

St Boniface Trust Essay Competition

Why I Am an Anglican and Believe I Shall Remain So

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[The author lives in Chorleywood, England, and is a licensed Reader. The judges thought the essay good on 19th Century Anglican history and the development of 'Broad Church'. Little editing has been required prior to publication; but we have added footnotes in simple explanation for readers who may not be familiar with the many individuals mentioned; and we have moved bibliographical information from the main text to footnotes.]

'Anglican' — from the Latin word for 'English' and meaning 'of, or relating to, or denoting the Church of England or any Church in communion with it'.¹ The earliest reference dates from 1625-1635, but not until the nineteenth century did it come into common usage, when the British Empire was spreading across the world.

I grew up near Liverpool at a time when the concept of Empire² and steadfast churchgoing were part of the fabric of the people's lifestyle. My mother was staunchly anti-Catholic and made sure I was baptized, as a baby, in an Anglican church. She exhibited a fierce Protestantism even though neither she nor my father were church-goers. Instead, they were church-senders, and I dutifully attended a nearby Methodist Sunday School on a Sunday afternoon. Nevertheless, an Anglican influence was prominent in my upbringing as for several years I attended a Church of England school, while my secondary school had a strong connection with the local parish church. In my early teens, however, my faith

¹ Pearsall, Judy (ed) (1998) *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* Oxford, Clarendon Press.

² For example, the first hymn I learned at school was 'I vow to thee, my country'.

diminished, but on reflection, I see that a Christian foundation had been laid down, and throughout my 20s and 30s I occasionally prayed privately and read the Bible.

When 45, and freshly moved to Hertfordshire, I began to attend our parish church with my wife solely for our two daughters to be baptized. Yet, when that was accomplished, we stayed. Why? The church was modern in many ways, charismatic in worship, and its members were very loving and made us feel most welcome. Our desire to bring up our daughters—and two subsequent sons—in the Christian faith was easily accommodated. Then I learned of the power of the Holy Spirit for the first time and several spiritual experiences made it clear that God not only wanted us to remain in that church but also that he had plans for our lives. So, my Anglican adherence was assured and I was confirmed, not through having weighed up the pros and cons, but through God's leading us, perhaps without our realising this at the time. The fact that both my wife and I became committed Christians in an Anglican church and gave our lives to Christ there, was a hugely significant factor in cementing our loyalty to it.

Since then, I have immersed myself in every aspect of Anglican church life, at parochial, deanery and diocesan levels, undertaken many courses, and qualified as a Reader. My churchmanship is low-to-middle but I have worshipped in all types of church and I am steeped in the Church of England. Even when, with my family, I spent a year leading a United Reformed Church in response to an invitation (from an Anglican bishop!), I knew we would return to the Anglican fold in due course.

So arguably, I am an Anglican by parental tradition and the circumstance of where we lived, not by deliberate choice. Yet I treasure that membership and believe I shall remain an Anglican, for several reasons.

I regard the Anglican Church as a family, whose members were like brothers and sisters as I struggled with the faith. A small group prayed for me, loaned me books appropriate to where I was spiritually, and were patient, forbearing and ever-willing mentors. More than anything, they taught me always to put Christ first. The teaching was, and still is, excellent, but I do accept that my experience might have been the same in a church of another denomination.

I have experienced an abundance of warmth, love and fellowship. Again, however, I am sure many non-Anglican churches exhibit these attributes, and to explain why I am an Anglican I need to identify a particularly Anglican characteristic or two.

Anglicanism is rooted in the ultimate supremacy of Holy Scripture, a vital attribute, one brought home to me when I received my Reader's licence. A deep commitment to Biblical truth is the essence of salvation, enabling individuals to form a relationship with Christ through his Word. There are other denominations, however, that similarly base doctrinal authority on the Bible.

But at the heart of Anglicanism is the basis of doctrine as expressed in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordinal. The Preface to the Declaration of Assent declares that the Church of England professes 'the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds'. This is what the Church of England confesses, and true unity belongs in this common confession. It is the

mark of Anglicanism, and its evolution in the wake of the Reformation sets the denomination apart. I am convinced that the overwhelming reason I am an Anglican derives from the foundation of the reformed Church of England in the sixteenth century and its development thereafter. My convictions dovetail neatly into my deep interest in the history of our islands and my love of my native land and her people, so much so that I shall detail how the Church of England grew into the archetypal 'Broad Church' of which I feel honoured to be a member.

Following the turmoil of the Reformation, Elizabeth I set up a middle-of-the-road Church of England where people's different shades of Protestant belief could be accommodated without resort to fanaticism. She was not concerned with men's consciences; she wished them to have their consciences in private. This understanding of religion was fundamental to the establishment of England, and later Britain, as a stable realm. Having learned that religious fanaticism can tear a country apart, the nation aligned itself to a Church of England precisely defined to avoid that, and it is this loose control within a convergence of Church and State history that underpins my Anglicanism.

The nineteenth century brought the greatest challenge to the Church. It was a pivotal time and the battle was relentless, but the 'Broad Church' came into its own, giving Anglicanism a strong sense of unity. The term was coined, possibly by Arthur Clough,³ to classify Anglicans whose beliefs differed from the extreme Evangelical and Tractarian Movements that isolated people either uneasy with the Thirty-nine Articles or impatient for the Church to accommodate new ideas in science and historical/biblical criticism. In this group, Clough typified graduates whose feelings of abandonment and disillusion undermined their aspirations to ordination. Religion, politics and science all witnessed clashes between liberal and reactionary forces.

Religious stirrings dated from Enlightenment claims that reason led to truth, a thinking propounded by German intellectuals who encouraged Christians to rationalise against a belief in divine revelation and blind biblical interpretation. The first waves reaching England merely targeted the Old Testament, to which Samuel Taylor Coleridge⁴ directed 'students and professors of theology and Church history,'⁵ while he queried references to ungodly sources,⁶ different accounts of the same event, and God's commands to massacre enemies. His subjective analysis, however, did not dissuade him that 'the bible contains all truths necessary to salvation ... the undoubted Word of God.'⁷

³ Arthur Hugh Clough, 1819-1861). In 'Memorials of The Very Revd William Charles Lake DD, Dean of Durham 1869-1894' (Katharine Lake, ed. 1901), it is recorded that the dean heard the term 'Broad Church' used by Clough before 1847.

⁴ Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), philosopher, critic and poet.

⁵ Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1825) *Aids to Reflection &c*, published 1904 London, George Bell and Sons, p.331. [The book is digitised and available on-line (but in an 1840 edition with different pagination) <http://archive.org/stream/aidstoreflectio01marsqooq#page/n13/mode/2up>]

⁶ 2 Chronicles 9.29; 12.15; 25.26; 28.26; 32.32; 33.18; 36.8, for example.

⁷ Coleridge, *op cit*, p.330.

Coleridge redefined orthodoxy. ‘Nothing but unalloyed truth... satisfied him.’⁸ Also, he believed that people’s moral sense would bind them to God in a united Church,⁹ something Chadwick considered his major teaching, placing him in the philosophical—not the German critical/historical—half of what became the Broad Church.¹⁰ Following Coleridge, Arnold¹¹ linked belief to inquiry, using the mind to energize the will, typified in F D Maurice’s¹² life-long pursuit of a Church Universal.

George Eliot’s¹³ translation in 1846 of David Strauss’ *Leben Jesu*,¹⁴ which separated scriptural reality from legend, attracted followers with a Latitudinarian dislike of subscribing to articles of belief, favouring reason to establish moral doctrines to supplant ‘those of the eternal punishment of the wicked and the vicarious sacrifice of Christ.’¹⁵ Many doubters were concerned by scientific discoveries, such as Lyell’s¹⁶ verification that the Earth was immeasurably older than *Genesis* suggested. The aim of the liberal truth-seekers was to free Christianity from such ‘shackles of history and so the mind from the torment of doubt,’¹⁷ but the challenges to the Christian fundamentals of ‘creator God, Christ divine, inspired Bible, future life’¹⁸—the absolute essence of faith—failed to break out of academe. Lower clergy generally knew nothing; in fact, ‘a closed mind had become ... part of the professional equipment of a clergyman.’¹⁹

Given that Broad-Church ideas had long been the preserve of a minority, it is worth considering why they broke out so publicly and vigorously in mid-century.

First, the Church felt shaken by successive Governments. Rectifying what they considered to be imbalance, and prompted by Dissenters, these had repealed the Test and Corporation Acts, emancipated Roman Catholics, created the Ecclesiastical Commission, introduced tithe reform, and established a Registrar-General Office.

Second, there was fear of civic unrest. Chartism, supported by prominent Christians, troubled Government and Church. Chartists regarded politics and religion inseparable, capitalism abhorrent, and the Church neglectful of social inequality and poverty.²⁰ They looked to create a just Christian society, Christianizing the new Owenite socialism²¹ by

⁸ Sanders, Charles Richard (1972) “Coleridge and the Broad Church Movement”, New York, Octagon, p.31f.

⁹ Crowther, Margaret A (1970) “Church Embattled: Religious Controversy in Mid-Victorian England” Newton Abbot, David and Charles, p.114.

¹⁰ Chadwick, Owen (1966) “The Victorian Church Part 1”, London, Adam and Charles Black, p.186.

¹¹ Dr Thomas Arnold (1795-1842), Headmaster of Rugby School 1828-41

¹² Frederick Denison Maurice (1805-1872).

¹³ George Eliot, pen name of Mary Anne Evans (1819-1880), novelist.

¹⁴ *Life of Jesus* 1835.

¹⁵ Crowther, *op.cit*, p.48.

¹⁶ Sir Charles Lyell, (1791-1875), lawyer and geologist, sometime professor of geology at King’s College London

¹⁷ Chadwick, *op.cit*, p.532.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.527.

¹⁹ Altholz, Josef Lewis (1998) “The Warfare of Conscience with Theology”, article in ‘Religion in Victorian Britain—Vol IV (1998) Milton Keynes, Open University, p.153.

²⁰ See “The Kingdom of Christ”, F D Maurice 1838, the theological basis of Christian Socialism.

²¹ Named after social reformer Robert Owen (1771-1858).

opposing 'the unsocial Christians and the unChristian socialists' as Maurice put it.²² Socialism was about people, so Christian Socialists, ignoring politics and economics, responded in terms religious and moral, focusing on the plight of workers.²³

Third, the Anglican Church had experienced several shocks. The Gorham Judgement²⁴ and 'Papal Aggression'²⁵ of 1850 exposed its structural weaknesses and many people were dismayed to see it lacking authoritative leadership and publicly torn in Parliament and the courts. Worse, the Census of Religious Worship (1851) revealed the number of its worshippers to be barely half the figure expected.

Fourth, countless unbelievers viewed all religions as at best unpopular, at worst outmoded, and realized that, because of increased knowledge, long-established truths were challengeable. Creation, original sin, messianic prophecy, substitutionary atonement, and hell all came under intense scrutiny. Organised religion had lost its way.

Fifth, new ideas proliferated because of improving communications. 'Even the remotest country clergyman [through] newspapers and popular periodicals [was being brought] into contact with the thoughts of others and ... prompted to indulge in controversy.'²⁶

Finally, the dangerous tendencies of Evangelicalism towards over-emotion (neglecting the mind), and of Tractarianism towards authoritarianism (veering Romeward) facilitated a Broad-Church advance. Its new liberalism moved inquirers to proclaim that 'unless a reformation in the Church's teaching brought it to discard many of its outworn ideas, Christianity in England would be overcome by the two extremes of superstition and rationalism.'²⁷

One inquirer was William John Conybeare²⁸, the first to use 'Broad Church' meaningfully in an article²⁹ identifying three parties in the Church: high, low and broad. He pulled no punches: to him even the Broad-Church reformers and 'pioneers of moral progress ... [possessed] little organization or mutual concert of any kind.'³⁰ Although his analysis was

²² In 1851. Quoted by Charles Raven "Christian Socialism 1848-1854" London, Frank Cass, 1920, p.154.

²³ Parsons, Gerald (2001) "Social Control to Social Gospel: Victorian Christian Social Attitudes", article in 'Religion in Victorian Britain – Vol II (2001) Milton Keynes, Open University p.45.

²⁴ George Cornelius Gorham was presented to the living of Bramford Speake, near Exeter in 1847; the bishop of Exeter refused to institute him because of his views on Baptism; Church courts upheld the bishop's ruling, but the Privy Council overturned the judgement, and thus began a controversy as to whether the state should interfere with Church doctrine and discipline.

²⁵ The Roman Catholic Church re-established its own hierarchy in Britain in 1850.

²⁶ Crowther, *op.cit.*, p.18

²⁷ *Ibid*, p.7.

²⁸ William John Conybeare, vicar of Axminster, Devon 1848-57.

²⁹ Conybeare, "Church Parties", article in the *Edinburgh Review* (October 1853) reproduced in 'From Cranmer to Davidson: A Church of England Miscellany' pp.255-365 edited in an Introduction pp.215-252 by Arthur Burns (2002) London, Boydell.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p.346.

incomplete, unsophisticated and fragile, he had tried bravely to codify a complex belief-pattern consisting of a 'true battle between faith and reason.'³¹

Another figure was Maurice, gifted but controversial. He believed that 'God is to be sought and honoured in every pursuit, not merely in something technically called religion,'³² and saw the brotherhood in Christian Socialism as 'the assertion of God's order'.³³ But Maurice and his circle were not Socialists, but more like old-fashioned paternalist clergy who hated middle-class manufacturers and the industrial England they had created.³⁴ Among others, Arthur Stanley³⁵ aspired to the Anglicanism visualized by Bishop Tait of London³⁶: a deeply religious liberal party more accommodating than the narrow doctrines of Anglo-Catholicism and anti-Roman Evangelicalism.

It was open season for testing Christian belief. The Broad Church fulfilled a need, and essays by Maurice³⁷ and Wilson and Powell³⁸ extended its ideas: denouncing miracles, challenging everlasting punishment, questioning the evidence for Christianity, and arguing the unreasonableness of expecting people to be slaves to dogma. In 1859, Darwin's³⁹ *Origins and Species* generated acute tension between science and religion. His theories of evolution infuriated millions, yet found support with Broad-Church adherents like Powell, who endorsed evolution as an alternative to biblical six-day creation.

The publication of *Essays and Reviews* in 1860 was sensational. The essayists⁴⁰ expressed people's anxieties in a Broad-Church spirit, restating 'traditional doctrines in line with developing moral sensibilities and German critical scholarship.'⁴¹ Jowett advocated free-thinking 'within the limits of the Church of England,'⁴² but opponents feared he 'would propagate Germanism';⁴³ Powell discounted miracles; Wilson rejected traditional notions of heaven and hell; Pattison wanted theology to adapt to history and science; while Williams questioned some Biblical authorship, denied the atonement, and redefined justification by faith as peace of mind! The book's fierce reception came from an unholy alliance of 'Evangelical, Orthodox and Anglo-Catholic protagonists...[who turned]...their collective fire on the liberals of the Broad Church' causing feuding that brought Church people into fresh

³¹ *Ibid*, p.362.

³² *Life of Maurice II*, p.319

³³ *Life of Maurice I*, pp.43f

³⁴ *Ibid*, p.171.

³⁵ *Arthur Stanley, Dean of Westminster 1864-81*.

³⁶ *Archibald Campbell Tait, Bishop of London 1856-68, Archbishop of Canterbury 1868-82*.

³⁷ *Theological Essays*, (1853), by F D Maurice, based on sermons

³⁸ *Oxford Essays*, (1857), by Wilson and Powell

³⁹ *Charles Robert Darwin (1809-1882), naturalist*

⁴⁰ *Frederick Temple, Williams, Powell, Wilson, Charles Wycliffe Goodwin, Mark Pattison, and Benjamin Jowett*.

⁴¹ *Moore, James R (ed) (2001) "The Broad Church: a Reformed Bible", introductory article in 'Religion in Victorian Britain - Vol I' (2001) Milton Keynes, Open University p.25.*

⁴² *Quoted in Reardon, Bernard M G (1971) "From Coleridge to Gore: A Century of Religious Thought in Britain" London, Longman, p.322.*

⁴³ *Chadwick, op.cit*, p.551.

conflicts with one another.⁴⁴ Wilson and Williams were tried for heresy but the furore endured.⁴⁵

Liberal thinking had reached most parishes, while religious history was fast becoming an acceptable subject for study and all Christians no longer regarded the Bible as literal truth.⁴⁶ This, plus the Church-State debate and the decreasing faith among the expanding working-class, threatened a schism. Stanley and other Broad-Church supporters even expected another Reformation and the re-thinking brought, not peace and lucid minds, but embitterment and confused intolerance. In Knight's view between 'about 1800 and 1870 the Church of England underwent a transformation more rapid, dramatic and enduring than any ... since the Reformation.'⁴⁷

The Broad Church had never been an organized party and the name disappeared after 1870,⁴⁸ but its principles lasted and evolved against a 'modern' background, an obviously changed environment.⁴⁹ Its legacy will be considered under the umbrella headings of doctrinal belief, Church organization, and social attitude.

Doctrinal belief was being undermined through two strands: first, the pursuit of theological truth in the face of obstruction, which Jowett illustrated by his comment that 'doubt comes in at the window when inquiry is denied at the door'.⁵⁰ He hesitated over the incarnation doctrine, while Sanders relates⁵¹ how Maurice accused the High Church party of 'endeavouring to pull down other men's truth because it is not the same position as their own'.⁵² A critical point arrived in 1864 when Kingsley taunted Catholicism, writing: 'truth, for its own sake, had never been a virtue with the Roman clergy', an accusation that riled Newman.⁵³ 'English public opinion was gripped by the battle of these two literary and theological giants.'⁵⁴ In Natal, Bishop Colenso questioned substitutionary atonement and everlasting punishment,⁵⁵ and applied historical/critical methods to the Pentateuch.⁵⁶

⁴⁴ Knight, Frances (1998) *"The Nineteenth-century Church and English Society"* CUP, p.2.

⁴⁵ Ernest Renan's *"Life of Jesus"* in 1863 and John Seeley's *"Ecce Homo"* in 1865 each dealt with Christ in human terms and attracted both acclaim and condemnation. These were the first of a great number of publications on the life of Jesus, in particular his humanity.

⁴⁶ A prominent exception was John Burgon, Dean of Chichester. 'Every book of it... every letter of it is the direct utterance of the Most High... faultless, unerring, supreme' (from a sermon at Oxford in 1861, quoted by Badham, Paul (1998) *"The Contemporary Challenge of Modernist Theology"* Cardiff, University of Wales Press, p.17.

⁴⁷ Knight, *op.cit.*, p.1.

⁴⁸ It was relabelled 'Maurician Socialism' by Charles Gore (see Carpenter, James (1960) *Gore: A Study in Liberal Catholic Thought* London, Faith Press, p.58) and as *Liberal Anglicanism* by others.

⁴⁹ Reardon, *op.cit.*, p.18.

⁵⁰ "On the interpretation of Scripture" in *Essays and Reviews 1860*

⁵¹ Saunders, *op.cit.*, p.233.

⁵² *Life of Maurice I*, p.205

⁵³ Book review in *MacMillan's Magazine*, January 1864, quoted in Newman, John Henry (2004) *"Apologia pro Vita Sua"* (ed Ian Ker) London, Penguin, p.xi.

⁵⁴ Longley, Clifford, *Thought for the Day* (25th June 2007) BBC Radio 4.

⁵⁵ John William Colenso, first Anglican bishop of Natal, *St.Paul's Epistle to the Romans: newly translated and explained from a missionary point of view 1861.*

Where was Christianity heading? Maurice based his belief on directly experiencing God, Jowett represented the German interpretation of Christianity as spiritual philosophy, while Powell supported a science-dependent religion without the Old Testament and miracles. Of these three paths it was Maurice's—where faith remained sure—along which the future lay.

A Broad-Church aim was to enhance its image by appearing 'reasonable and tolerant ... more mature than the narrow and selfish creeds of the wrangling Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals.'⁵⁷ But liberal Anglo-Catholics such as Gore⁵⁸ also felt challenged to bring historical fact and Christian belief together. Two theological streams converged: one from Newman, the other from Coleridge and Maurice,⁵⁹ and an outcome in 1889 was *Lux Mundi*⁶⁰, an essay collection that generated extensive debate through its challenging of Old Testament accuracy and Christ's divinity, yet did so within a claim of orthodoxy. Its editor, Gore, argued 'that it was he, and not ... rigid adherents to the Tractarian position, who was following in the great tradition of Anglican thought.'⁶¹

The second strand undermining doctrinal belief was the personalization of 'expressions of faith during public worship. Faith's essentials came to lie in religious experience, feeling and intuition. Wilson thought that 'the ultimate interpreter of Scripture was the reason and religious sense of the reader.'⁶² Williams sought a rational basis for his own faith, believing the mind had power to evaluate scripture. As the century ended, more clergymen moulded their beliefs to suit personal conviction, unlike fifty years earlier when holding liberal views was incompatible with priesthood.⁶³ The displacement of blind belief by intellectualism had come to stay, and the 'attempt to find the source of authority in the Church was ... abandoned'.⁶⁴ Quite simply, educated Christians no longer accepted the old rigid doctrines.

Although expressions of worship unified in choirs and hymn-centred devotion, controversy raged over the conduct of services, and wide differences prevailed over the frequency of holy communion, weekday services, the 'six points',⁶⁵ and ritualism. These were part of the new pluralism that existed in 'theologically incompatible doctrinal attitudes co-existing

⁵⁶ John William Colenso, *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined*. Seven volumes 1862-1879.

⁵⁷ See Fairfield, *The Rev'd Dr Leslie (1999) "Modernist Decline and Evangelical Renewal: The Episcopal Church from 1873 to 1998"*, article on TES Website Ambridge, Pennsylvania, USA Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry.

⁵⁸ Charles Gore, *Principal of Pusey House, Oxford 1884-93, subsequently Bishop, first of Worcester, then Birmingham, and finally Oxford*. In 1892 he founded the *Community of the Resurrection*.

⁵⁹ Carpenter, Spencer Cecil (1933) *Church and People, 1789-1889: A History of the Church of England from William Wilberforce to 'Lux Mundi'* London, SPCK

⁶⁰ *Light of the World: its sub-title was "A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation"*; 10th edition.

⁶¹ Quoted by Carpenter, James (1960) *Gore: A Study in Liberal Catholic Thought*, London, Faith Press, p.59.

⁶² Crowther, *op.cit*, p112.

⁶³ Bishop Samuel Wiberforce, *Bishop of Oxford, criticizing Essays and Reviews, 1862*, quoted in Turner, Frank M and Von Arx, Jeffrey (1998) *"Victorian Ethics of Belief: A Reconsideration"* article in *'Religion in Victorian Britain'* – Vol IV (1998) Milton Keynes, Open University, p.204.

⁶⁴ Crowther, *op.cit*, p.8.

⁶⁵ The 'six points' were turning east, full vestments, altar candles, incense, wafers, and the mixed chalice.

and competing within a single ecclesiastical body.⁶⁶ The Church was ready to accept variations within a broad theology embracing moderate criticism, and ‘from the 1880s onwards it became possible to hold, teach and publish critical approaches to the Bible and remain an accredited clergyman.’⁶⁷ Doctrinal truth and personalised faith began to work in harmony, and it ‘became increasingly clear that the Church of England was in practice a very Broad Church indeed.’⁶⁸

Under the second heading—Church organization—were two forces: first, the lingering dream of Church unity. Arnold had sought a ‘Church thoroughly national, thoroughly united, thoroughly Christian, which should allow great varieties of opinion, and of ceremonies and forms of worship ... while it truly held one common faith, and trusted in one common Saviour and worshipped one common God’.⁶⁹ He acknowledged that the Thirty-Nine Articles needed revision and believed that Christians⁷⁰ should populate a National Church. Much later, Archbishop Davidson⁷¹ bravely spoke out in 1910 for unity in mission. However, despite his status⁷² he aggravated colleagues, and ecumenism became the scaled-down aim, albeit under Anglican leadership calling on other denominations ‘to unite ... to manifest to the world the unity of the Body of Christ.’⁷³ Internally, from the 1880s the already divided Church had become dominated by Anglo-Catholicism, and liberals, eschewing compromise, accepted some ‘Gothic architecture and the use of medieval vestments and liturgical colours’, and also ‘co-opted the Evangelical passions for personal commitment and social justice and their drive to transform society.’⁷⁴ The three Church Parties were edging together.⁷⁵

A second force in Church organization was the changing Church-State relationship, especially in the light of a Nonconformity that demolished any pretence that Church and State were the same. The Broad-Church viewed the State as having authority over the established Church. Establishment restrained extremism, providing a boundary within which moderates could exercise freedom of conscience. The Church was forced to redefine itself as a denomination, however, when Ireland and Wales broke away, and it lost some privileges.

⁶⁶ Parsons, *op.cit.*, p.47.

⁶⁷ Parsons, Gerald (2001) “Biblical Criticism in Victorian Britain: From Controversy to Acceptance?” article in ‘Religion in Victorian Britain’ – Vol II (2001) Milton Keynes, Open University p.250.

⁶⁸ Parsons, Gerald (2001) “On Speaking Plainly: ‘Honest Doubt’ and the Ethics of Belief”, article in *ibid.*, p.217

⁶⁹ Thomas Arnold, “Principles of Church Reform”, 1833.

⁷⁰ Quakers and Roman Catholics were excluded.

⁷¹ Randall Thomas Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury 1903-28.

⁷² A leading churchman, John Scott Lidgett, even awarded Davidson the title ‘the Archbishop of the Universal Church in England’ – see Taylor, Stephen (ed) (2002) *From Cranmer to Davidson: A Church of England Miscellany*, Church of England Record Society 7, London, Boydell, p.409.

⁷³ Hastings, Adrian (2005) “A History of English Christianity 1920-2000”, London, SCM Press, p.97.

⁷⁴ See Fairfield, *op.cit.*

⁷⁵ Parties virtually disappeared by 1960.

Under the third heading of Broad-Church principles—social attitude—four trends may be discerned.

First, the need for a new relationship was acknowledged, although agreement proved elusive. Maurice was intensely nationalistic; Anglicanism to him was the foundation of a Universal Society, with its creeds, Articles and Prayer Book embodying eternal truth. He supported Tractarian belief that the Church was a divine society inseparable from the world, and took this into Christian Socialism, which made strenuous efforts to carry its message to the masses, even though between 1854—when Christian Socialism faded—and 1877 there was no organized Church group concerned with social responsibility. Disappointed, Tait wrote (1863): ‘the great evil is that the liberals are deficient in religion, and the religious are deficient in liberality.’⁷⁶

But the spirit of Christian Socialism continued to inspire, through the formation of associations of trades that spawned the Co-operative movement and, in 1889, the Christian Social Union, both aligned to Maurice’s broad theology. Even the Anglo-Catholic Gore founded an Oxford CSU branch in 1889.⁷⁷ Bishop Fraser⁷⁸ of Manchester mediated in major industrial disputes and the original Broad-Church calls for social action by the Church were manifested in a proliferation of ‘societies, leagues and unions committed to a more or less precise and overt Christian Socialism.’⁷⁹ Being developed was a Broad-Church call for clergy to combine ‘a liberal understanding of theology with devoted parochial work’⁸⁰: a practical approach to Christianity. In 1890 Bishop Westcott of Durham appealed for support of Socialism, which emphasised co-operation, not competition, but the social policy—always a minority interest—of an increasingly peripheral Church was waning and being subsumed by the State. By 1903 the number of worshippers and church marriages had begun to fall,⁸¹ and the welfare state was dawning.

A second trend in Broad-Church social attitude was improving education by promoting exemplary behavioural patterns, a sense of duty, and high standards in religion, without being dogmatic. Rugby School was the model, under Arnold, who ‘had faith in the power of the mind to cope with the problems confronting human beings’⁸² and encouraged students to inquire after truth, not automatically accept authority. At the foot of the social scale Maurice believed that without a full education, artisans could never manage their own affairs, and he founded the Working-Men’s College on the model of a ‘people’s college’ opened in Sheffield in 1842.⁸³ Education was a concern also of Christian Socialism, which pioneered night school, Working-men’s Associations, and the Workers’ Educational

⁷⁶ Quoted by Crowther, *op.cit*, Chapter 2.

⁷⁷ Carpenter, James, *ibid*, p.35.

⁷⁸ James Fraser, *Bishop of Manchester 1870-86*.

⁷⁹ Parsons, Gerald (2001) *Social Control to Social Gospel: Victorian Christian Social Attitudes* article in *Religion in Victorian Britain – Vol II* (2001) Milton Keynes, Open University p.51

⁸⁰ Quoted in Parsons, Gerald (2001) *Reform, Revival and Realignment: The Experience of Victorian Anglicanism* article in *Religion in Victorian Britain – Vol I* (2001) Milton Keynes, Open University p.25.

⁸¹ Knight, *op.cit*, p.12f.

⁸² Sanders, *op.cit*, p.92f.

⁸³ Matthew, Colin and Harrison, Brian (eds) (2004) “*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*”, Vol 37 OUP

Association. The Education Acts of 1870 and 1902 brought the State into education and although many schools remained Anglican, the Church's influence on education slowly diminished during the twentieth century.

A third social trend was maintenance of high morality. This lay at the heart of Broad-Church philosophy, with doctrinal concern reflecting doubts about God as a moral being and whether belief in him was immoral in view of Old Testament suffering. Broad-Church supporters believed Christianity had an essential morality expressible in various ways, including love of truth, while Stanley in 1883 also supported a theology that 'insists, not on the ceremonial, the dogmatic, or the portentous, but on the moral side of religion.'⁸⁴ The early Tractarian-Evangelical conflict had changed into a Broad-Church (liberal) and orthodox (conservative) conflict, with honesty and integrity the main principles. Maurice argued that original sin, substitution, atonement, hell and eternal punishment did not belong in a faith based on God's love: Jesus did not die to appease God's anger. Maurice was convinced that theology should be 'the protector and basis of morality.'⁸⁵

The fourth trend in the Broad-Church social attitude was its dedication to staying attuned to the spirit of the age by supporting models of free- and pure-mindedness, gentlemanliness, physical prowess, and distinctive sexual roles within and outside marriage. It valued Christian behaviour more highly than Christian doctrine. Kingsley⁸⁶ conceived a manly ideal based on sound religion and sound morality, embracing physical exertion and strenuous work to ameliorate evil.⁸⁷ By the 1890s, however, the Church's social influence was waning and any ideas of establishing behavioural standards across male society foundered.

From a 1914 stand-point, the divergent lines of theological and ecclesiastical thinking had caused controversy for decades but Anglicans came to admire a Church able to hold together contrary views. Moreover, Broad-Church principles had blurred former party boundaries yet sharpened smaller groups within them such as the Protestant Truth Society and the English Church Union. Their story largely became the Church's story, reshaping a forward policy that generally held together. Credit for this must go to Gore, whose liberalism had restrained Anglo-Catholic excesses in a volatile situation. 'Traditional positions became increasingly modified' wrote Reardon,⁸⁸ and leaders such as Gore and Dean Inge⁸⁹ (who loathed emotionalism and intellectualism) were difficult to place.

By 1914 some Broad-Church strands had merged or become obsolete, leaving arguably four of ongoing significance: the search for theological truth, the personalization of expressions of faith, the need for internal Church reform, and social interaction.

⁸⁴ Quoted by Roger Booth: "Historical notes on inclusive or Free Christianity in England" in *The Chapel in the Garden* website.

⁸⁵ "Theological Essays", p.223. Quoted by Sanders, *op.cit.*, p.210.

⁸⁶ Charles Kingsley, (1819-75), priest and historian.

⁸⁷ See Vance, Norman (January 1975) "Kingsley's Christian Manliness", article in *Theology* Vol. LXXVIII, No. 655 (January 1975) pp.30-38.

⁸⁸ Reardon, *op.cit.*, p.464.

⁸⁹ William Ralph Inge, 1860-1954, Dean of St Paul's 1911-1934.

Concerning theological truth, some Christians believed the faith had never changed, but most recognized that to remain credible the Church needed to be less dogmatic. In 1898, with the founding of the Churchmen's Union, Broad-Church thinking had become liberal Modernism, pursuing a doctrinal truth subject to research discoveries. 'Speculation in biblical history and religious philosophy did not stand still;'⁹⁰ six-day creation, original sin, prophecies of Christ, substitutionary atonement, and hell, had all taken a battering, and the virgin birth, Jesus' physical resurrection, and the historical Jesus would soon come under scrutiny. Remarkably, however, conflict between criticism and faith softened to a difference of emphasis between intellect and devotion. Animosity turned to reasonableness, piety reigned, and 'even Darwinian irreligion was swallowed up in respectability.'⁹¹ The atonement, the wrath of God, and fear of hell, became subordinate to the incarnation, the love, mercy and fatherhood of God, and Jesus' teaching that the kingdom of God is here now.⁹² Jesus' death was seen as not placating the anger of God or ransoming sinners from Satan's power; God was wholly present, sharing human suffering; and hell was not seen as punishment but separation from God. These were Modernist views that perceived God as a God of love, accepting people as they were. By this criterion the Church was able to resist challenges, such as those by Bishop John Robinson⁹³ with his extreme liberal, if not relativist, views about God existing outside the Church in culture,⁹⁴ the first of many challenges from the 1960s stretching into the New Age and post-modernist periods.

One Broad-Church legacy is that mainstream Christians do not accept the Bible as infallible. Another is that although traditional language in liturgy and hymns is still employed, rarely is its meaning spelled out, leaving worshippers to determine their own interpretations. So, in matters of theological truth, doctrine and personal faith, the search for objective certainty and the personalization of faith converged in Modernist theology to update traditional Christianity in line with the rest of modern knowledge.⁹⁵

The Anglican search for union with Nonconformity remained an objective, but even its Broad-Church inspiration was insufficient to find common ground. Internal reform, however, was essential, and although the 1919 Enabling Act⁹⁶ awarded the Church some administrative powers, the Government maintained a heavy hand, witness the rejection of a revised Prayer Book in 1928. From 1970, synodical government presented the Church with a mechanism to manage and resolve its own affairs, including problematical issues. Nevertheless, agitation for reform continues.

⁹⁰ Vidler, Alec R (1961) *The Church in an Age of Revolution, 1789 to the Present Day - Vol V of The Pelican History of the Church* London, Pelican, p.194.

⁹¹ Moore, *op cit*, p.314.

⁹² Parsons, Gerald (2001) "Social Control to Social Gospel: Victorian Christian Social Attitudes", article in *Religion in Victorian Britain' – Vol II* (2001) Milton Keynes, Open University p.59

⁹³ John Robinson, (1919-83), *New Testament scholar and Bishop of Woolwich*.

⁹⁴ *Honest to God*, 1963

⁹⁵ Badham, *op cit*, p.15.

⁹⁶ *The Act gave a degree of self-government to the Church of England*.

As regards social interaction, although the Church had but a vague notion of Socialism, Christian Socialists dominated the early leadership of trade unions and the Independent Labour Party.⁹⁷ It appeared to be the way ahead, William Temple⁹⁸ declaring in 1908: 'the alternative stands before us: Socialism or Heresy. We are involved in one or the other.'⁹⁹ To many, Socialism resembled the Gospel with its opposition to capitalism and commitment to the poor, social justice, victims of crime, and peace, but it was slow to appreciate that God loved all humanity, something deep in Christianity. The relationship also changed when 'the activities of the Labour Party ... began to replace those of the church hall,'¹⁰⁰ and when Labour rejected pacifism and aligned itself to supporting economic market forces, only a minority represented a direct link to Christian Socialism.

As for the Anglican Church, it retreated from a position of power to one of encouragement, persuasion, and standard-setting, embracing moral values, and generating socially radical ideas. Clergy lost their professional status and eventually most lived in urban areas, sharply made aware of the need for social reform. When COPEC¹⁰¹ was held in Birmingham in 1924, the Church began to turn away from 'high Tory attitudes to an acceptance of the Christian case for massive social reform and the development of a welfare state.'¹⁰² In 1942, William Temple published *Christianity and Social Order*, an influential document searching for a fairer society. During the 1980s the Church took a lead in alleviating the plight of inner-city residents facing riots, poor housing, and unemployment.¹⁰³ Church views were of a centrist, Broad-Church nature. No longer in control, it fell back on holding the Government to account, supported by Christians exercising their own influence in the secular worlds of political parties, education, health, community relations and moral welfare.

My Anglican commitment is tied to this legacy of the Broad Church, which I have deliberately described in detail because it is central to my being an Anglican. Its triumph is that it despatched the feeling that the antiquity of the Church did not mean that it guarded 'a divinely held revelation which also stays the same from age to age.'¹⁰⁴ To survive, it has been forced to subject its beliefs to scientific and historical analysis, and been prepared to modify them. Christianity is now based on finding God as he speaks to people rather than on their trying to comprehend an infinite personality. I rejoice in this, plus the fact that faith expressions are increasingly varied, employed in many types of situation, with language often deviating from that printed in set liturgy. I also rejoice in the increased willingness to conduct mission in new ways from its unique presence in every community, and to take that key message of mission throughout the Anglican Communion.

⁹⁷ *Its founder, Keir Hardie, was called into the Labour Movement through his Christian faith.*

⁹⁸ *William Temple (1881-1944), Archbishop of Canterbury 1942-44*

⁹⁹ *Hastings, op cit, p.172.*

¹⁰⁰ *Knight, op cit, p.79.*

¹⁰¹ *A landmark inter-denominational Conference On Politics, Economics and Citizenship.*

¹⁰² *Hastings, op cit, p.179.*

¹⁰³ *Its report Faith in the City set up Urban Priority Areas, and policies were agreed to move clergy there.*

¹⁰⁴ *Badham, op cit, p.16.*

Addressing new tendencies inevitably causes tension, but the spirit with which Anglicanism holds diverse opinions together constitutes its strength. With complex subjects such as women's ordination, women bishops, issues of sexuality and the Anglican Communion Covenant, I am confident that internal warring parties will find solutions and retain most of the existing membership. Losers of arguments may find solace in Psalm 73.25: 'My heart and my flesh may fail; but God is the strength of my heart and portion for ever.'

People have largely remained loyal, to a Church of all things to all men maybe, but also one of tolerance and comprehensiveness and whose leaders are aware of this. The Anglican Church has become a very broad Church, and how it has kept, and still keeps, pace worldwide with changing times continues to inspire me.

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