substantial one."<sup>31</sup> Liddon shared Newman's fear of the effect of popular "Liberalism" on the Christian Church and its faith. Yet because he could not admit (as Newman did)<sup>32</sup> *some* merits in Liberalism, he could seem only narrow and reactionary to those of wider sympathies and greater optimism.

The aspect of Liddon's character which did much to damage his reputation in his later years was his undisguised pessimism concerning Oxford and the Christian cause there. Pessimism was a theme common to the Tractarian fathers – pessimism concerning the limitations of human nature and the human propensity to sin, and pessimism about the Church, fallen away from her first faith and commitment. Liddon absorbed this outlook, though it is a moot point whether this inheritance or natural inclination led him to the despondent view which darkened his final years.

<sup>29</sup> O. Chadwick: *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement* (Cambridge, 1990), p57.

<sup>30</sup> *Halifax*, June 6, 1883. "I felt quite vexed with myself for finding it so much easier to get on with Cardinal N. than with an average bishop of our own. There is of course the practical chasm...."

<sup>31</sup> *Halifax*, Sexagesima Sunday [February 4], 1866.

<sup>32</sup> I. Ker: *John Henry Newman* (Oxford, 1988), p721.

Was there indeed a movement away from Christian belief in Oxford, or were Liddon's anxieties a projection of more personal fears? There is some evidence that the last two decades of the Nineteenth Century saw the beginnings of a decline in Church attendance, but not enough to allow of firm conclusions as to causes, which may have had as much to do with shifting population as with shaken faith.<sup>33</sup> That faith was being disturbed is beyond doubt, however. The agnosticism espoused by Huxley, more than atheism, was finding its professed adherents. This disturbed Liddon:

Agnosticism [he wrote to one correspondent] seems to be a less "blasphemous" state of thought than Atheism; it wins our sympathy by pleading ignorance, and not insisting upon knowledge. But it is, I fear, often more hopeless. The Atheist is committed to a position for which he is intellectually responsible, and from which he may be dislodged by argument. The agnostic is committed to nothing except the lazy theory that we have no means of knowing anything which is really worth knowing in this life.<sup>34</sup>

Unsettlement of belief *was* becoming more evident in Oxford, and for Liddon the writing appeared on the wall with the University Tests Act of 1871, by which academic posts in Oxford (except those attached to specific religious positions) became open to those of all shades of belief or none. In this anxiety Liddon was in the company of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, which wished Roman Catholic parents not to send their sons to Oxford since it would threaten faith and morals. Even Newman, who did not wholly disapprove of Oxford as a place for young men, concurred with Liddon's view that *Lux Mundi* capitulated to rationalism and spelled the end in Oxford of what the Tractarians had attempted.<sup>35</sup> However, Edward King, remarkably untouched by Tractarian pessimism, thought that this was too defeatist an outlook, and was heard to laugh at "poor Liddon's" prophecies of gloom about university reform.<sup>36</sup> It is not surprising that to the young, Liddon appeared a teacher who could neither respond to nor guide their aspirations.<sup>37</sup>

Our study has noted the inclination of Pusey and Liddon to spring to the defence of orthodoxy and tradition. Liddon was no doubt partly motivated by his sincere belief that correct doctrine was vital. "Theology" he told Wood, "is not a matter of characters holy or attractive, or the

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<sup>33</sup> O. Chadwick: *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement*, pp204ff.

<sup>34</sup> Johnston, p291.

<sup>35</sup> C. S. Dessain & T. Gornall [Eds]: *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman* vol. XXIII (Oxford, 1973), p 101; vol. XXXI (Oxford, 1977), p294.

<sup>36</sup> *The Oxford Magazine*, May 5, 1910, p288.

<sup>37</sup> W. Lock: *Oxford Memories* (London, 1932), p56.

reverse. It is a matter of propositions which are either true or false.”<sup>38</sup> This is strange coming from a champion of Catholic Christianity, which emphasizes the Gospel incarnated in holy lives at least as much as doctrinal correctness. The Tractarians themselves stressed *practical* piety, not only sound teaching – a point acknowledged by Liddon when he wrote that as a young man Bishop Hamilton of Salisbury was drawn to the Tractarians because “the Movement appealed to a desire to lead a holy life rather than to any craving to fill up gaps which the ‘reason of faith’ could not but detect in an imperfect creed. The intellectual or dogmatic interest came later, when the true and lasting doctrinal springs of ethical beauty had been laid bare to the eye of the anxious conscience.”<sup>39</sup> However, logic and Liddon’s residual Evangelicalism combined, urging him to protect doctrinal truth. Evangelicalism urged the saving of one’s soul as the most important task in life, and wrong belief could (in Liddon’s view) condemn the soul to an eternity of grief.<sup>40</sup> Given this disposition, Liddon’s involvement in controversy was inevitable. Pusey was usually an unwilling controversialist, but one senses in Liddon a greater pugnacity. He fought to defend and to win. Nor did he consider religious controversy necessarily regrettable. “Between the sacredness of Divine truths and the angry passions which rage around them, when the floodgates of religious discussion have been opened,” he said, “there is a painful contrast, which we feel most deeply in our best moments. And yet the wind and storm of controversy has its place and use in God’s providential government of His Church.”<sup>41</sup> St Paul had opposed St Peter; Athanasius opposed Arius; Augustine attacked Pelagius; the Reformation had convulsed Europe. Yet God’s purpose was defended by such conflict:

Our own age has not been wanting in its full share of religious disputes, and we have not escaped the heart-burnings and other evils which always accompany it. But these winds and storms have fulfilled God’s word, by rescuing from oblivion some neglected truths; by reminding Christians of a truer and higher standard of practice which they had well-nigh forgotten; by bringing out into the sunlight the unity which often underlies apparent differences, as well as the deep differences which may traverse specious agreement;...by deepening the sense of the preciousness of that Will and Word of God, which is itself attested by our misunderstandings, our struggles, our very faults of temper, accompanying the effort which is made to recognize and proclaim it. Yes, even controversy may have its blessings.<sup>42</sup>

Again, Truth is at issue, not merely piety or emotion. Yet controversy tends to reinforce opposing convictions, and to blur the distinction between matters of primary and secondary

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<sup>38</sup> *Halifax*, December 6, 1889.

<sup>39</sup> H. P. Liddon: *Walter Kerr Hamilton* (London, 1869), p13.

<sup>40</sup> Y. Brilioth: *Evangelicalism and the Oxford Movement* (Oxford, 1934), p39-40.

<sup>41</sup> H. P. Liddon: *Advent in St Paul’s*, vol. II (London, 1889). p256.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* p257.



importance. It also tends quickly to stale for succeeding generations. We may understand the reasons for Liddon's engagement in disputes, but it is impossible not to regret that his time and energy and the resources of his mind were so often engaged in argument which reinforced his rigidity of outlook.

What impression of Liddon remains at the conclusion of our study? He was an extremely able and convinced Churchman, respected and loved by his friends, yet also a somewhat constricted human being. The letters and diaries reveal at first sight a man of curiously little self-awareness. He was not introspective, and his examination of mind and heart would most likely have taken place in a regulated manner appropriate to preparation for sacramental confession. His feelings could be glimpsed, but they appear to have been very strictly guarded. There was about him none of the spaciousness of mind which we find in Dean Church. (Church, for example, could never have referred to classical Greek life as "elegant and detestable", as Liddon did.)<sup>43</sup> Despite his foreign travels, Liddon's interests were narrowly ecclesiastical. Unlike Newman, he makes no mention of music, except Church music. He actively opposed Christian attendance at the theatre.<sup>44</sup> He read the novels of Walter Scott and Jane Austen, but he gives little indication of purely literary concerns. His reading of Shorthouse's novel, *John Inglesant*, which he mentions to Wood, was certainly dictated by the book's description of Nicholas Ferrar's community at Little Gidding.<sup>45</sup> He was alert to works of fiction, whether English or European, which attacked Christian faith, and so he could not help being aware of the commotion caused by "Poor Mrs Humphrey Ward's new infidel novel [*Robert Elsmere*]", and he disapproved of comments on it by Scott Holland, "who has a general tenderness for everything that is new, whether true or not."<sup>46</sup> He did have an appreciation of painting, and his diaries reveal a keen awareness of the beauties of the natural world.

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<sup>43</sup> *Halifax*, September 10, 1879.

<sup>44</sup> Johnston, p282-3; 284-6. In this he was at one with Frederick Temple in deploring the activities of the young socialist priest, Stuart Headlam, whom he criticised severely to Wood. (*Halifax*, July 8, 1879; October 29, 1885; September 1, 1887.) On Headlam's support for the theatre, see R. Foulkes: *Church and Stage in Victorian England* (Cambridge, 1997), Ch 10, though some of his references to Liddon are inaccurate.

<sup>45</sup> *Halifax*, September 2 and 5, 1881. He shows genuine discernment of the novel's merits and flaws.

<sup>46</sup> *Halifax*, April 6, 1888. *Robert Elsmere*, depicting contemporary religious doubt, caused a sensation, aided by Gladstone's searching review of it, claiming that its purpose was "to expel the preternatural element from Christianity, to destroy its dogmatic structure, yet keep intact the moral and spiritual results." (W. E. Gladstone: "Robert Elsmere' and the battle of belief" in *The Nineteenth Century*, May, 1888, p773.) Liddon was personally acquainted with Mrs Ward.

Unlike Pusey, Liddon was a sociable man who entertained or dined out frequently. He sought the company of those sympathetic to his interests, but, as we have noted, he sometimes found himself with those of differing viewpoints, for example George Eliot or Matthew Arnold. Such encounters did not alter his opinions.<sup>47</sup>

The rigidity of Liddon's religious outlook is one of his most pronounced features. Did its source lie in his innate conservatism and Pusey's influence, or was there an additional cause? Manning said of Newman, "[his] mind is subtle even to excess, and to us certainly seems to be sceptical."<sup>48</sup> Liddon's mind, despite the view of Archbishop Benson's biographer, quoted earlier, was not particularly subtle, and there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate concealed scepticism: but if he differed from Newman in quality of intellect, he shows decided similarities of mind (though not of character) with Manning. "Instinctively [Manning] preferred the downright dogmatic statement of fixed principles: 'whatever is new is not of Christ'."<sup>49</sup> So did Liddon. For both men, "where there was no dogma there could be no faith."<sup>50</sup> Like Manning, Liddon sought an infallible authority as the only secure foundation of faith. Manning found that authority in the Papacy. Liddon, dismissing Papal claims, found it in the Divine utterance and person of Christ, the scriptures, the creeds and councils of the early Church, and the Prayer Book as the embodiment of Anglican principles. He contended strongly for these, for despite his anti-Romanism, there was in him much of the Ultramontane outlook which Manning personified. It is this approach which can make him seem almost a man of belief rather than faith. It should be noted, however, that his opposition to Rome was not primarily doctrinal but historical. His logical, indeed essentially *factual*, mind protected him from the allure of Roman Catholicism which eventually claimed some of his Anglican contemporaries. He believed that the facts of history did not justify the Papal claims, and no appeal to feeling could shake him on this question.

C. G. Matthew accused Pusey of leading Anglo-Catholicism into a dead end.<sup>51</sup> Geoffrey Rowell admits the force of the criticism "if devotion and intellect, theology and spirituality, are kept in separate compartments", but correctly adds that if they are not then Pusey left a positive

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<sup>47</sup> *Halifax*, February 3, 1885, gives his impression of George Eliot.

<sup>48</sup> R. Gray: *Cardinal Manning* (London, 1985), p111.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p136.

<sup>51</sup> H. C. G. Matthew, "Edward Bouverie Pusey", *JTS*, n.s. XXXII (1981), p123.

legacy of spirituality and teaching to his successors.<sup>52</sup> It is not so easy to claim this of Liddon. Though a confessor and spiritual advisor, he left no published corpus of spiritual counsels. His letters to Wood show a sensible but essentially practical approach to a disciplined life of devotion and conduct. His strength, in both preaching and controversy, was that of an advocate for a position, and as we have seen, circumstances changed in ways which his position could not meet. His Bampton lectures were his single major theological testament, but less than thirty years after his death Mrs Humphrey Ward was writing, “Who now would go to Liddon’s famous Bampton, for all their learning, for a still valid defence of the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation?...The University politics of Liddon and his followers are dead and gone; and...the intellectual force of Liddon’s thoughts and arguments, as they are presented to us now on the printed page, is also a thing of the past.”<sup>53</sup> Another who found Liddon’s Bampton powerless to help her growing unbelief was Annie Besant, who after a period of atheism became a leading figure in the Theosophical movement. She also heard Liddon preach, and was as impressed by his sincerity as she was unconvinced by his eloquence.<sup>54</sup>

It was Liddon’s misfortune to stand between the original Oxford Movement and its renewal in Gore’s generation, for he shared in neither the excitement of the originating impetus, nor the vigour of the movement which would carry its message to a new century. With Tractarianism incarnate before him in Pusey, he devoted himself to defending the principles of a golden age in which he had not participated. To those principles he would allow no transformation. It is an enduring enigma how a man of such intelligence and firm religious conviction could not grasp the religious truth that the Spirit of God leads the Church into new ways and grants fresh insights which reshape received traditions. If the First World War was to shake even the optimism of the *Lux Mundi* writers, it meant that Liddon’s legacy offered still less to the tragic and tumultuous Twentieth Century. He tended a tidy theological garden, whose surrounding walls could not be breached. Neither could they permit entrance from those bringing new growth. Furthermore, he left no band of committed disciples to continue his teaching, for the reasons already mentioned. Indeed, in certain ways he seems an isolated figure not only theologically, but also in his detachment from the networks which enabled certain Oxford and

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<sup>52</sup> G. Rowell: *The Vision Glorious* (Oxford, 1983), p96.

<sup>53</sup> Mrs Humphrey Ward, op. cit., p135, 138-9. For a balanced assessment of Liddon’s Bampton lectures see J. M. Creed: *The Divinity of Jesus Christ* (Cambridge, 1938), pp70ff.

<sup>54</sup> A. H. Nethercot: *The First Five Lives of Annie Besant* (London, 1961), p53; 302-3.

Cambridge figures of the day to determine the careers of individuals and ensure the continuing influence and outreach of their ideas.<sup>55</sup>

What has been written thus far must place serious questions against Liddon's standing in the Victorian Church. Yet there are points which we must now raise in his defence.

Although Liddon's logicity could lead him astray, honesty and truth were always his intention. There was in him a strong strain of realism, and his greatest contributions to the Church resulted from the *practical* actions he took in consequence of his attempts at a realistic assessment of situations. He did not merely lament what he saw as error, but took practical steps to correct it by writing and preaching. None could accuse him of timidity where the defence of right belief (as he saw it) was at stake. In the wake of the defections to Roman Catholicism by Newman, Manning and others of prominence, when Tractarians were demoralized and vilified, Liddon stuck firmly to his principles even at the cost of personal criticism. Though he came to lament the religious situation in Oxford, still he remained there, even when he thought that the younger men like Gore no longer supported him. Nor did he become so sectarian as his strong convictions might lead us to expect. As we have seen, he was a moderating influence on the ritualist clergy and the more extreme members of the English Church Union, including Charles Wood.

Liddon's contacts moved beyond the Church of England, a notable correspondent being the distinguished Birmingham Congregationalist, R. W. Dale. Liddon appreciated Dale's theological vigour and sent him copies of his published sermons. Dale's study of the Atonement and his 1877 lectures on preaching won Liddon's particular praise.<sup>56</sup> Dale's acceptance of Biblical Criticism would not have pleased him, but despite differences of thought and denomination he could write, "I do feel that we agree in our major premisses much more than I can with some others who, ecclesiastically speaking, are more nearly related to me."<sup>57</sup> On the day before his death, Liddon requested that an article on Dale in the *Spectator* be read to

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<sup>55</sup> I am grateful to the Revd Alan Cadwallader of Flinders University, South Australia, for drawing my attention to the importance of such networks in his unpublished lecture, " 'Just Among Friends': Establishing and Preserving Networks of Influence in the Church: A Comparison of Charles Vaughan with Brooke Foss Westcott", delivered at St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden, on February 6, 2000.

<sup>56</sup> A. W. W. Dale: *The Life of R. W. Dale* (London, 1898), p325; 339.

<sup>57</sup> Johnston, p335.

him twice.<sup>58</sup> One of his last letters was addressed to Dale - a moving personal statement of faith tested by physical pain:

While my general health has much improved, I am still liable to recurring attacks of severe pain, which leave me very prostrate...Such experience can only be sent to any of us for some especial purpose, and while I have good reason to know that I greatly needed the chastisement, it has taught me, I hope, more than I knew before of the Justice and Love of God. Your kindness, my dear Dr Dale, emboldens me to venture on these private, and in some sense sacred regions, not without a hope, too, that you will remember me in your prayers, and ask that such a visitation may, at least, not turn to my loss in the great Day of Account.<sup>59</sup>

A notable event on the Victorian religious scene was the emergence of William Booth's Salvation Army. The Army's courageous work in some of the country's worst environments won the admiration of many who were not sympathetic to the movement's doctrines. Liddon was aware of the Army's activities, and willing to experience its worship at first hand in December, 1881. His companion on that occasion was almost certainly W. T. Stead, the famous newspaper editor and social reformer. Of Nonconformist background, Stead became a friend of Dean Church and Liddon, often walking with the latter on Monday afternoons.<sup>60</sup> He greatly respected Liddon, though he thought him "in the Church so much as hardly to be anything out of it."<sup>61</sup> Liddon wrote,

At 7.30 went with Mr Stead to the Salvation Army in Whitechapel. The proceedings were conducted by young Mr [Bramwell] Booth: there was a great deal of fervour and evident earnestness. The women speaking their experiences were to me the least grateful feature in the proceedings. It was curious to observe how entirely the Ritualistic Element was recognised in "holding up the hands"...[MS] Numbers of young men who might have been won by a warmhearted, living Church system.<sup>62</sup>

This reveals Liddon's genuine appreciation of what the Army was doing. Its enthusiasm clearly touched him, and he acknowledged the failure of his own Church to meet the needs of the young men present. How shrewd was his recognition that an element of ritual will always creep into worship, even that of the Salvation Army. And how characteristic was his prim, donnish shrinking from the testimonies of what were undoubtedly "fallen women". (He was rarely at

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid. p385-6; 388.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p385-6.

<sup>60</sup> W. T. Stead: *Character Sketches* (London, 1891?), p117.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. p110.

<sup>62</sup> *Diaries*, December 30, 1881.

ease with women unless they were intelligent.) Furthermore, this expedition required of him physical and moral courage. Whitechapel was one of the most offensive and depraved areas of London, the scene of early work by William Booth and of the ministry of Canon Barnett at St Jude's Church. Bishop Jackson of London called it the worst parish in his diocese, and only seven years after Liddon's visit it saw the sensational crimes of "Jack the Ripper".<sup>63</sup>

Liddon's willingness to be open to other Christian traditions is further seen in his attendance at the Bonn Conferences on reunion in 1874 and 1875. There has been no space in this study to deal with these in detail, but they show Liddon's sympathies with the Eastern Church and with the Old Catholics. The Second Conference saw much argument over the *filioque* clause in the Creed, and Liddon faced some criticism at home (including Pusey's) over his contribution to the Conference. In his response he was careful to do nothing which might harm the prospect of reunion abroad by causing division in England. Once again, his outlook emerges as broader than might be predicted. Among Tractarians he was distinguished by his direct experience of Eastern Christendom in Russia. He was an active member of the Eastern Church Association, founded in 1863.

One of the most fruitful results of Liddon's realism and practicality has been only touched on in our work – his role as a Canon of St Paul's Cathedral. From his appointment in 1870 until his death he played a leading part in transforming the life and worship of one of the greatest churches of the nation. Until shortly before his installation, life at St Paul's had been at a shockingly low ebb. In 1868 a visitor could comment that the most prominent characteristics of the building were dirt and neglect.<sup>64</sup> That year Robert Gregory became a Canon and, aided by Dean Mansel, began agitating for reforms. Liddon's arrival gave him a staunch ally, and they set themselves to remedy the slovenly conduct of worship, especially from the choir. Liddon insisted on moving to beneath the Dome to preach, a shift quickly justified by the crowds he drew. By 1871 Gregory and Liddon had inaugurated weekly lectures for men in the winter, and the Eucharist was celebrated on all major Holy Days – daily from 1877. J. B. Lightfoot arrived as a Canon in 1871 and joined the two in showing parties of working men around the building on many Saturday afternoons.<sup>65</sup> 1871 also saw the appointment of Richard Church as Dean. He

<sup>63</sup> H. O. Barnett: *Canon Barnett*, vol. I (London, 1919), p68.

<sup>64</sup> W. R. Matthews & W. M. Atkins: *A History of St Paul's Cathedral* (London, 1957), p266.

<sup>65</sup> G. L. Prestige: *St Paul's In Its Glory*, (London, 1955), p106.

accepted the post after prodding from Liddon, who was also influential in bringing John Stainer from Oxford in 1872 to transform the cathedral's music.<sup>66</sup>

Despite his Oxford commitments, Liddon was punctilious in keeping his three months of residence at St Paul's each year, as well as in attending Chapter meetings. Every aspect of the cathedral's life interested him, whether it was worship, music, fabric or a new peal of bells. It was his suggestion that a great Bourdon bell should be added, for which he supplied the name ("Paulus, Doctor Gentium") and the inscription (I Corinthians 9:16), which gave him the theme for a sermon in St Paul's on December 18, 1881.<sup>67</sup> This bell was tolled for the first time at his own funeral.<sup>68</sup> Also, after initial reservations, he supported the Chapter's decision to commission G. F. Bodley to create a new high altar. The reredos which was part of Bodley's design roused controversy following its dedication in 1888 because of the crucifix which was central to it. Defending it was one of Liddon's last ecclesiastical struggles.<sup>69</sup> In the case of St Paul's Cathedral, therefore, Liddon made an enduring contribution to the Church of his day.

A final question presents itself. Given his prominence in Church of England affairs, why was Liddon not advanced beyond his St Paul's canonry? Certainly opportunities were presented, as noted in our Introduction. He was pressed to stand for the See of Brechin in 1875, and elected Bishop of Edinburgh in 1886, the same year he was offered the Deanery of Worcester. Early in 1890, after the death of Bishop Lightfoot, Liddon was certainly being considered as a possible successor to the See of Durham. Writing to Randall Davidson at Windsor, the Dean of Westminster, G. G. Bradley, listed some candidates for the post. His own preference was Westcott, but he commented, "*Liddon* will be preferred by Lord S[alisbury]. I can't say a word against him willingly [a word then scratched out]. Our scant relations have always been most cordial – could he *sympathise* with any one outside his own party? – one or two things have startled me by his narrowness this way."<sup>70</sup> This was a familiar question mark over Liddon's suitability for the episcopate. Davidson had raised it in a letter to Queen Victoria in 1888, acknowledging the truth in it but suggesting that becoming a bishop might broaden Liddon's outlook.<sup>71</sup> By March, 1890, gossip in the press that Liddon was being passed over for a

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. Ch. 10; P. Charlton: *John Stainer and the Musical Life of Victorian Britain* (London, 1984), Chs. 4 & 5.

<sup>67</sup> H. P. Liddon: *Advent in St Paul's*, vol. II (London, 1889), pp115ff.

<sup>68</sup> W. M. Sinclair: *Memorials of St Paul's Cathedral* (London, 1909), p348.

<sup>69</sup> *Halifax*, February 19, April 6, 1888; June 1, 1889.

<sup>70</sup> **Lambeth Palace Library**, Davidson Papers, 27.407-8, January 1, 1890.

<sup>71</sup> G. E. Buckle (ed.): *The Letters of Queen Victoria* (3<sup>rd</sup> Series), vol. 1, p427-8.

bishopric because of the Queen's personal opposition reached such a pitch that she ordered Randall Davidson to write to her, assuring her that there was "not a vestige of foundation" in the rumours.<sup>72</sup> This was not wholly ingenuous, but her annoyance at such criticism may have assisted Lord Salisbury in overcoming her suspicion of Liddon, which resulted in his being offered the bishopric of St Albans in April, 1890. All the positions mentioned were declined, however, which meant that Liddon never occupied a post imposing administrative burdens and the need to work alongside Churchmen of views different from his own. His excuses in the above circumstances were that Scotland should have Scottish bishops, that he was too busy with Pusey's biography, and (in the case of St Albans) that he was too old, too uncertain in health, too distant from Churchmen of all schools, no administrator, and that he was better placed at St Paul's.

It could be argued that Liddon simply wished to be unencumbered by the trivial details involved in high office. Perhaps, however, he was being painfully honest with himself, and acknowledging privately that his abilities were limited. As a preacher he was outstanding. Why abandon his platform in St Paul's for work not naturally suited to his capacities? And he was being truthful in claiming not to be physically robust.

This is the point to consider the question of Liddon's health, not only in the context of work offered to him and declined, but because there may here be some explanation for his despondent frame of mind in later years. Acute attacks of rheumatism are mentioned frequently in his diary, and an entry for January 26, 1872 strongly suggests that he was ill with rheumatic fever, which can cause heart damage. Nine years later he records "a great deal of pain throughout the day on the left side of my chest. In the evening it was scarcely bearable",<sup>73</sup> which might indicate organic heart trouble. During the 1880's his health seems to have been slowly but surely worsening. He complains often of severe headaches and begins to have trouble with his hearing, referring to "A very odd throbbing in my left (hearing ear) like the beating of a drum, accompanied by pain in my neck. This I have had for some days: but today it is much more troublesome than I have had before."<sup>74</sup> In 1883 his health and spirits suffered a marked decline. He wrote gloomily in his diary about his difficulty in working and his sense of

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<sup>72</sup> Johnston, p373.

<sup>73</sup> *Diaries*, January 23, 1881.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* June 15, 1883.



depression.<sup>75</sup> Entries are made such as, “Headache again at night. Do not know how I shall get clear of it.”<sup>76</sup> By April 3 Dr Ogle was telling him to go away for a break. He went to Brighton from April 11-13 and felt better, but on the 14<sup>th</sup>, back in a fog-bound London, he was again “very depressed and unwell”. He found it necessary to escape to Brighton once again from May 7-10. Travelling in July, he wrote, “At Dartmouth so much rheumatism that I determined to remain there for the night...The air *very* depressing, and I am very low spirits [sic.] – though feeling that this is wrong.”<sup>77</sup> Perhaps he was troubled by migraine, for in July, while in France, he noted, “At the end of 2 hours my headache was so bad that I was obliged to go home and go to bed – Better after resting for 3 hours; but unable to eat any dinner. Much better late at night.”<sup>78</sup>

In 1885 Liddon’s health was giving cause for serious concern. Following a head cold he wrote, “My head and ears again very troublesome.”<sup>79</sup> “My head again very troublesome. Can hear nothing distinctly.”<sup>80</sup> “Feeling very unwell. Sent for Sir H[enry] Acland. Went with him to his house, where he and Dr Grey examined my left ear. They found that there was a small obstruction in it. But the deafness was owing to my general condition.”<sup>81</sup> The references to head trouble continue throughout the year. In October he “walked in afternoon to Godstow: and enjoyed the fine sky and breeze. My head began to buzz immediately on my return.”<sup>82</sup> Finally, in November, “Dr Ogle overhauled me. Said that I had had a great break down of the nervous system from which I had not recovered. Added that six months entire rest were necessary, if I was to get well. I begged for a reprieve until after Christmas.”<sup>83</sup> Many of Liddon’s friends considered that this breakdown in health was directly attributable to the strain of writing Pusey’s biography on a highly-strung nervous system. There was truth in this, confirmed by the fact that his health invariably improved when on extended holiday away from strain and tension, but the evidence suggests definite organic trouble also. The symptoms described here would be more than enough to lower his spirits during his later life.

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid. March 7, 8, 13, 1883.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. March 29, 1883.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. July 14, 1883.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. July 21, 1883. He mentions a similar attack on June 1, 1881.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. June 8, 1885.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. June 16, 1885.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. June 19, 1885.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. October 27, 1885.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. November 4, 1885.

Liddon was honest in claiming that his health was not of the best, and that this fact, as well as disinclination, probably kept him from accepting greater appointments in the Church. In any case, he was never concerned to procure his own advancement. Clerical ambition was not in his nature.

The life of Keble has been described as “a study in limitations”.<sup>84</sup> This might apply to Liddon also. His outlook and sympathies were clear but narrow. His failure was, in the end, one of imagination. Yet, as this study has tried to show, he occupied too important a place in the history of the Victorian Church to be so neglected as he has been. If his limitations provide a warning, his single-minded devotion to Christian truth as he saw it must also invite respect. Certainly we are justified in claiming for him the title of a great Churchman.

At Liddon’s funeral in St Paul’s on September 16, 1890, the packed congregation ended the service by singing the hymn which he had often requested when in residence, “When morning guilds the skies.” Liddon had actually helped the St Paul’s congregation to learn the hymn, presumably to the tune *Laudes Domini*, which was new in 1868. The *Guardian* reported in 1874 that “upwards of 4,000 people were present at St Paul’s Cathedral on Sunday afternoon, when Dr Liddon preached...After the sermon, as on the previous Sunday, the hymn ‘When morning guilds the skies,’ was heartily sung, the Canon literally leading the people throughout.”<sup>85</sup> Many present must have sensed the ending of an era, an impression intensified by the presence of the visibly ailing Dean Church - his last appearance in his cathedral, so it transpired. As they sang, however, they must have realised why the hymn was such a favourite of Liddon’s, for the purpose which had guided his whole adult life was summed up in its refrain – “May Jesus Christ be praised.”

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<sup>84</sup> G. Battiscombe : *John Keble* (London, 1963).

<sup>85</sup> *Guardian*, August 12, 1874, p1042.

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*Liddon Papers, Pusey House, Oxford.* This important collection includes Liddon's diaries, letters written by him to E. B. Pusey, Pusey's letters to Liddon, drafts of Liddon's biography of Pusey, and an invaluable set of transcripts of letters to Pusey by various writers, as well as letters from Pusey. These transcripts, bound in volumes, were prepared for Liddon's use when he was writing Pusey's biography.

Among the many other collections held at Pusey House are the papers of Bishop Hamilton of Salisbury and the papers of the English Church Union.

*Liddon Papers, Keble College, Oxford.* This collection consists chiefly of letters written to Liddon; but it also includes manuscript sermons and the manuscript of his Bampton Lectures.

*Salisbury Papers, Hatfield House.* There is here a file containing a small number of letters from Liddon to the Third Marquis of Salisbury, and also a few written to Lady Salisbury.

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