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PARSON AND PARISH

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The English Clergy Association, as the successor to the Parochial Clergy Association, exists to support in fellowship all Clerks in Holy Orders in their Vocation and Ministry within the Church of England as by law Established. The Association seeks to be a Church of England mutual resource for clergy, patrons and churchwardens requiring information or insight; to support Clergy serving under Common Tenure as well as those still enjoying Freehold of office; to monitor ever-burgeoning bureaucracy and continued legislative and other processes of change; and to promote in every available way the good of English Parish and Cathedral Life and the welfare of the Clergy.

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PARSON & PARISH
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“serving the people and their parishes”

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The front and back covers depict St Peter and St Paul, Swaffham, Norfolk.

Front: exterior view.

Back: interior, showing double hammer-beam roof with some of the 88 carved chestnut wood angels, and detail.

FROM THE EDITOR

This year sees the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Association, originally named the Parochial Clergy Association as our title page makes clear.

To mark the occasion we plan to produce a special edition of archival material, to illustrate questions which have concerned members over the years, and also to show a few of the distinguished contributions which *Parson & Parish* has been able to publish. The first few editions appeared during World War II and the immediate postwar years, under understandably difficult conditions. The work involved in collating the material to be published in the Special Edition is considerable, and readers' patience is requested!

We are pleased in this edition to be able to publish a long article, or extended essay, thus continuing a tradition found in earlier issues of *Parson & Parish*.

A luncheon to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the English Clergy Association was held at the Oxford and Cambridge Club on 9th September, by kind permission of our Chairman, the Reverend John Masding. Among those present were several members of the Council of the Association, Trustees of the Benefit Fund, members of the Association and a pleasing number of private patrons.

In some brief remarks our Chairman referred to article 39 of the Magna Carta, which can be translated as follows:

No free man shall be taken or imprisoned or his goods seized or be outlawed or be exiled or be in any other way ruined, nor will we come upon him, nor send upon him, except by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land.

He observed that William III quoted this in December 1688 in his speech to Parliamentarians when he came over and accepted the throne, after James II had fled, having lost his fight to deprive the President and Fellows of Magdalen College of their freeholds. He drew out the modern relevance of this article for the necessary freedom of clergy to work without over-prescription by ecclesiastical bureaucracy and hierarchy, in order to secure the exercise of responsible ministry and service in good spirit. Writing in *Parson & Parish* in 1942, he said, Dr. Headlam, formerly Regius Professor of Divinity, and at that time Bishop of Gloucester, had spoken of the Parson's Freehold as a guarantee of a clergyman's liberty to act and speak, the very icon and exemplar for society of the Free Man whom Magna Carta had protected.

[Although many articles of the Magna Carta have been modified or repealed by subsequent Statute, article 39 remains intact. For those interested, the Latin text

may be found among other places in Stubbs, *Select Charters and other Illustrations of English Constitutional History* (4th edition, Oxford, 1881) at pp. 296ff.]

I recently came across a copy of a service of Institution and Induction in which the new incumbent was to make an Oath of Canonical Obedience to ‘the Lord Bishop of X, the Area Bishop of Y and their successors, in all things lawful and honest’.

Certain questions arise from this “double whammy”:

- Can canonical obedience be delegated or split?
- If an oath of canonical obedience can be paid to an Area Bishop, why not also to a Provincial Episcopal Visitor by those who have opted for the reception of that channel of ministry?

The office of what in the Church of England is usually called a ‘Suffragan Bishop’ is of ancient origin, reaching back to the chorepiscopi of the pre-Nicene church, who were ‘country bishops’ appointed to assist the bishop of a *civitas* in its outlying areas. They were strictly subordinate to the bishop, and various canons of early 4th century synods made regulations about them.

From about 1306 in England until 1535 about 100 suffragans were appointed, since many diocesans were officers of state. A further 17 or so were appointed between 1535 and 1592. They were then in abeyance until 1870 when the increasing pressure of church development led to their reintroduction. Interestingly, in *A Dictionary of English Church History* (Ollard and Crosse, Mowbray, 1912) it is stated that their appointment ‘is now common, but [they are] a less satisfactory method of relieving overburdened bishops than the division of dioceses’.

That abidingly valuable report *Doctrine in the Church of England* (1938, SPCK reprint 1957) presents (pp. 122f) five principal considerations from whose convergence “the argument for Episcopacy derives its strength”. In summary form, these are

1. Symbolising and securing the apostolic ministry of the Church;
2. The episcopal succession as a guardian of orthodox teaching;
3. Representing the unity and catholicity of the Church, diocese to Church, and Church to diocese;
4. The bishop as chief pastor, representing the good Shepherd;
5. The bishop as the agent for carrying on through ordination the authority of the apostolic mission.

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The Report goes on to say:

It is the coalescence of all these elements in a single person that gives to the Episcopate its peculiar importance. Such coalescence could not effectively take place in a committee or assembly. And the full development of these several elements will prevent the undue development of any [one]...An assemblage of persons cannot be a 'Father in God'.

This quotation from the Report does not on this writer's part betoken a comment on the question of women bishops, nor on the questions of succession and oversight in special conditions, particularly as addressed by the Porvoo accords. But those words remain a classic statement of Anglican understanding of episcopacy, and can therefore be fairly used in discussion about the status or role of suffragan bishops.

In his Bampton Lectures for 1960, published as *Counsel and Consent* (SPCK 1961), Dr EW Kemp (at pp. 222ff) quotes the above passage, and goes on to observe that it was difficult to reconcile that ideal with the existence (at his time of writing) of 43 dioceses, 44 suffragans and 25 assistant bishops. He continues by arguing for the creation of smaller dioceses, arranged in a number of regional groupings, or new provinces, under a metropolitan.

A diocese, to fulfil its function as the essential unit of the Church, did not necessarily need a full blown cathedral of the traditional type, merely a larger parish church where the bishop's chair may be situate; for although Cathedrals are important signs of the Christian faith and its role in our society, as attested by attendance and visitor numbers, yet there is already considerable variation among them. Administrative services could be shared (as indeed is now happening more and more, e.g. registries, child protection, DAC secretary). Dr Kemp's argument is still well worth reading, particularly in the light of increasing top-heavy bureaucratisation of the Church.

It will be interesting to see whether the creation of the new diocese in Yorkshire, if it has area or suffragan bishops, may perpetuate the problem mentioned in the 1938 report that an assemblage of persons cannot be a 'father in God'.

There is now a common practice in intercessions of praying for 'X and Y our bishops', instead of 'X our bishop and Y his suffragan' [or 'Y, bishop of Z']. This is compounded by the existence of a 'House of Bishops' in the Diocesan Synod, which militates against the notion of Bishop in Synod which in Anglican usage has developed from Bishop in synod of clergy to Bishop in synod of the whole *laos*.

While one ventures with some caution to enter the legal questions implicit or explicit in all the above, the law ought to make sense in the context of the body it is meant to serve. It is worth remembering that apparently minor points can often be

symbolic of wider assumptions or attitudes which need examination. Maybe there is some obscure provision lurking in a Miscellaneous Provisions Measure which allows or is thought to allow the purported double oath of canonical obedience, but even were that to be so there are underlying ecclesiological and canonical concerns which remain.

Peter Johnson

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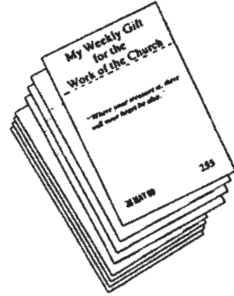
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Anglican Awareness

Barry A. Orford

In February this year *The Church Times* printed an article in which I voiced concern about the formation of our future priests, both in residential and non-residential training. My anxiety is that too many ordinands appear to have only the haziest ideas of Anglican Church history, worship and spirituality and of the notable figures in that history.

As I wrote, ‘it is a serious matter if the priests of the Church of England are ignorant of our story and our spiritual tradition, yet looking back on my own ordination training in the early nineteen seventies I remember no sustained instruction on our Anglican heritage. Is that still the situation?’

I waited to be criticised for being out of date, out of touch with recent trends in training, and failing to grasp the needs of the Church of England today. What surprised me was that all the comment I received, both in print and in personal contact, was strongly supportive. I can only conclude that I was making a point which people had been waiting to hear.

I said in my article that I have no interest in ecclesiastical antiquarianism. I am not an unyielding defender of the *Book of Common Prayer*, still less of the King James Bible. I recognize fully that we have to live, work, think and pray as twenty-first century Christians. Yet without a sense of our Anglican inheritance we have nothing firm to support us in that task and nothing to guide our Church. Despite what critics claim, the Anglican heritage is not a vague, flaccid, ‘anything goes’ affair. It has solid foundations, both in theory and practice, and those who will be ministering in the Church of England need to learn about them, and about the circumstances and individuals which established them. Without this, our distinctive voice is lost, as is any understanding and appreciation of our tradition of worship.

A friend, who shares my unease that Anglican history and tradition are not being sufficiently taught to ordinands, remarked that he thought the same problem attended matters of liturgy. In his view, ‘ordinands are being encouraged to experiment with liturgy without being taught the *principles* of liturgy.’ If he is correct, we have another area where basic knowledge is not being handed on. A general guideline applies here as in the arts; you need to learn the rules before you can properly tinker with them.

Clearly there is work to be done on our clergy training. Many ordinands are required to read for a degree in theology in one of our universities, but specifically Anglican history and spirituality will not feature in those courses. Indeed, Church history too often ranks last in importance in academic theological studies.

Here another thought comes to mind. Is the approach to theology found in academic faculties the best preparation for priesthood? I do not question the good

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quality of the work being done in universities, nor the integrity of those who teach, but we must recognise that the needs of ordinands are not the same as those of undergraduates.

In the theology or religious studies departments of secular universities no faith commitment is required of students. This cannot be the case with ordinands. For them, theology must be taught from a basis of faith. The words ‘the theologian is one who prays’ are fundamental in the formation of priests. Their theology must be grounded in daily prayer and worship. It must be pursued with intellectual rigour, but rooted in living faith.

Our university theology departments are unable to do this. Should we therefore cut loose from them, and establish our own scheme of instruction and accreditation? If we follow this course and wish it to be effective it will mean that residential training must become the norm, and that will require a major investment of cash on the part of the Church of England. To what better use could we put our money than the proper preparation of priests?

I have been told I am suggesting a return to an older training pattern for ordination. Would that be so bad a thing? But even if we do not go down this route, the question of forming ordinands in our Anglican heritage remains to be addressed. Without it, as I wrote in February, ‘we too easily become unfocussed in our purpose and lacking in conviction about the worth of what we have received.’ A friendly reader of my article cautioned against falling into ‘preaching Anglicanism’, and I have no wish to do that. However, we have our distinctive history and our distinctive ways in theology and worship, and tomorrow’s priests need to know them and grow from them. Without this it is too easy for ideas and ways of worship to be called Anglican when there is no justification for this. The splintering into factions which we see in the Church at present suggests that thorough teaching about where we have come from is more urgent than ever.

‘Anglicans are heirs to a tradition of which at present they are often almost unaware,’ wrote A. M. Allchin. ‘There is here a need for a recovery of memory, which will allow for a recovery of identity.’ But that memory must be kept alive, which means it must be taught, learned and *lived*. Providing future priests with knowledge of their inheritance means that they will be well grounded for their ministry and able, in their turn, to instruct others.

A recent American visitor to the retreat house at Pleshey rejoiced at being drawn into ‘the quiet, dignified spiritual life that goes on in the Anglican tradition at its best.’ It is good to learn that our Anglican way can still be so effective, but it can be sustained only if priests and congregations are formed in a definitely Anglican tradition.

The Revd Dr Barry A. Orford is Priest Librarian at Pusey House, Oxford.

Funeral Ministry

Alec Brown

This article follows up the brief reference to this topic in the last issue of *Parson & Parish* (no. 172, p. 20).

The context for funeral ministry within the Church of England is changing fast. Funerals remain a vital area of pastoral care and mission opportunity as part of the Church's overall cure of souls. At the same time however, greater expectations on the part of families together with the recent rise in the number of funerals being conducted by civil and humanist celebrants means that the Church is facing a very new set of challenges.

Concern over the falling number of Church funerals in the Rural Deanery of Great Budworth, in the Diocese of Chester, led to the formation of an ecumenical group of clergy determined to do something about this. A suggestion from the Anglican Chaplain at The University of Chester, Padgate site, led to a research project, which was undertaken by students taking a marketing degree at the University.

The research project was managed by the Chaplain, the Revd Ian Delinger, and a member of the Deanery Chapter, the Revd Jane Proudfoot, and involved a survey of some 150 members of the public in Warrington, together with observation of funerals by the students and discussions with funeral directors and clergy. This was undertaken in the early summer of 2012 and the resulting report, *The Funeral Project*, chronicled the strengths and weaknesses of Church of England funerals. The former included pastoral and bereavement care, the trust placed in the clergy by people and the value placed by people on tradition and community. Weaknesses included some public perception that church services were outdated, were inflexible and that some members of the clergy were difficult to make contact with.

Among the Report's recommendations were further training for the clergy in terms of the expectations of people in this day and age, greater encouragement for people to plan ahead in terms of their own funeral, and better publicity for the service which the Church provides. Students from the University have given presentations of their work within the Diocese, and the Rev'ds Ian Delinger and Jane Proudfoot have spoken at Diocesan training events in Chester, Manchester and Portsmouth Dioceses.

During the autumn of 2012, a series of meetings were held across Chester Diocese in which bishops and other clergy met with local funeral directors to discuss ways of working together more effectively. As a result of these meetings, and *The Funeral Project* Report mentioned above, a second series of meetings were held across the Diocese in the spring of 2013, with Clergy and Readers, to reflect on the results

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of the research project and the meetings with funeral directors, and to discuss best practice in funeral ministry. The meetings have been very well attended and a short guide entitled *Best Practice in Funeral Ministry* has been published by the Diocese, for use by all those involved in funeral ministry, and dealing with communication, the funeral service itself, fees, collections and donations and continuing care.

Discussions are on-going as to how to ensure that all those involved with funeral ministry in the Diocese are best equipped to deal with the fast changing scene in funeral ministry in the second decade of the 21st century.

The Revd Alec Brown is Rural Dean of Great Budworth in the Diocese of Chester, and a member of the ECA Council.

The Church of England Pensions Scheme

Jonathan Spencer

In his article in the Summer 2012 issue of *Parson & Parish*, Canon Derek Earis raises some interesting points about the clergy pension scheme. As he rightly says, pensions are an increasingly complex subject, not helped by continuous changes from government. In this article I will try to explain some of the complexities and clear up some misunderstandings about the current arrangements.

The current pensions funding crisis is not restricted to the Church – all pension schemes are facing real difficulties, and especially those that link pension to final salary or stipend at the point of retirement. During the 1980s and 1990s funding was not a problem; stock markets were forging ahead and high levels of investment returns meant that many employers did not need to pay contributions into their schemes for long periods. Since 2000, the bursting of the dotcom bubble and other stock market difficulties have meant that the financial environment has been very much tougher. As an illustration, the FTSE 100 Index, which measures the prices of the largest company stocks quoted on the London Stock Exchange, was 6950 at its peak at the end of 1999. At the end of June 2012 it stood at 5571.

However, the performance of stock markets is not the only problem facing schemes. Currently, it is the return on gilts (government bonds) which is causing the most financial pain. Gilt returns are currently at record low levels and this has the effect of increasing the amount of money needed to provide the promised benefits.

Another major factor has been increasing life expectancy — it is a fact that people are living longer and that the rate of improvement in life expectancy is accelerating. Although this is clearly a good thing, it comes at a cost; the longer pensions have to be paid, the greater the amount of money that needs to be set aside.

Faced with these difficulties, most organisations in the private sector have taken drastic action - very few final salary schemes now accept new members, and in many schemes people have been moved off these arrangements and into defined contribution schemes for future service. The Church has been keen to resist such moves for clergy. But the significant increase in the cost of providing pensions had to be addressed somehow – the cost of running the scheme was reaching a level which was completely unaffordable. The changes that were introduced in 2008 and 2011 were an attempt to continue to provide a good quality pension scheme, but at a more affordable cost. Even after these changes it remains the case that for every £100 dioceses pay in stipend, they have to find a further £38 in pension contributions. Only time will tell whether or not the strategy has been effective.

Canon Earis mentions the State Second Pension (S2P) and the decision that was taken as part of the most recent set of changes to contract the scheme into S2P.

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Before the 2011 changes, members were contracted out and so did not build up any entitlement to S2P, but both the member and the employer (or diocese in the case of clergy who are office-holders) paid a lower rate of National Insurance contribution.

At around £5,500 pa, the basic state pension provides a significant proportion of retirement income. When designing a pension scheme, a scheme sponsor is looking to provide additional pension to bring total retirement income up to a desired level. The question in relation to S2P and whether or not to contract out, is whether the amount of pension provided by S2P can be provided more efficiently by the scheme or the State.

Thirty years ago the conclusion reached was that the pension provided by the forerunner of S2P (“SERPS”) could be provided more cheaply from the clergy scheme. The reduction in National Insurance contributions was greater than the cost of providing the same amount of pension through the scheme. Over time the position has reversed and it is now more cost-effective to the Church to provide that element of benefit through S2P. The decision taken from 2011 was to contract the scheme back into S2P, so that members earn S2P in addition to their clergy scheme pension and basic state pension. The amount of clergy pension being earned for future service was reduced to take account of the higher state pension being earned.

To put some numbers on all this, the net saving to the Church, i.e. the difference between the increase in National Insurance and the reduction in contributions payable to the scheme, was assessed to be around 2.5% of National Minimum Stipend. In current terms that is about £530 per member, or a total of about £4.5 million a year. National Insurance contributions for a typical member are about £250 higher than before the change and a number of dioceses decided to increase stipends by a corresponding amount to compensate for that increase. Those that didn't saw the extra amount as a way of clergy making some contribution towards the escalating pensions bill.

In terms of benefits, the reduction in the maximum clergy pension is almost exactly matched by the amount of S2P earned, with small variations depending on age and individual stipend amounts.

What these figures add up to is that the combination of contracting back in to S2P and reducing the maximum scheme pension provides at least an equivalent amount of pension income from all sources for a total saving of £4.5 million to the church. It would have been irresponsible not to have taken advantage of this. And, in assessing the adequacy of clergy retirement income, the Church of England has always taken into account the basic state retirement pension as well as its own occupational scheme for clergy. So, no new principle was involved in introducing a third funding stream.

As Canon Earis points out, no sooner had the Church decided to make this change than the government announced its intention to work towards abolishing S2P and providing an increased basic state pension instead. There are a number of points to be made here. Firstly, we do not yet know when any new system might be introduced or the detail of the changes. They are probably still several years away. Changing state pension arrangements is extremely complex, and the timetable for the government to announce more details has already slipped. Secondly, the government has stated that existing entitlement to S2P will be preserved. So members will receive the S2P they build up from 2011 to whenever the changes are introduced. Thirdly, it is entirely accepted that any significant change to state pensions would have to trigger a further review of the clergy pension scheme so as to ensure that the overall level of retirement provision remained appropriate. And finally, it is clear that the “contracting out” option would, in any case, not continue if the government’s proposals are implemented.

In short, the possibility of changes to state pensions in the future was no excuse for not dealing with the present situation.

Finally, I should clear up a misunderstanding about how policy on clergy pensions is decided. The Church of England Pensions Board is the trustee of the scheme and is responsible for ensuring that it is administered correctly and is properly funded. It is not responsible for setting the policy on the benefits to be provided. That rests with General Synod, advised by the Archbishops’ Council and by the Remuneration and Conditions of Service Committee chaired by the Bishop of Ripon & Leeds. Further advice is also provided by a Task Group appointed by the archbishops. This consists of the Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Archbishops’ Council, the First Church Estates Commissioner and the Chairman of the Pensions Board, but they act in their personal capacities as experts rather than as representatives of their organisations.

We live in difficult economic times, and the pressures on pension schemes show no signs of diminishing in the near future. The Church hopes that the action taken in changing the scheme in 2011 will mean that the arrangements remain sustainable for many years to come.

Dr Jonathan Spencer CB is Chairman of the Church of England Pensions Board.

The Editor is most grateful to Dr Spencer and the Board for offering this article in response to Canon Earis’ article in the previous issue, as these matters are obviously of high importance for members of the ECA.

Herbert Hensley Henson, Prelate and Pastor

John S. Peart-Binns

Herbert Hensley Henson (1863-1947), Bishop of Durham from 1920 to 1939, was the most distinctive, illustrious and formidable diocesan bishop of his time. He formed his own character and fashioned his own course, setting out to conquer fortune by the force of his intellect mingled with imagination. Self-projection made him the most feared and equally the most admired controversialist in the Church of England. He stood apart from his contemporaries, his head erect among the episcopal ostriches. On many, even most, crucial issues he voted in a minority of one. The jewel in Henson's ring could have been a sardonyx. The colour of ink into which he dipped his quill pen ranged from patrician purple to dense black.

The Bishop of Durham is marked off from his episcopal colleagues by some honorific distinctions. He takes rank next to the Bishop of London: he is one of the three bishops who sit in the House of Lords by title of their Sees, not in order of consecration. In his official documents he uses a style commonly distinctive of the archbishops of Canterbury and York, writing himself bishop 'by Divine providence' rather than, as is usual, 'by Divine permission'. He has the privilege of supporting the Sovereign on the right side at a coronation, and the mitre which surmounts the arms of the See is bound with a ducal coronet.

These distinctions may perhaps be regarded as the last surviving relics of the splendour of the Palatine jurisdiction which the Bishop of Durham, alone among the bishops of England, possessed from 1099, only to perish in 1836 with Bishop William Van Mildert. The diocese of Durham was a little kingdom, equipped with the complete machinery of Government—courts civil and criminal, sheriffs and other officers, parliament, mint, prisons and army. When Henson's official portrait was painted by Harold Speed in 1929 the sword of Anthony Bec, Bishop of Durham 1284-1311, was substituted for the more conventional book, and Henson preferred to be painted in a preacher's gown rather than in the more familiar red and white of the Convocation dress.

Harold Begbie (who also wrote under the pseudonym of "A gentleman with a duster") described Henson's physical appearance and impact in *Painted Windows: a Study of Religious Personality* (1922):

Few men are more effective in soliloquy. It is a memorable sight to see him standing with his back to one of the high stone mantelpieces in Durham Castle, his feet wide apart on the hearth-rug, his hands in the opening of his apron, his trim and dapper body swaying ceaselessly from the waist, his head, with its smooth boyish hair, bending constantly forward, jerking every now and then to emphasise a point in argument, the light in his bright, watchful, sometimes mischievous eyes dancing to the joy of his own voice, the thin lips working with

pleasure as they give to all his words the fullest value of vowels and sibilants, the small greyish face, with its two slightly protruding teeth on the lower lip, almost quivering, almost glowing, with the rhythm of his sentences and the orderly sequence of his logic. All this composes a picture which one does not easily forget. It is like the harangue of a snake, which is more subtle than any beast of the field. One is conscious of a spell.

The dark, tapestried room, the carved ceiling, the heavy furniture, the embrasured windows, the whole sombre magnificence of the historic setting, quiet, almost somnolent, with the enduring memories of Cuthbert Tunstall, Joseph Butler, J.B. Lightfoot and Brooke Foss Westcott, add a most telling vivacity to the slim and dominating figure of this boy-like bishop, who is so athletic in the use of his intellect and so happy in every thesis he sets himself to establish.

It is an equally memorable sight to see him in his castle at Bishop Auckland in the role of host, entertaining people of intelligence with the history of the place, showing the pictures and the chapel, exhibiting curious relics of the past—a restless and energetic figure, holding its own in effectiveness against men of greater stature and more commanding presence by an inward force which has something of the tag of a twitching bowstring.

T. S. Eliot noted in *The Idea of a Christian Society* (1939): “I must take this occasion for calling attention to the great excellence of Bishop Hensley Henson’s prose For vigour and purity of controversial English, he has no superior today, and his writing should long continue to be studied by those who aspire to write well.” Henson’s words were enfolded in seventy-five books and pamphlets, Open Letters, *The Bishoprick*, and major contributions in periodicals. Over five hundred prominently placed letters in *The Times* covered the decisive and divisive events affecting Church and State from 1887 onwards. Unfortunately, Henson is best remembered for *Retrospect of an Unimportant Life*, a misleading title for an autobiography of 1135 pages, published in three volumes, and primarily based on a minute number of entries of the Journal which he wrote daily, with some gaps, from 12 May 1885 to 7 April 1947.

Henson was renowned as a preacher. His old nurse remembered how child Herbert broke in on the company in the drawing room at Broadstairs clothed in a nightshirt, and delivered a sermon. The childhood fantasy became a reality when queues regularly formed to hear him preach at Westminster Abbey and St Margaret’s. His sermons were fascinating for their content and for the literary and fastidious perfection of their literary form. They had other qualities: a distinguished richness of Scriptural quotation and such a fecundity of pertinent, if selective, illustration from historical and contemporary sources, that to hear them or read them when published was a liberal education.

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A witness remembers:

He is one of the few pulpit orators whose sermons have been transferred to print without betraying any of the looseness of texture or diffuseness of language which are the snares of spoken rhetoric. Apart from this perfection of literary form it is difficult to account for Dr Henson's eminence as a preacher. Listeners will remember a figure rigidified by the necessity of following a written text, a reedy voice with no charm but that of an exquisitely clean-cut renunciation, a very rare gesture, short and sharp like a sword-thrust, an abstinence from the histrionic arts of weighted pause and changed intonation. In recompense for their want there was an intensity, a searching sincerity, a disinfectant irony at times of voice and manner—in brief that elusive quality of 'personality' which is the secret power alike in churches, parliaments and theatres. It is a quality that also provokes hostility, and it is not surprising to read of bitter opposition to the man and his message.

The House of Lords filled rather than emptied when Henson spoke or intervened in debates. He was equally notable on the platform. Today the language of many political and religious leaders has evaporated into slogans and sound-bites, fluent incoherence and repetitive shibboleths. Henson was referred to as 'a Jacobin lacquered over to look like a Tory'. He referred to himself as 'latitude man who had strayed out of the seventeenth century into the twentieth' or as an enigmatic 'Ishmaelite'. Throughout his life he wondered: 'Is it a quixotic sincerity which compels me to blurt out in unmistakable decisiveness the sentiments which, at the moment, reign in my mind? Or is it, as my enemies affirm, a demonical fondness for the *guardia certaminis*? Or is it a Cassandra-like clearness of temperament, at once loyal and reckless, brave and yielding, far-seeing and absorbed in immediate situations, an amalgam of all that is most estimable with all that is least trustworthy?'

Early Life

The first eighteen years of Henson's life are covered in three and a half pages in *Retrospect!* It is not simply reticent and fractional but deluding and denying. His father, Thomas, was born in 1812 at Morebath in Devon where his grandfather and father farmed land and were churchwardens of the parish church. The drudgery of farm work did not appeal to Thomas who quarrelled with his father and left home to work and prosper in London. Aged fifty-three he retired to Broadstairs in Kent where he bought a large modern house. Appearances masked financial excesses and religious turbulence.

The wife of Thomas' first marriage died young without issue. When he was forty, he married twenty-two year old Martha Tyler Fear who bore him eight children, of whom Herbert Hensley, the sixth child and fourth boy, was born on 8 November 1863. The name Hensley was inherited from an aunt. Martha offered some protection for her

children from her husband's puritanical severity. She died in January 1870. Thomas trawled places of worship in London, falling under the mesmeric spell of the Rev'd Baptist Noel, an evangelical preacher with a God-fearing and Calvinistic message. Thomas Henson transferred his allegiance to the local Congregational Church. The household religion became narrower, stricter and darker. Soon Congregationalism was abandoned for discipleship of the Christian/Plymouth Brethren. The pietism and prophecy of the Brotherhood intensified Thomas' bleakness. His contempt for the wickedness of the world made home life purgatory. The children were not to be tarnished by attending the corrupt world of schools.

In 1873, Thomas met Emma Theodore Parker, thirty years his junior, a devout Lutheran and widow of a German pastor in Stuttgart. There is no record of a 'legal' marriage as the Brethren disapproved of legal ceremonies. One positive outcome with lasting results for Herbert was access to his father's library where he saturated himself in the large collection of theological and philosophical books. He was drawn to the Old Testament and with a retentive memory was able to recite portions of it, and he knew most of the psalms by heart. 17th, 18th and early 19th century authors appealed including John Milton, Edward Gibbon, John Bunyan, William Paley, Thomas Fuller, John Newton, Robert Leighton, Joseph Butler, Gilbert Burnet, poets William Cowper and Edmund Spenser. Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* appealed for extolling the heroism and endurance of the Protestant martyrs of Mary's reign. For young Henson Catholicism was tyranny, Protestantism liberating! Translations of Greek historians and philosophers, such as Thucydides, Pericles and Aeschylus were special.

Herbert was baptised shortly before his Confirmation. When he was fourteen his stepmother persuaded her husband to allow him to attend Broadstairs Collegiate School first as a day boy then as a boarder when the family moved to Pegwell Bay. Apart from learning Latin and Greek any formal education came too late. The masters were out of their depth with this precocious prodigy. He spent his time reading and writing essays and sermons and claimed he wanted to be a preacher.

Inexplicably the Head Master appointed Henson head boy. His school life came to an abrupt end after the Head Master questioned Henson's integrity over a discipline issue. 'I proceeded to climb the playground wall, and walk a distance of five or six miles to my home, which I reached in the early hours of the following day, to the amazement of my family and the considerable indignation of my father.' Henson was thrown back on his own resources, accentuating his individualism and sceptical intellect concurrent with a developing power of self-expression in lucid and incisive speech.

Aged sixteen, in 1879 Henson secured an educational position as an usher at Brigg Grammar School in Lincolnshire, where he went post haste. The Head Master

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was an Oxford graduate and sympathetic to Henson's desire to be ordained. He knew that Henson could go to Oxford by matriculating as an 'unattached student' known to undergraduates as a 'tosher'. Acquiring the essential high standards of Greek and Latin he matriculated in October 1881. His father reluctantly provided some finance. Henson found the cheapest lodgings at Cowley isolating himself in books. Every penny counted and was counted! He was cut off from the natural rhythm of university life which broadens minds by a range of non-academic activities.

In concealing his early life Henson had built himself a fortress, and thereafter wore metaphorical armour as thick as a tank. Underneath was a deeply sensitive person. One noticeable consequence - and flaw - was an insatiable desire to be noticed. He became a walking arsenal of erudition, who, when heated by argument, became a furnace for roasting opponents. The privations, difficulties and bitterness of the child carried permanent mental scars and emotional travails. For someone who became one of the Church's most eminent leaders there is a puzzle. 'The fact that I had never been at Public School brought home to me increasingly as the years passed the disadvantages and limitations which that great misfortune involved.' A chip on the shoulder became a carbuncle that was never lanced, leaving Henson strangely class-conscious.

All Souls College, Oxford

In 1884 Henson obtained a brilliant first class degree in modern history and, before his twenty-first birthday, was elected a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, a pivotal moment of his life. All Souls had never known a Fellow like Henson. He dressed snappily and sombrely, every crease in his suit ironed into place, white handkerchief in jacket pocket, and he wore a bowler hat. Even before Ordination there was a whiff of Trollope's Septimus Slope about Henson's severe and disapproving countenance. He was in receipt of a stipend of £200 a year for seven years. As his father careered towards bankruptcy Henson provided money for the welfare of the family and the three children still at home.

Henson founded the still extant Stubbs Society in 1884, named after William Stubbs (1825- 1901) where members read historical papers. In 1886 Henson formed The Oxford Layman's League for the Defence of the National Church.. His campaigning speeches began to be reported in religious and secular newspapers. The League may have survived if Henson's mind had been singularly focused but he was unstable and reckless. He planned to write a history of Ireland, agreed to write a biography of Pope Leo the Great (c.390-461) and drafted polemical articles on subjects which crossed his mind. Nothing came of them.

His first published work, *Gordon: a lecture* (1886), attracted wide attention. He also accepted an invitation from the Hon. James Adderley to join the League of the

True Vine, a fleeting wisp of an idea for spiritual discipline in a Tractarian manner. Henson was oddly attracted by the life of renunciation. ‘Had our lot been cast in the Middle Ages, he would have been St Francis of Assisi or St Bernard of Clairvaux, I should have more easily have betaken myself to Peter Abelard.’

In September 1886 Henson went to stay at the university settlement of Oxford House in Bethnal Green, where Adderley was Head. He should have been at All Souls deciding what he should do with his life. He had many pupils and contemplated lecturing in the School of History. Imagining a future with Henson filling lecture halls and writing books in his unique style is not difficult; being an academic historian is! He admitted: ‘The literary and pictorial historian has been replaced by the patient and laborious researcher.’ Henson lacked the capacity to direct his attention to subjects that did not interest him. Moreover his historical judgement was inclined to be darkened by prejudice, and the facts, truly ascertained, would not necessarily be allowed to give their own evidence. That is why he declined Prime Minister Asquith’s offer of the professorship of Ecclesiastical History and a Canonry of Christ Church, Oxford in 1908.

A number of All Souls Fellows encouraged Henson to read for the Bachelor of Civil Law Degree and become a barrister. His scrupulous conscience might hamper him. Would he defend a client of whose integrity he was in doubt or argue any cause with which he was not wholly in sympathy? Yet one can visualise him as a high court judge or even a Lord Chancellor.

Ordination lurked with muffled intent in the shadows. Was there real inner conviction? Rather than come to a decision, he thrashed about as if waiting for a clear exterior call. Whenever he was on the verge of committing himself he found a reason to delay—lack of money, insecurity, religious doubts. His Journal is full of breast-beating and soul-bashing self-examination.

Henson was captivated and propelled towards ordination by Charles Gore, Principal of Pusey House and the most prominent leader of Anglo-Catholicism. Henson needed to have his sense of vocation vigorously tested. But Gore was not someone to rescind his hold of a very promising candidate. In June 1886 Henson lunched with Gore ‘after which we talked for an hour or more lying on cushions in the Puseyum. He urged on me the duty of taking Orders, and not abandoning my vocation ... [later in the day] I told Gore that I would burn my ships at last and take Orders. Then I returned to my rooms and wrote to the Bishop of Oxford.’

With continuing doubts Henson was not made deacon until June 1887 upon the title of his All Souls fellowship. That was the bishop’s grievous mistake. Henson should have been compelled to join a team of curates in a large parish under the discipline of a good training vicar. Instead he followed Adderley as Head of Oxford House. He was totally misplaced, thinking (falsely) that the East End could

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be regenerated by lectures, sermons, conferences and culture when the situation required total commitment, wide sympathy, large hearted charity, and inexhaustible patience. He resigned within a year but in this period took his Master's degree, met members of Lord Salisbury's family, preached before 1400/1500 people at St Paul's Knightsbridge and was the youngest recorded preacher at Harrow School. This boy-like figure was a main speaker at the Wolverhampton Church Congress alongside Mandell Creighton, Brooke Foss Westcott and Harvey Goodwin, future bishops respectively of London, Durham and Carlisle.

Three months after his ordination as priest and still only twenty-four years of age, Henson was doing a *locum tenens* in Yorkshire when he received a letter inviting him to be Vicar of the Parish Church of St Margaret, Barking, then in the diocese of St Alban's. It was in the patronage of All Souls College. Lord Salisbury, by tradition, was Lay Rector. Henson was instituted to the cure of sixteen thousand souls on Advent Sunday, 2 December 1888, and the following day preached for the first time in Westminster Abbey.

The previous incumbent had left the parish waxing in lethargy and waning in discipline. Congregations were thin, communicants negligible. Henson's impact was immediate. All seats were declared free and unappropriated. He inaugurated an elected Church Council, opened the Working Men's Institute and another for Lads, started a parish magazine, initiated numerous Guilds to bind people together with a common purpose, for example, ones for Communicants (one for over-eighteens reached 725 members). Bible classes for boys, girls and men were packed; school treats for up to 3000 children were held in the vicarage grounds. In addition to an existing Mission which provided a home for young working women another mission church was dedicated and he persuaded Lord Salisbury to give land for the building of a new church.

Cosmo Lang, not yet ordained, visited Barking in 1889, 'Henson came six months ago to a parish *dead*—250 a good congregation in the church, and now, when he preaches, every seat is filled—1100' (*Cosmo Gordon Lang* by J.G. Lockhart, 1949). Henson referred to the clergyman as 'the tribune of the people'. He was not alone, training seven curates during his incumbency. His stepmother moved into the vicarage to help and provide sustenance and manage the fourteen-room house with the help of a number of domestic staff. His wish to turn the vicarage into a clergy house where all would live together was unfulfilled.

Henson had little interest in the trimmings of worship, or the adornments of vesture, although he occasionally wore a biretta. The fundamentals of Catholic faith and its sacramental expression were crucial including the sacrament of confession, which he recommended to communicants and, during this period only, practised himself. However, he was never carried along in the mainstream of Anglo-Catholicism, never

regarded as 'one of us'. But he was strict in duty and discipline and the Eucharist was central to his teaching. 'Weekly communion ought to be the normal practice of every Christian; and until it is, it cannot be believed that the Blessed Sacrament has become the "Bread of Life" to the disciple, that is, the spiritual provision of ordinary experience'.

He produced a manual on *The Holy Sacrifice*. St Margaret's was beautified to create an impression of sedate High Churchmanship. The church was crowded, sometimes overflowing, for ten nights in 1894 for a Mission led by A. F. Winnington-Ingram, then the successful saviour Head of Oxford House! During Henson's seven year incumbency 3000 children were baptised, 613 confirmed, and Easter communicants rose from a previous 132 to 528.

Beckton Gas Works was, by far, the biggest employer in the parish. When Henson criticised workers from the pulpit for their habitual neglect of religious practices the local branch of the Gasworkers and General Labourers' Union challenged Henson to preach a sermon on the text, 'Every labourer is worthy of his hire'. This he did on 8 November 1891, an occasion never erased from his memory when in excess of thirteen hundred men crammed the church to capacity, with others gathered about the entrances. The service became an annual institution and the sermons were published in *Light and Leaven* (1897). When Henson visited Beckton Gas Works he stood on a bench or table to address workers. He took to the soap box in the open air public forum in Barking and was also an expert heckler.

Henson was conspicuous as a controversialist. He claimed Barking was 'infested' with Dissenters who attended 'schismatic conventicles'. When the archdeacon of London pleaded for 'courtesy' between Churchmen and Dissenters, Henson took umbrage and published an Open Letter, *Is it Honest?* (1892) stating that he was not prepared to 'acquiesce in the presence and work of Dissenters among my people'. Open Letters and polemical tracts were effective features of Henson's ministry. His power of invective in print or speech was deliberate but controlled by an accurate script. When he allowed himself to be carried away by his tongue, the result could be disastrous with lasting consequences. An early example came at the St Albans Diocesan Conference in 1892 when the work of Nonconformist chapels was praised by two laymen. Henson rose in a passionate fury and called dissenters 'emissaries of Satan'.

The Established Church was central to Henson's thought and action at a time when some people promoted the ideal of a Church free from State control. In 1898 he published *Cui Bono? An Open Letter to Lord Halifax on the Present Crisis of the Church of England*. It was recognised as a most formidable statement against Disestablishment.

I believe in the National Church as the most beneficent of the National institutions,

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every instinct of patriotism is outraged by the proposal to degrade and pillage her, but this is not the deepest basis of my loyalty. The National Church commends itself to my conscience and reason as the most faithful representative now existing in the world of that Divine Society which the Apostles planted, and which the primitive martyrs watered with their blood English Christianity eschews the striking effects of which continental religion is prodigal, but it is more thorough and robust, and perhaps covers a larger area of national life.

Henson first drew his sword with the publication of the Welsh Church Suspensory Bill in 1893 and organised petitions and advanced the Church Militant in correspondence, lectures and sermons. Welsh Disestablishment subsided until the Liberal government under Campbell-Bannerman appointed a Royal Commission in 1906 when Henson returned to the fight. Henson was never in danger of falling below Benedict's rule, 'Idleness is the enemy of the soul'! He overstretched and over-pressed himself at Barking, resulting in a severe breakdown in 1895 (there had been others) and resigned his living.

Fortuitously in 1895 there was a vacancy for a chaplain at The Hospital of St Mary and St Thomas of Canterbury, Ilford, a 12th century foundation of which Lord Salisbury was Master and Patron. Six almshouses were attached to the chapel. Henson's predecessor had 'crossed the Tiber'. Having increased the candle-power at Barking Henson would now be a candle snuffer, abandoning the use of incense, discarding Eucharistic vestments, and removing statues. His preaching received ever-increasing notice.

Had Henson not learned a salutary lesson? His lust for activity did not lessen. He spent more time in Oxford and elsewhere than Ilford. His work for the degree of B. D. (1897) was the substance of *Apostolic Christianity* (1898); he published a collection of sermons and contributed substantial articles to journals. His superiors became accustomed to reading his views on contemporary controversies in *The Times*. He advocated alterations to the working system and the formularies of the Church more radical than anything coming from so-called reformers.

Some still resonate at the beginning of the twenty-first century. For example:

- all parishes with populations under 1500 should be amalgamated;
- the age of priesting should be raised to twenty-six years, and celibacy insisted on until the age of thirty;
- the Bishop's Examination for Priest's Orders should be a thorough test of three years of theological study during the diaconate;
- Diocesan Boards should be created with power to determine the ritual of parish churches, and settle all disputes relating to public worship and to insist on the retirement of incompetent clergy;

- bishops should appoint diocesan Confessors, assign places and authorise forms for the hearing of private confessions, and restrain all other clergy from hearing confessions save *in articulo mortis*;
- representation of the Episcopate in the House of Lords should be restricted to the two primates and the bishops of London, Winchester, and Durham;
- the normal income of all bishops should be reduced to £2500 and the balance of episcopal incomes should be placed in a fund for the gradual increase of the Episcopate;
- all partisan trusts should be prohibited as contrary to public interest.

Henson arrived at Ilford as an English Catholic. He left as a Reformation Protestant, asserting the plenary right of the individual conscience against the aggression of external authority, however designated.

Canon of Westminster Abbey and Rector of St Margaret's

On 30 October 1900 the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, offered Henson the Crown Appointment of Canon of Westminster, and Rector of St Margaret's, which for three centuries had enjoyed the distinction of being the official church of the House of Commons. As a Canon of Westminster he was extra-diocesan, and as Rector of St Margaret's he neither received institution from the Bishop of London, nor took with respect to him any oath of canonical obedience,. Within a fortnight of talking up residence his memorable sermons following the deaths of the Bishop of London, Mandell Creighton, 'the most versatile and brilliant of English prelates' and 'Queen Victoria, of Blessed Memory' were printed.

As a canon of Westminster he participated in the funeral ceremonies for Queen Victoria, the Coronation and funeral of Edward VII and the Coronation of George V. He criticised the 'incorrigibly archaic Coronation service, reflecting a past age of the Church of England, one of unquestioned spiritual supremacy and hierarchic authority'. With a dislike of pomp and pageantry, he thought 'the service could have been simplified in certain directions and purged of elements which, to say the least, are archaeological rather than religious'. He powerfully objected to the House of Commons having no part in the Coronation save as spectators. (*Preaching to the Times* 1902).

Extracts from his sermons and prominently placed letters featured in *The Times*. Books were published on Education, Law, Marriage and Divorce, Rationalism, Moral Discipline, Christian Unity, Toleration in the Church of England, also on English Religion in the 17th and 18th centuries, his natural milieu.

Henson acquired the characteristics of a national Church figure whose views were sought on issues of moment. He enjoyed being a person of consequence

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entertaining prominent men of the professions and commerce, and politicians (mostly Conservative, some Liberal, none Labour). He was invited to breakfast with Prime Ministers. He featured as an atheist Canon of Westminster in a novel by Marie Corelli, was remembered in verse, regularly featured in *Punch* and attracted the cartoonist's art: for example, 'Spy' in *Vanity Fair* shows him striding along wearing top hat, long coat, reading a newspaper, with his Aberdeen terrier 'Logic' trotting behind him. Later, on his appointment as Dean of Durham, a northern newspaper depicted him with a comic coat of arms and a damning nickname—the Reverend Coxley Cocksure.

Henson married Isabella (Ella) Dennistoun, the daughter of a west-Scottish squire, in Westminster Abbey on 20 October 1902. She was thirty-two, he thirty-eight. Ella went into labour on the evening of 7 January 1905. The child was born dead. 'I looked at the dead boy: he is fashioned completely though small: his tiny face had a care-stricken and sorrowful look which sufficiently confessed its father. It is no still-born infant that I mourn, but my own son.' On 10 January 'the poor little body of my dead child was buried without other liturgy than its father's grief'. Childlessness was the greatest grief shadowing their married life.

There were changes affecting Henson's theological and doctrinal outlook. When Henson outgrew his belief in the Apostolic Succession he made public his volte-face in a 1901 series of sermons in Westminster Abbey (*Godly Union and Concord* 1902). 'I started on the assumption of the High Church Party—that the Apostolic Succession is vitally necessary to a Christian Church. Experience destroyed the conviction; inquiry dispersed the theory. I now know that ecclesiastical organisation is not primary; and I drew the inference frankly.'

Henson was accused of being a tergiversator often using the university pulpits of Oxford and Cambridge as 'the confessional of distressed churchmen'. At Great St Mary's, Cambridge on October 20 1901 he made An Appeal for Unity as he ardently promoted the reunion of the Church of England with other Churches of the Reformation. 'I crossed the Rubicon which divides "Catholicism" from "Protestantism".'

Henson became the champion and defender of 'liberal' clergy who were involved in difficulties with their bishops in regard to the historicity of the Virgin Birth, the empty tomb and the reality of miracles. He began to be accused of heresy but his opponents were unable to match his reasoning and language, which were not only his spear but also his 'shield and buckler'. Towards the end of his episcopate he scratched a developing itch of traditionalism.

There were occasions when Henson fearlessly exposed wickedness from the pulpit. One example suffices to describe this intrepid ministry. On 4 August 1912 he preached in Westminster Abbey on the atrocities by the agents/employees of the

Peruvian Amazon Company at Putamayo. The consul-general in Rio de Janeiro, Roger Casement, had investigated and discovered Indians whipped, mutilated, raped, tortured, murdered or burnt alive. From the pulpit Henson named the English directors of the Peruvian Amazon Company saying, 'Is it not the irresistible demand of justice that these men be brought to public trial?' Afterwards there was correspondence between solicitors acting for the former directors of the company and Henson, who needed no lawyer. He ensured the correspondence was published in *The Times*. Proceedings were threatened against Henson. They came to naught: the directors were named, shamed and damned and Henson was heroic.

Dean of Durham

In 1912 Henson accepted Prime Minister H.H. Asquith's offer to be Dean of Durham with an income of £3,000. With the outbreak of war Henson was in demand for preaching engagements. In defending the nation's action his primary aim was to sustain the spirits of people under the accumulated mass of anguish brought by war, its terrible cruelty, frightful wastefulness and unconceivable horror but never to give false hope to people in their understandable demands for vehemence and violence.

Henson's mind was consumed with the Church's intention of changing its relations with the State. He was the sole dissident when the national Representative Church Council passed a resolution which led to the appointment of the Archbishops' Commission on Church and State in 1914. Thenceforward he persevered with every fibre of his being, using every fighting opportunity to prevent the transformation and remodelling of the Established Church into an autonomous denomination.

This brought him into regular contact with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson. Their relationship was curious and pivotal. Davidson was diplomatic by genius and habit, set to rule in times of unprecedented difficulty, perceiving the advent of new forces which he could neither direct nor restrain. Henson thought Davidson

preferred peace to truth and elevated safety and security to a new level ...
...Unfortunately, his Grace has an inveterate habit of adding qualifications to every apparently clear declaration, until the final impression left is entirely different from that originally made. I call it prophylactic verbiage. It is a kind of political opportunism.

Calculated consensus was Davidson's gift. That picture is incomplete. Davidson was not pliant. He was hard to influence and hard to move, except by the irresistible logic of events as he perceived them. His papers reveal someone who shrewdly observed and accurately estimated passing events. He was more a time-observer than a time-server.

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The Archbishops' Commission reported in 1916 with proposals for a Church Council (National Assembly) of three Houses—Bishops, Priests and Laymen, the introduction of parochial electoral rolls of actual communicant members or those baptised and confirmed, and an Enabling Bill conferring Statutory Powers upon the Church Council. A 'ginger group' was formed, largely motivated by William Temple, Rector of St James Piccadilly and H.R.L. 'Dick' Sheppard, Vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields. A packed public meeting was held at Queen's Hall on 16 July chaired by William Temple who ended with a powerful challenging oration: 'Come out from your safety and comfort: come out from your habits and conventions. Listen for the voice of the wind as it sweeps over the world and stand where you may be caught in its onward rush. We claim Liberty for the sake of Life.' The meeting ended with a resolution urging the Archbishops to 'ascertain without delay' whether and on what terms Parliament was prepared to give freedom to the Church in the full sense to manage its own life. Henson was present and voted against the resolution in a minority of one.

Bishop of Hereford

Henson wanted to be a bishop of the National Church with a public platform and seat in the House of Lords. Was it an unreal expectation when senior members of the hierarchy led by Archbishop of Lang of York, who feared and disliked Henson, and influential laymen, would do everything in their power to deny Henson any See?

When the diocese of Hereford fell vacant in 1917 there was a new Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, whose ignorance of the Church of England was colossal. Davidson was taken aback on his first visit to the Prime Minister on 5 August when he said his sole requirement for a new bishop of Hereford was that he should be a good preacher, and produced three names—Michael Bolton Furse, Bishop of Pretoria, Albert Augustus David, Headmaster of Rugby, and Henson: of the three 'very markedly Henson'. Davidson left empty-handed. Afterwards the Prime Minister offered Hereford to Burge of Southwark and Nickson of Bristol, both amenable to Davidson. They declined.

Four new names were produced by Davidson, countered by two more from the Prime Minister but 'Henson the Preacher' never left the Prime Minister's mind. Even more names were suggested as Davidson continued to oppose Henson and look for an escape hatch, only to be told that his names were 'not of equal calibre to the Dean (Henson) either as preacher or thinker'. The Prime Minister's patience ended on 6 December when he informed Davidson he was offering Hereford to Henson and by the same post wrote to Henson: 'It is not quite the diocese I should have chosen for you, if there had been any choice, as I would prefer to see you grappling with the needs of some large and industrial population. Such a vacancy, of a more responsible character may arise in due course.'

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The Honorary Almoner, Rev'd Richard Hall,
The Rectory, 12 Beech Road, Saltford, Bristol, BS31 3BE
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A note from the ECA Treasurer

You can now nominate the English Clergy Association Benefit Fund to receive all or part of any tax refund due to you. Please complete page CH2 of your Self Assessment Tax Return, entering code UAH88UG in box 5. If you are able to tick the Gift Aid declaration your donation will be augmented by a further 25%.

Thank-you postcards recently received

Enjoying Mediterranean-style conditions here in Dorset. Many thanks for the help towards a thoroughly enjoyable holiday.

Greetings from Aubeterre in the Charente region of France. Our trip here to join my wife's mother and father's 70th birthday celebrations would have been very difficult without your support and I am writing to thank you very much indeed for your very generous donation.

Greetings from Andalusia and the Costa del Sol. We are very grateful to the English Clergy association for helping with our travel costs so my family could enjoy a relaxing and refreshing break.

We have had a wonderful break in Poole and Bournemouth which would not have been possible without your help.

We are very much enjoying our holiday in southern France. The weather has been beautiful giving us much opportunity for family time by the pool and on the beach. We are most grateful to the English Clergy Association for the generous contribution.

We are having a fantastic week holiday here in Menorca thanks to the very generous gift from the English Clergy Association. The weather has been glorious and we swim in the sea every day—a very splendid family time.

Our grateful thanks to the English Clergy Association for assisting us with a holiday this year. My little boy particularly enjoyed seeing the steam trains and was overjoyed when he got to have a ride...it was a wonderful family time away.

We're having a lovely time in Cornwall at a beautiful (and quiet!) campsite outside Newquay. We've been relaxing on the beach and visiting places like the Eden Project. It's been exactly the break we've needed.

We are having a wonderful family holiday in Korea. My son met his great grandmother who is 89 years old, and has been properly spoiled!!

We are grateful for your support that helped us enjoy some time in Northern Ontario, a glorious part of creation. We've been kayaking...but also swimming, hiking, reading, and some good time with family. We're returning to England next week feeling refreshed and renewed—thank you.

A huge thank you for the generosity of a grant enabling us to spend a wonderfully relaxing week away surfing, walking, eating, body boarding. The clean sea air has been very restorative and we feel fully recharged with many fun memories.

Thanks to your generous grant from the English clergy association my wife and I are sitting on a balcony at the moment overlooking this beautiful town on the island of Skopelos. The views are stunning and the weather is perfect.

Warm greetings from Japan, and thank you again for your generous gift that helped us enormously with our trip. My wife & I (as well as her family whom we visited) are very grateful.

Just a brief note of special thanks for the grant made to us, which enabled us to visit this splendid Basilica during our Italy trip... Refreshed, recreated and very grateful.

I have just returned from a very relaxing and enjoyable break in Portugal, which coincided with the Feast of S. Anthony of Lisbon (or Padua!). Prayers were said for the English Clergy Association at his birthplace. Lisbon is a beautiful city and I was able to enjoy the best of Portuguese scenery, food and weather. Many thanks to ECA for making it possible.

Enjoying a lovely, much needed holiday in Cornwall, thanks to you!

Scargill in the snow—almost like the Alps! Having a splendid time courtesy of the English Clergy Association. Many thanks.

Many thanks to the English Clergy Association for the kind grant which has helped us to enjoy a travelling holiday down to Umbria.

It is wonderful to get away for a break. I am so grateful to English Clergy Association for help. I am looking at Queen Elizabeth Cunard Liner in the Mersey—a magnificent sight. I just love these huge ships.

We are having a relaxing and refreshing time at Ferring on the West Sussex coast. Thank you to the English Clergy Association for your grant which enabled us to take this holiday.

WILLS — Making a Donation in your Will

The Association and our Benefit Fund are helped greatly if there are legacies and bequests. By making a posthumous gift of money or property you may also reduce your estate's Inheritance Tax liability.

The options for a donation in your Will are:

- a legacy of a specific sum
- a bequest of specific property
- a bequest of the residue of your estate or a share of it with other charities or individuals

What to do to help us in your WILL:

If you wish to include a donation in your WILL please first consult your solicitor.

A simple form of legacy might include the following words:

“I hereby bequeath, free of tax, the sum of £
to the English Clergy Association Benefit Fund (Registered Charity No. 258559) OR to The English Clergy Association (The Old School, Norton Hawkfield, Bristol BS39 4HB) and the receipt of the Hon. Treasurer or other proper Officer for the time being of the English Clergy Association shall be a complete discharge of such legacy.”

This wording can easily be adapted to cover the bequest of a property or of all, or part of, the residue of your estate. In any case of doubt please ask your solicitor or get in touch with the Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer. This is especially appreciated if you intend to lay down conditions as to how the bequest should be used.

[Continued from p. 28]

The announcement of Henson's appointment on 11 December led to one of the greatest ecclesiastical scandals of the twentieth century. The religious and secular press throbbled with activity. Partisans shouted their wares with placards of 'No' and 'Never'. The Anglo-Catholic English Church Union orchestrated the collection of thousands of signatures which were sent to Downing Street, Buckingham Palace and Lambeth Palace. Day and night Davidson was bombarded with pamphlets, telegrams and post. The columns of the *Church Times*, whose editor lived just outside Hereford, overflowed with bile and threats about Henson. It was an amazing sight to see posters on Hereford telegraph poles denouncing Henson and a plethora of emotive pamphlets were circulated.

'Heresy' became the prevailing word, as quotations from Henson's published works were lifted out of context and thrown by a baying crowd. Davidson, who had often heard Henson preach at Westminster, re-read some of his books and found nothing heretical about them. But he could not avoid those bishops who notified him privately that they were opposed to Henson's consecration on doctrinal grounds. The visit of Charles Gore, Bishop of Oxford, to see him was of nightmarish proportions when he said that Henson could not 'with my consent, be made a Bishop of the Province, when he believes Our Lord had a human father, and that His Body rotted in the tomb'. On 3 January 1918 a 'Formal Protest' from Gore arrived. The bishops of London, Winchester, Salisbury, Worcester, Exeter, Ely, Truro, Chelmsford, Chichester and Rochester expressed their opposition in separate letters to *The Times*.

Davidson met Henson at Lambeth to discuss Gore's protest; he asked Henson to 'relieve me of the charge that I was carelessly ordaining an unbelieving man because the Crown made me do so'. A form of words was agreed that suggested creedal orthodoxy on Henson's part. Gore withdrew his protest. Henson should have been his resolute self and not succumbed to Davidson's wishes. Henson was Consecrated Bishop in Westminster Abbey on 2 February with eleven bishops taking part in the laying on of hands. Dean Inge preached.

The clergy and people of the diocese rapidly came to appreciate their new bishop's qualities. Henson was accessible, direct, courageous, and steady in action. He provoked intelligence by expecting it. His public speaking was admired. What was new for Henson was the round of Confirmation addresses and village sermons. The effect upon congregations was marked and clergy were encouraged and stimulated by Henson's teaching and pastoral care. Crucially he had the *Hereford Diocesan Magazine* whose circulation immediately rose as copies were read throughout England.

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The Enabling Bill 1919

Henson contended that the Church of England was a federation of dioceses, and the independence of the diocesan units ought to be jealously guarded. He witnessed the Church accelerating towards a centralized government. Bishops would become purple-bibbed bureaucrats managing their dioceses. William Temple, not yet a bishop, was successful in influencing leaders in Church and parliament. The clashes between Henson and Temple were part personal, part conviction, and part temperamental. Temple was integrated, unaffectedly friendly and lived modestly within a very happy marriage, with a disposition of cheerfulness radiating Christian joy. He was free of complexity. Henson was encrusted with it. Temple's flawed judgment of people is well attested, whereas Henson's perception of people was usually sharp.

On hearing of Temple's death Henson would write: 'I think he is *felix opportunitate mortis*, for he has passed away while the streams of opinion in Church and State, of which he had become the outstanding symbol and exponent, were at flood, and escaped the experience of their inevitable ebb.' History judges him not simply a man of his time, but a man of longer time.

Henson was not yet a spiritual peer but members of both Houses of Parliament approached him for guidance. He stiffened Lord Haldane, a former Lord Chancellor, who led the opposition to the Bill in the Lords. Henson canvassed support from bishops who were in the Lords and received half-promises that they would carry their hostility into the Lords. But when the vote came he was irked by the defection of five bishops: 'The Evangelicals are always a rotten stick to lean on.' When the House of Commons divided (Ayes 304, Noes 16), the votes cast amounted to less than half of the composition of the whole House. The Third Reading of the Bill on 5 December was greeted with cheers. Henson wrote in his journal: 'The Establishment has fallen like an over-ripe fruit.' The fervour of the agitators, the lassitude of the nation, and the Commons' surrender without reluctance of its control of ecclesiastical legislation to the new Church Assembly brought the Church of England to this point.

Bishop of Durham

Handley Carr Glyn Moule, Bishop of Durham for nineteen years, died on 8 May 1920, in his eightieth year. Prime Minister Lloyd George had only one name on his mind—Henson of Hereford. The archbishops of Canterbury and York were united, first in their complete opposition to such a translation and, secondly, in their opinion that the Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, Thomas Banks Strong, should be Bishop of Durham. Lang had an apoplectic fit at the mere suggestion of Henson returning to the Province of York.

In truth, the two archbishops washed their hands over any part in the appointment. Davidson wrote to Sir Arthur Bigge (later Lord Stamfordham), King George V's

Private Secretary, on 31 May. 'Neither he (York) nor I can take any responsibility for Henson going to Durham. Whether it is a case in which the King should bring personal pressure or exercise an actual veto you are best to judge.' Too late! Henson received the Prime Minister's letter of 31 May offering him Durham, which he accepted the following day.

Now signing himself 'Herbert Dunelm', Henson ascended to what is regarded as the highest throne in Christendom, built over the tomb of Thomas Hatfield, Bishop of Durham 1345-1382, for enthronement as Lord Bishop of Durham in the Cathedral Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary on 30 October 1920. The population of the diocese was 1,478,506. Henson refused to have a telephone installed in Auckland Castle so his chaplains, weighed down with coppers, used the local telephone box.

Henson's episcopate was exercised during a bleak and adverse period of labour difficulties and disputes, strikes and unemployment in the mines, closures in the shipbuilding centres, rural stagnation, and a woeful shortage of decent housing. Auckland Castle was in the centre of a great minefield. Its beautiful Great Park provided an excellent meeting place for unemployed men. When he was at home Henson, dressed always in black apron and gaiters, would go for an afternoon walk and, if not with young clergy, invariably would be seen sitting on a bench or on the grass with unemployed miners, listening attentively and speaking frankly. Sometimes he took little groups into the Castle, showed them round and gave them afternoon tea.

When unemployment was at its most severe in the nineteen-thirties, he lent part of the Park for a sports ground for the unemployed and paid anonymously for the equipment, encouraged work centres and influenced the opening of an institute for training in the skills of furniture making or cobbling. He was responsible for ensuring a fishing boat was available at Hebburn for the use of unemployed men. Money, often from Henson's pocket, was sent to clergy working at the Church's coalface, where unemployment was between 70% and 80%, to use to help parishioners cope in adversity.

His response to need was deep-rooted. He acknowledged with regret that what were once gifts of charity had passed to the public purse.

State action must in the nature of the case be impersonal. This is its justice, and this is its weakness. Therefore, being impersonal, State action can never be morally regenerating. The benefits provided by the rates and taxes carry to their beneficiaries no influence which can quicken self-respect or stir affection. (*The Problem of Private Benevolence in the Modern State* 1926).

Politically, Conservatism was Henson's natural home, yet the Party thought him an unreliable ally. He was a recognised foe of Socialism and the Labour Party.

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Edward Norman's judgment is pertinent, that Henson was 'in effect an old-fashioned Gladstonian Liberal. He believed in economic individualism, the competitive system, tempered by some restraints in the interests of social justice, but as few of those as possible.' (*Church and Society in England 1770-1970* 1976).

In the enduring conflict between coal owners and miners, Henson was critical of the miners' shirking of work and ca-canny (go-slow), when they went down the pit and only cut so much coal as equalled their free allowance. He was jeered and threatened and, on several occasions, his car was stoned as he travelled in the diocese. Once he stopped the car, got out, and addressed a hostile crowd of 500 unemployed miners. By the time he finished the men cheered him loudly. But Henson was their bishop, and occasionally made his support and care for them plain in Lords debates. In 1925 Henson accused the miners' leaders of wanting to bring the mines to deadlock. He was one of the first in the country to demand ballots before striking, for which, not for the first or only time, he was strongly criticised in the House of Commons.

Henson was opposed to the dismemberment of ancient dioceses by the creation of further new ones. In 1924 he almost succeeded in blocking the proposal for creating new dioceses of Guildford and Portsmouth out of Winchester in the House of Lords. In 1926, on a proposal to mutilate the bishopric of Hereford by cutting it in half to facilitate the creation of a 'county' bishopric of Shropshire centred in Shrewsbury, Henson's speech succeeded in defeating the scheme by a majority of one!

Revision of the Book of Common Prayer

Henson, though not a liturgist, was involved in the lengthy process of revising the Prayer Book from 1920 to 1927. He strenuously supported revision by publishing articles and letters, speaking at diocesan conferences and contact with parliamentarians. Although opposed to every form of Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament he did not think any question of principle was involved over Reservation for the Sick. 'Reservation for Communion and Reservation for Adoration ought, in my judgment, to be resisted, both in the Church Assembly, and in Parliament and that Revision must be, if necessary, wrecked over them.'

In the Lords it was generally reckoned that on the final day of a three day debate there were two commanding speeches. The Archbishop of York used parliamentary skill to gather the threads and clarify the issue. The peroration of Henson's speech was the apex of the debate: 'When the Church of England stands at your bar and asks for justice, I will not believe that that appeal can be in vain.' Henson had to deal with the boomerang effect of his quips and sayings such as 'the Protestant underworld' and 'an army of illiterates generalled by octogenarians', which were never forgotten nor forgiven. The House divided Contents 241: Not Contents 88.

On 16 December the debate moved to the Commons which turned into a gladiatorial arena for a doctrinal disputation led by the Home Secretary, Sir W. Joynson-Hicks, a Protestant Evangelical and member of Church Assembly who was unscrupulously effective in inflaming all the Protestant prejudices latent in the House. ‘No Popery’, Transubstantiation and Reservation were paraded like processional banners by the Solicitor-General, Sir Thomas Inskip, another Church Assembly member. Rosslyn Mitchell (member for Paisley) subjected the House to an ultra-Protestant harangue. The Attorney-General, Sir Douglas Hogg, in more moderate language was equally against Reservation. The Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, was almost unheard as he spoke of the strengths of a comprehensive Church. The Prayer Book Measure was rejected by 238 votes to 205. Instead of accepting defeat the Church brought forward a slightly amended Revised Book to the Commons on 15 June 1928 which was again rejected.

Pastoral Bishop and Father-in-God

Henson believed the strength of the Church of England was in its parishes. He described the Anglican clergyman as parson, preceptor and pastor and preferred the description ‘parson’ to ‘priest’. In 1958 Michael Ramsey, then Archbishop of York, included these words in the Preface to a re-issued edition of Henson’s *Ad Clerum*:

While the Church as a whole knew Herbert Hensley Henson as a controversialist and both feared and relished his pungent polemics, those who were brought nearest to him in his episcopal character cherished most of all his pastoral wisdom and sympathy. He had himself a special devotion to two pastoral classics of old time, *The Country Parson* of George Herbert and *The Reformed Pastor* of Richard Baxter; and his own two volumes of Ordination Charges, *Church and Parson in England* (1927) and *Ad Clerum* (1937), take their place in the line of great English works on the pastoral office.

Henson’s Ordination Charges were models of responsible direction. With weight of real authority and with transparent sincere concern for the men whose lives were for the moment in his hands, he spoke from his own experience. ‘Personal religion nourished by prayer, by discipline, by Holy Communion, is the “one thing needful” in the work of the ministry without which everything else is without value.’ He transmitted a lesson learned from his early ministry:

Don’t underrate the intelligence of uneducated people. I have never forgotten what a working man in a jute factory in my own parish of Barking said to me. ‘You know, Sir, we working men can understand much more than we can say.’ The power to think: and understand, to distinguish between bombast and good sense, bad reasoning and sound, is often present where facility of utterance is absent.

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Henson was strict in advising newly ordained clergy in their house-to-house visitation of parishioners to 'be careful not to show partiality by going often to, and staying long at, the houses where you are welcome, and neglecting the houses where the people are unattractive and even discourteous'.

A frequent subject was the duty of self-criticism. 'Many men,' observes Bishop Butler, 'seem strangers to their own character.' Henson said

This is certainly true of the clergy who are, perhaps particularly ill-placed for becoming really acquainted with themselves. They are beyond other men isolated from their contemporaries, and therefore exempt from the kind of salutary criticism which is involved in intercourse with one's equals. They are much flattered by inferiors, and the publicity in which they commonly live exposes them in unusual measure to the chronic disease of modern democracy, its passion for eulogy, for giving and receiving compliments. A man once said to me as a boy, and I have never forgotten his words, 'Remember that the value of a compliment depends, not on what it says, but on who says it.' 'Prefermentitis' is a clerical disease in the Church of England. Once caught and embedded it is difficult to control, impossible to cure.

Henson had not been completely free of this virulently contagious disease and now advised new ordained clergy of its perils.

It needs no argument to show that a clergyman so employed will be half-hearted in his spiritual work. Moreover the people will find him out. They will discover that he is really not caring for them but longing to advance himself, that he has no real concern for their souls, and he only wants the opportunity to turn his back on them ... Wherever a clergyman holds to his post, and loves the people, he gains a rich recompense in their trust and love.

Inevitably, preaching featured in Henson's Charges. He maintained that Evangelistic preaching should be limited to special times and places.

Pastoral preaching is the parish priest's distinctive duty. It must influence conduct, and this it will never succeed in doing unless it is felt to match the facts of life—as they are emerging daily in common experience. Knowledge and sympathy are the conditions of relevancy. The one should be the fruit of pastoral visiting, the other can only spring from pastoral charity. The sermon must be edifying. All else—interest, intelligibility, relevance—must lead to this grand, governing character of edification. The people are to become better Christians through their audience of sermons, more intelligently attached to their religion, more able to give a reason for the faith that is in them, more discriminating in their insistence on ecclesiastical obligations, more charitable in their judgments of others, more lovingly zealous for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom. Here, undoubtedly,

the secret lies mainly in the habit of the preacher. Only conviction can breed conviction: only genuine loyalty to Christ can evoke loyalty.

Henson also referred to practical matters, for example, 'Be careful about your personal appearance. Let your surplice be clean, and properly arranged: nothing unkempt or neglectful about you. You are in a holy place: you are about a solemn business: you are on duty.'

It was Henson's custom every year to invite the men whom he had ordained to come together at Auckland Castle for a reunion. The day started with Holy Communion at 11 a.m. Then, after a good and lively lunch Henson mingled with clergy in the garden and the park, some played tennis. Tea was provided and the day ended in the chapel with a short address by Henson. By the mid-1930s the number of clergy attending had swollen to two hundred. Henson lamented that some of them did not receive Holy Communion and they informed him that they had a strict rule about fasting. The following year (1933) Holy Communion was celebrated at 9 a.m. and Henson gave breakfast to the whole two hundred in addition to other meals. The whole day was Henson's means of keeping in touch with young clergy and creating a bond of fellowship with them.

He also found it an opportunity to speak with individual clergy in what seemed an inconsequential way. 'I want a word with you. Come along, give me your arm.' As they strolled the clergyman was stimulated into talking freely. Henson was gathering information which he could later use in offering a parish or inviting them to lunch for more explicit conversation. At the end of each reunion the earliest person he had ordained spoke a few words of appreciation for the hospitality. One of them quoted an eighteenth century cleric who told his bishop, 'Your Lordship is the very breath of our nostrils.' Henson replied: 'I suppose that even if one is the breath of the nostrils one should not turn up one's nose at a compliment.'

Invitations to ordinands and junior clergy to lunch at Auckland Castle were natural and regular aspects of Henson's episcopate. Having no family of his own he 'adopted' many of the young men he ordained and lavished on them the affection and concern for which he had no ordinary outlet. He asked those who left the diocese to keep in touch with him and let him know of their progress. Clergy who left for the mission field informed him of their many problems and a few successes. When they were on furlough they were invited to stay at Auckland Castle. If clergy were troubled about an issue they sometimes went to the Castle without appointment and Henson saw them. These occasions which could stretch for two or more hours were unlikely to be replicated by any other bishop. Nowadays bishops are too busy with their lives prescribed by diaries.

John Taylor Hughes (a future Bishop of Croydon) was a curate of Catholic persuasion. He saw Henson on several occasions, who persuaded him not to accept

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an appointment in another diocese. Hughes received a letter from Henson written in his own hand.

My dear Hughes, I write to offer you nomination to the Vicarage of S James, West Hartlepool, now vacant by the preferment of the last incumbent. The parish is inhabited by about 9,000 people, mostly poor: the traditions of Churchmanship are what are commonly described as 'Anglo Catholic'; there is a residence for the Vicar to live in, and an income of about £500 for him to live on. If you can see your way to accept nomination, I shall be glad to know as soon as possible. In making this offer, I indicate sufficiently my confidence in your character and pastoral capacity. You will not need that I should emphasise the moral obligation resting on every clergyman who accepts office in the Church of England to obey the law and be loyal to that version of the Catholic tradition which the Church of England affirms, and its official standards, explicates. Believe me, Sincerely, your Bishop, Herbert Dunelm: P.S. By all means take time to consider your decision and then go to St James!

E.W. Hunt (later Professor of Theology and Hebrew at David's College, Lampeter), whilst studying at Durham University, informed Henson that he wished to be ordained.

I was summoned to Auckland Castle. I approached his study in fear and trembling as I was aware of his razor-like mind. I need not have worried. As I entered the room the Bishop rose from his desk-chair, walked towards me, put his right hand on my shoulder, and said: 'Ah William, it's good to see you. Come and sit down.' I can remember clearly one item in the conversation. He asked me whether I had any theological doubts. I told him I could not accept the Resurrection narratives as historical. I thought he would reject me on the spot! All he said was 'Don't worry. You are feeling the birth-pangs of thinking.' I remained in the diocese for eleven years as a curate and vicar and throughout he was a model pastor, enquiring after my progress, responding to queries and inviting me to the Castle for lunch.

There were few Anglo-Catholic parishes in the diocese, most of them in working-class areas and staffed by hard-working clergy with strong personalities and character. One became Primate of Australia, another a bishop in West Africa then Korea! Henson was aware of ritual he would not ordinarily sanction. When Cecil Charlton left the Durham curacy for London Henson sent for him.

He asked me my reasons for leaving the North. I replied that I wanted to be trained in an Anglo-Catholic parish where there was Reservation and Penance. He put me through a gruelling catechism, then suddenly smiled and said 'Cecil, I am sorry you are going, but glad you have the courage of your convictions.' Later in the park the Bishop said, 'Kneel and I will give you my blessing.' So,

on the gravel path I knelt and gladly received his episcopal blessing. He was a Protestant, I was a Catholic: but I loved and admired him.

At the Institution of a new 'High Church' vicar at St Oswin's South Shields, the new incumbent asked all the visiting clergy to wear copes. Henson arrived in the vestry just before the service, took one look and ordered the assembled clergy 'to take those things off'. They obeyed. The 'stripping of the butterflies' entered diocesan folklore.

Henson's visits to parishes were mainly for Confirmations, Institutions and a limited number of special events. He usually had a talk with the Parochial Church Council after a service. Following a visit to one parish for a Confirmation a timely word of warning was addressed to the incumbent. 'Both my chaplain and I myself noticed that you looked very debilitated, and smelling of liquor.' The parson had a history of drinking. Henson warned him 'to break the habit at once and decisively with a practice which, if indulged, must lead to the gravest consequences both to yourself and to your parish. In my judgment your duty and your wisdom will unite in requiring you to be a total abstainer.' Henson's chaplain subsequently checked if this was so.

A young incumbent wrote to Henson enclosing a letter to his people scolding them for not accepting his leadership. He wanted to move or resign. Henson replied, 'You speak and think of yourself as "called" to lead. That is not the Christian formula. "I am among you as him that serveth" said your Master and mine. It is when we indulge in this vain conceit of "leadership" that every experience easily takes shape as a personal humiliation.' Whilst Henson considered the future, the clergyman was told to 'go forward in humility and determination to do out the duty. No good was ever done by scolding, and keep the idea of service ever before you.'

On another occasion it came to Henson's notice that a married clergyman had committed adultery. He was summoned to Auckland Castle where he confessed. The following Sunday Henson went to the parish to inform the congregation that their vicar had resigned with immediate effect and subsequently resigned his Orders.

Another feature of many Ordination Charges was money. 'You must make it a point of conscience to live within your income. Remember that the problem of "making both ends meet" presents itself to all, clergy and laity alike, whose incomes are small. I can see no excuse whatever for the clergyman's getting into debt. There is no disgrace in being poor: there is a very real disgrace in living beyond your means.' Henson was merciless when confronting a clergy debtor. He knew 'A debtor never discloses the whole truth.' More than one clergyman resigned. On one occasion Henson assisted in negotiating a method of small monthly repayments by the clergyman until the debt was paid.

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In *Slums and Society* (1916) Father Adderley wrote with considerable insight of his close friend and critic Henson, then Dean of Durham:

He has more heart than he gives himself credit possessing, and he wilfully (I think) hides it. It is a thousand pities that he has not been kept at parish work much longer. His monthly service for communicants at Barking was one of the most inspiring services I ever attended, and I am not at all sure that he will not make an excellent Bishop one day, just because he will then once more come in contact with the souls of sinners and weak Christians who want comfort rather than dialectics and diatribes.

Such thoughts were reflected in one of Henson's Charges as his episcopate neared its end:

Nearly fifty years have passed since I was ordained in Cuddesdon Parish Church on a lovely summer morning in June 1887. How well I remember the tumult of conflicting thoughts which ranged in my mind, and perhaps hindered me from entering as fully as I would have entered into the solemn yet exalting service! How little I guessed what lay before me! The immense failures which would overtake my too ardent beginnings; the disappointments which would shadow my later course, the growing sense of inadequacy which would become a settled resident in my mind. The happiest years of my ministry were those in which, as the vicar of a great industrial parish, I was nearest to the people.

Faces look out of me from the past—toil-worn faces radiant with love and confidence. Nothing of what men call success is worthy comparison with the experiences which those faces recall. This exceeding great reward of ministry is within your reach, and it is the best thing you can have—far better than prominence, and great office, and the applause of crowds and senates.

I suppose that, after all these years, I may speak to you, not only with the authority of my Apostolic office, but also with the added authority of long and varied experience. I say to you then—love God and love your people. Count nothing excessive which you can do for them. Serve them in your office for the love of Christ, and they will surely give you back more than you can give them. 'Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.'

Disestablishment

Following the House of Commons' rejection of the Revised Prayer Book, Henson preached at Great St Mary's, Cambridge on 29 January 1928, declaring his belief that the spiritual independence of the Church of England must be vindicated. Establishment was now morally discredited, beyond recovery and could not

permanently continue. His Second Quadrennial Visitation Charge in 1929 carried the simple title *Disestablishment*. ‘Whatever fortunes may be reserved for the Church, may God in mercy preserve it from the ignominious security of a tame Church in a secularised State!’

Disestablishment consumed Henson to an obsessive degree in future publications, sermons and addresses. In his final book *The Church of England* (1939) Henson’s complete *volte face* on the Establishment was clear:

The losses involved in Disestablishment would be material and sentimental. Much property would be lost, and some social and political prestige would be taken away. But the gains would be moral and religious. The Church would at last be free to direct its own course in spiritual policy; it would be able to determine its own rules of discipline, and to enforce them; it would be able to cut itself free from the degrading tradition of clerical ill-faith which, however excused and extenuated by sophistries, has in the past done so much to enfeeble the influence of the clergy, and to alienate the public conscience; and it would be relieved from the embarrassment and disadvantage of the State connection when it seeks by negotiation with other churches to restore the broken fellowship of the Christian society.

Disestablishment would inflict on the Church of England the strain and sacrifice of the difficult transition from Erastian subordination to spiritual independence, but it would restore the Church’s self-respect, and once more secure from the nation an audience for its message: To churches, as to men, the Divine challenge is spoken, ‘What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self?’

Jews, Dictators and War

George Bell of Chichester was a genuinely good man whose personality was not compellingly attractive, nor his character magnetically dramatic. Though Bell’s voice was modulated and quiet, there was a subdued sharpness, a tingle of prickliness, which put opponents on edge. Some politicians in both Houses of Parliament accused him of agitation. That is a false distraction. Bell disliked the violence, coarseness and humbug of popular agitation. However, in common with Henson, his conscience was active and inexorable. Henson’s criticism of Bell was that he ‘lived too much in the heated atmosphere of committees, conferences, congresses, and the like debased outcrops of modern democracy’. Mrs Bell thought Henson put his finger on a weak spot: ‘(George) was beset at times by a sort of diffidence which deprived him of sufficient brutality or ruthlessness to carry his ideas through.’

When hostility towards Jews by the Hitler regime became a serious issue in the 1930s the two bishops were brought into closer contact. On 15 September 1935 the

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Nuremberg Laws were passed defining the inferior status of any citizen who had the slightest trace of Jewish blood. When Bell was heavily criticised for bringing a motion before Church Assembly (“church and politics don’t mix”) it was Henson’s intervention which received a loud and sustained ovation: ‘It is preposterous that the “Children of Christendom”, with such a basic obligation to the Jewish people, should turn on the ancient People of God to whom we owe religiously, spiritually and morally, almost everything we value.’

Overseas universities were invited to send delegates to the University of Heidelberg in January 1936, celebrating its 550th anniversary, a university which had already driven out its Jewish professors. Bell wondered, ‘Is it not a case for a rocket in *The Times* from the Bishop of Durham?’ Henson obliged! How could the citadels of sound learning and vigilant guardians of intellectual freedom fraternise with the avowed and shameless enemies of both? Thousands of copies of Henson’s letter circulated in Europe. Organisations wanted Henson not simply to be their letter-head patron, but to speak for them. This he did and pamphlets by Jewish writers appeared with instructions by Henson who also gave much time and encouragement to the Jewish community in his diocese. This led to him being presented with a Golden Book Certificate of Merit in 1939 which Jews presented to outstanding personalities.

In a speech remarkable for its time, Henson castigated the Chamberlain government during a debate on Foreign Policy in the Lords on 18 May 1938. It followed the defence of the Anglo-Italian Agreement by Viscount Halifax, Foreign Secretary, at the League of Nations in Geneva. Henson referred to Halifax’s language as

the cold sophistry of a cynical opportunity...The Agreement is to be the prelude and first part of a general appeasement...The word of Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini is worthless. The Rhineland was occupied against treaty, Austria has gone, Spain is going. We are asked to register the passing of Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia is now being talked about. Where are we going to stop?...I feel very much like Demosthenes warning against Philip. It seems grotesque that our country, the guardian of these great human interests of liberty and justice, should really be led in this free and easy fashion.

The speech deeply shocked members from different sections of the House who thought Henson was war-mongering. Halifax, as a supplicant to the dictators, was stung. Sixteen months later, Henson wrote to a former chaplain:

It is hard to be true to one’s Religion just now. I have never been easy in mind about the much advertised and persistent praying for Peace which has been so prominent recently. We have no right to assume that Peace is God’s will for such a world as this. It may be that He wills the purgation and penalty of War. He keeps his own secrets but we know enough for personal guidance We may

only pray *Fiat Voluntas Tua* and make our petition for grace rightly to discern, willingly to accept and loyally to serve that Will. It may bring us to peace, but it may require of us the sorrow and sacrifice of War. It seems almost silly to be writing sermons and lectures when Death stalks the world.

Retirement

On 31 January 1939 Henson ceased to be Bishop of Durham. He moved with his wife to Hyntle Place, a Tudor house at Hintlesham, near Ipswich. He intended to write and continue a public ministry, not 'to be *adscriptus glebae*, or to yield to the lethargic indolence of senectitude'. The State intervened when Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who occasionally met Henson at the London Club Grillions, invited him to undertake 'war work' by accepting a canonry of Westminster Abbey. Seventy-six year old Henson was installed on 3 September 1940. It was tragically unfortunate that personal debility, failing eyesight and restricted light in the Abbey made it difficult for him to read his sermons and led to his resignation, preaching the last of eight sermons on 27 April 1941. He returned to Hintlesham to prepare *Retrospect of an Unimportant Life*.

Spiritual odyssey

Retrospect provides hints and guesses of Henson's inner life but only unpublished Journals and some letters open the door to the penitent, revealing inner conflict, doubt, anguish and inconsistency. Here also may be encountered the mysterious influence of Henson's hidden life of prayer, of self-examination and self-abasement. It led him to think of Christ's judgement pleading: 'O God I beseech Thee, look with compassion on my faults and failings.' He commended words of Archbishop Richard Chenevix Trench of Dublin to those on the eve of their ordination, and applied them to himself

Best friends would loathe us if what things perverse
We know of our own selves they also knew,
Lord! Holy One, if Thou knowest worse,
Shoulds't loathe us too.

Henson often turned to the poetry of Robert Browning which mirrored his condition. *Bishop Blougram's Apology* was his very help in trouble throughout his ministerial life. A heavily underlined and much quoted passage on the nature of faith matched his struggle with unbelief:

With me, faith means perpetual unbelief
Kept quiet, like the snake, 'neath Michael's foot
Who stands calm just because he feels it writhe.

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Even now (1946) these lines appeal to me as a not wholly unjust description of my spiritual state. I am still often brought to a sharp halt by some new challenge to Christianity, or by some uprush of old challenges which, though silenced for a while, have never been effectively banished. In these distressful crises, I have often been rescued by the method of imagining that I have committed myself to defence of the anti-Christian side. Then I have discovered that, in spite of all its ragged edges and unsolved problems, Christianity seems to provide the stronger case. I would rather be charged with its advocacy than with that of its opposite. Faith does not disallow the effort of Reason, but takes up the battle when Reason has done its utmost and failed.

As for Henson's *Confessio Fidei*, 'When I think over my personal religion it is still the Crucifixion that fills my vision.' He lamented that at the Reformation the Church of England did not follow the Lutherans in retaining the crucifix. 'I am one of those who find the crucifix the most moving of all spiritual symbols.' Henson was a friend of the Dowager Countess of Limerick, who gave him a beautiful ivory crucifix of French origin dating probably from the time of the great controversy of the Jesuits against the Jansenists in the 17th century.

Judgment Day came on September 27 1947 when Herbert Hensley Henson would meet a merciful God and loving Saviour. During the early evening he had a heart attack and died very peacefully about midnight. Following a funeral service at Hintlesham and cremation his ashes were taken to Durham Cathedral. Slightly to the north-east of the shrine of St Cuthbert and beneath the pavement of the Chapel of the Nine Altars is buried Anthony Bec, Prince Bishop, Statesman and Warrior (the first burial allowed inside the Cathedral). Next to Bec's tomb lie Henson's ashes. Presiding over both is the statue of William Van Mildert, the last of the Palatine bishops. It was a fitting place for a good and great bishop who was tinged with Palatine qualities!

No bishop could less deserve the censure passed by Erasmus on 'the tongueless divines' or 'dumb bishops' of his day, who watched in silence the sorrows and sins of the human race. Paradoxically, in a disestablished Church, Henson would never have been 'elected' a bishop. But the Church of England would have been exceedingly the poorer by excluding that extraordinary figure from the national stage on which he played such a central and distinctive role, one which could scarcely be described as 'unimportant'.

John S. Peart-Binns has written biographies of several Anglican bishops, with attention to theology and social teaching as well as internal ecclesiological questions. He has deposited material relating to over 400 bishops in the J.B. Priestley Library at the University of Bradford.

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Shaping the Future of Parochial Ministry

Ecclesiastical Law Society Conference, Birmingham, 19-21 April 2013

Peter Johnson

Since the subject of the conference is of obvious interest to the Association, the Council thought that a short (although necessarily subjective) article in *Parson & Parish* should be published.

The prospectus stated that the focus of the conference was to be on the legal framework for the future of parochial ministry, looking at the “underlying legal structures that will be needed to underpin parochial ministry in the changing cultural and financial climate that is currently facing the Church of England”. Points of particular interest would include the increasing use of non-stipendiary clergy and other ministers, redefining of pastoral areas, new patterns of worship, and fresh expressions in house churches, church plants or religious centres and the consequent questions of “oversight and control”.

The *keynote address* was given by the Bishop of Winchester (Timothy Dakin), who outlined the strategy he hoped to use in his diocese to “shape mission for a changing world, in a context of globalisation”. He was concerned to reduce committees and bureaucracy, a concern possibly blunted by his announced intention to create an essentially non-territorial third archdeacon charged with developing mission strategy and initiatives. Unfortunately the Bishop’s very densely concentrated material was delivered, very fluently, in the dining hall after dinner, so it was not possible to take notes. Subsequent conversation elicited a certain degree of concern about a “top-down” approach, since in the end these initiatives would depend on local response for successful implementation.

The Venerable Julian Hubbard, Director of Ministry, provided an impressive array of statistics about religious adherence, current and projected numbers in ordained and lay ministries. As a general projection, numbers of ordained were decreasing, but the proportion of women was increasing. One clear implication was for the future of small parishes. Attendance figures for Sundays were declining, but this must be offset by substantial midweek attendances, together with the growth in “fresh expressions”, which currently involved around 30,000 adherents in roughly equal proportions of churching, dechurching and unchurching. Identification with Christianity has stabilised at around 70-66%, while other faiths are around 25-29%.

Mr Peter Worgan, of the Church Commissioners’ Pastoral Department, spoke about *pastoral reorganisation as a tool for shaping effective parochial ministry*,

involving legal process, deployment of clergy and buildings, needs of the population and territorial structures. The 1968 and 1983 Measures encouraged collaborative ministry (or, in another reading, “managed decline”), while the 2007 and 2011 Measures introduced Bishop’s Mission Orders (BMOs) and the possibility of reordering dioceses.

At present, he said, more proposals were coming forward for amalgamation of territorial units, at least partly in order to decrease the number of meetings and because of the difficulty of finding officers. He mentioned various problems were a team to become dysfunctional, when “mini-parishes” arise. Over the last five years more teams have been dissolved than created. A new phenomenon was “clusters”, which were more informal, with cross-licensing.

In relation to the question of deanery and/or parish, he drew attention to the Harries report for the Church in Wales, which was suggesting “ministry areas” based on secondary school catchment areas with two or three stipendiaries and other ministers. If there was any discussion of the implication for patronage, I am afraid it escaped me!

Mr Martin Follett, Diocesan Registrar of Exeter and Truro, addressed *The Use of Bishop’s Mission Orders* by giving examples of three BMOs with which he had been involved. One related to a deanery, the other two were gathered congregations in Exeter.

- With a deanery in North Cornwall, the aim of the BMO was to foster partnership among leadership teams in an area which during the non-tourist winter was a remote and poor.
- One negotiation for a BMO eventually broke down because the promoters of the network church were unhappy about losing complete control of their project. So a lesson here: we are an episcopal church, not a congregationalist or consumerist one.

The purpose of a BMO, if needed, is to provide the bishop’s sanction for an activity and to safeguard its future when an individual departs. The Order must identify the initiative, the objectives, the leadership and make provision about worship, finance and administration. There must also be a Visitor. While acknowledging problems such as poaching, morale and financial relations to the diocese and parishes, he believed that the BMO can be helpful in mission, in drawing in the unchurched and encouraging enthusiasm and mission.

Dr Grace Davie, the respected sociologist, gave an excellent *Sociological Reflection* surveying the changing face of religious beliefs and practices in the western world. “Christendom” is coming to an end, but not Christianity. The law should therefore aim for creative, not destructive, transformation. Interestingly, she

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pointed out the “very long tradition” of accessing church through the parish unit: without such a unit in the future that access could be seriously impeded.

The concept of “vicarious religion”, done by a minority on behalf of a (possibly implicitly) consenting and understanding majority, helped to interpret phenomena such as Occupy at St Paul’s, Jade Goody, Diana Princess of Wales. Consumerism means we now contract in, but there is a danger of losing a sense of common narrative.

She drew attention to the heightened presence of religion in public discussion with the concomitant attacks by the secularisation narrative against this, particularly as a result of the increasing role of Islam in the west. Another aspect was the role of decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, and their inconsistencies. A concern in all of Europe was the rise of ill-mannered, ill-informed conversation. She reported that in the academy, social science was developing new forms of theorising to accommodate religion; in England the Church with its plant and possibilities should be able to offer a locus for courteous conversation.

The Bishop of Lincoln (Christopher Lowson) spoke on *Reflections on ministry in a diocese—outworkings of the Pastoral Measure*. He mentioned the changed nature of resources for ministry, training, accountability, and Continuing Ministerial Development as part of common tenure. If one uses the image of a pilgrim people, “gathered by the Holy Spirit to follow Christ into the Kingdom of God”, the importance of *κοινωνία* understood as mutual respect and fairness is apparent. The role was leadership and facilitation of others. [I do recall that the “priest as enabler” was mentioned in my ordination training some decades ago!] Training in basic theology, the ability to reflect, and reading the context were vital skills.

Bishop John Gladwin, at the “wrap-up” plenary, offered incisive summarising and focus. The quality of leadership in the church, the quality of our public conversation with imaginative language about the gospel, and how we share common responsibility—these were key issues. Bishop Dakin reemphasised “the need for our Christian culture to engage with the new age with Christian vision and to be proactive about ‘brutal facts’ such as finance”.

However, feedback in the final session on the Sunday morning from the discussion in the workshops was very limited, so it would be good to see in due course a summary report of questions raised or conclusions offered in the groups. It was reported that groups had raised questions about the size of dioceses and the role of deaneries, and whether archdeacons should be multiplied (beyond necessity). One observation from a senior judge was that the legal powers to make change to meet the new situations confronting the Church were already in place.

In the end, I came away much stimulated but unsure whether the aim of

focussing on the legal framework had really been achieved, even though the material presented was of great interest. On the other hand, law does not exist in a vacuum, and practitioners will have been well informed of the current context of church ministry and resource. The questions that were aired during the conference were certainly most apposite to the ECA's own concern for the wellbeing of the Church of England and all its ministers, whatever may be their sphere of ministry.

The Rev'd Canon Peter Johnson is a member of the ECA Council.

BOOK REVIEWS

How to Run a Charity

Cecile Gillard

ICSA publishing (2013, paperback, £29.95) ISBN 9781860725449

Much has changed in charity law over the last few years and the Charities Act 2011 has now incorporated those reforms of charity law introduced by the Charities Act 2006. There is therefore a clear need for a simple and straightforward account of charity law as it currently stands to guide those dealing with the administration of charities at the present time.

Cecile Gillard is a lawyer specialising in charity and company law, so she is well qualified to write a book looking at the practical aspects of charity law. The book is said to be primarily aimed at those responsible for the running of charities and in particular trustees and administrative assistants, charity managers and their professional advisors including lawyers, accountants, chartered secretaries, etc.

The book adopts an appropriately clear unfussy style. Tables are sometimes used, e.g. to show the different external scrutiny requirements of charities according to their gross annual incomes. The law has been brought up-to-date and includes a good introduction to the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (the 'CIO') whose concept was introduced in the 2006 Act as an alternative to the Company Limited by Guarantee. This form of charitable organisation has only recently come into being and is now in the process of being phased in for existing charities wishing to change: it promises to become an important form of charity. The position under Scottish charity law and that of Northern Ireland is also referred to.

The role descriptions of officers concerned with the administration of a charity contained in Appendices are I think particularly helpful and would be very useful to show what is involved should any person be approached to take on any such role.

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One of the benefits of this book is that even if it doesn't give all the answers it does give sufficient information to alert someone dealing with the administration of a charity that there may be issues that have to be dealt with or problems to be avoided. On occasion, the author helpfully suggests that in certain circumstances professional advice should be sought and she points the way to additional source material that can be accessed, e.g. the Charity Commission website. I think some of the difficulties with which I have been involved in practice with respect to some charities would very likely have been avoided had the trustees or the administrators of those charities been able to consult this book.

However, while appreciating that the aim of the book is a simple and practical exposition of the law and not an academic treatise, I feel it is a pity that there are no footnotes and no references to the Charities Act 2011 as the source of the principles of law described. A lawyer who does not practise extensively in the field of charity law would I think find this book helpful as a first source, but he or she would want to go on to refer to the relevant legislation itself, and in particular the Charities Act 2011.

Although there is a reference to alterations of the constitution of a charity in circumstances where the charity or the social and economic conditions in which it is operating have changed, there is no direct reference to the trustees' duty to take steps to ensure that the property of a charity whose purposes are no longer capable of being carried out or where the property might be used more efficiently within the terms of s 62 of the Charities Act 2011 is applied to other similar charitable purposes (i.e. applied *cy-près*). Nor is there reference to the process by which a small charity, even one with property that is restricted to use only for the purposes of the charity ('permanent endowment'), may dissolve itself and transfer all its property to another charity, nor to how and when a larger charity might dispose of some or part of its capital. These are areas that not infrequently cause difficulties for charity trustees and I think might usefully have been included.

Public benefit is discussed but it is not made clear that this has changed since the 2006 Act and that a public benefit must now be proved for every charitable purpose, though, as is rightly pointed out, this may vary from head to head. A benefit to the public may be negated if there is a personal benefit to be derived from the gift or fund, but perhaps it could have been explained that some minor personal benefit that is purely ancillary to the main purposes of the charity, such as a meal for the trustees or a bunch of flowers on a secretary's birthday, is acceptable. The extent to which charities might engage in political activities and campaigning should also perhaps have been referred to.

All in all, though, I think this is a very worthwhile account of the principles of charity law in terms that can be understood by any who might be involved with

charities and their activities. I would commend it as a book which those concerned with the administration of a charity should have on their book-shelves and to which they might usefully make reference in a variety of circumstances concerning their charity.

The reviewer, Dr Peter Smith, is a barrister and a Vice-President of the Association.

Prayers of Great Traditions

Christopher Voke

Bloomsbury (2013, paperback, pp. 192, £12.99) ISBN 9781408187302

This book is a compilation of prayers for private use in morning and evening prayer, using a cycle of 28 days. Its material is drawn from Daily Office material and later prayers of individuals. The sources give an indication of the variety of traditions used:

The Bible, Apostolic Constitutions, Ephrem Syrus, John Chrysostom, Augustine of Hippo, Benedictine and Franciscan uses, Julian of Norwich, Martin Luther, Lancelot Andrewes, William Laud, Jeremy Taylor, John Wesley, Charles Spurgeon, Søren Kierkegaard, *Carmina Gadelica*, Karl Barth, “prayers inspired by creation”.

The compiler, Dr Christopher J Voke, is a Senior Research Fellow and former Deputy Principal of Spurgeon’s College.

The structure of each day’s prayer is the same: preparation, psalm, Word of God including a set reading, prayer (with the possibility of free prayer), conclusion. It is good to be reminded of the rich variety of Christian devotion, both old and new, and the richness of the several Christian traditions of prayer is well brought out. And to the extent that you may not have time yourself to scour that rich variety, you have to be content with the anthologising work of others!

Also included is a selection of 28 psalms, newly translated for the purpose. As always, a different form of something familiar can provide new insights. One might, however, wonder in passing whether “covenant love” for *hesed* is a satisfactory translation in a context of prayer, even while understanding the theological argument underlying such a rendering. And in the translation of Psalm 122, the informality of “I was glad when people said to me/ Let’s go to...” is a pity.

Helpful information about each source is given in a succinct paragraph near the end of the book, and the notes give the location of each prayer within its source—a great help in any anthology.

There is also a Bible Reading Plan, which is quite a remarkable achievement given

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the number of lectionaries now available. Reading both the psalter and the bible is based on multiples of the 28 day cycle: the psalter is read through in 12 weeks, the New Testament in 84 weeks and the entire Old Testament (except understandably for 1 Chronicles 1.1-8.40) is covered in 136 weeks. The order of reading is not “straight through”, a good way of reminding the user of the variety of biblical treasure.

Thus the order in the Old Testament begins Genesis, Amos, Genesis, Micah, Genesis, Ezra... and concludes Malachi, 2 Chronicles, Esther, 2 Chronicles, Jonah. The New Testament begins Matthew, Philippians, Matthew, 1 Thessalonians... and concludes 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, 1 John, Revelation, 2 John, 3 John, 2 Corinthians, 2 Thessalonians.

The compiler in his preface tells the reader that “these forms are written for you to pray, not simply to read...to enable you as a Christian believer to engage with God privately, deeply and regularly.” He records his own experience that praying them regularly, with freedom and imagination in their use, along with psalms and scripture, has been for him a foundation of Christian faith and usefulness. In fact, the book might well appeal to small prayer groups as well as to the individuals whom the compiler has primarily in view.

The reviewer; the Rev'd Canon Peter Johnson, is the current Editor of Parson & Parish.

CHAIRPIECE

“To him that hath shall be given; from him that hath not shall be taken away even that he hath” (Lk. xix 26).

Polarisation—the religious life of the nation ever more sundered in two, that’s the pattern that is increasingly apparent. Time was when one could read Shakespeare, or a novel (P.G. Wodehouse a good example), and find awareness of a common cultural background in the United Kingdom. The Bible was known, or at least still lurked in people’s awareness of what they ought to know, and probably did, if they stopped and thought a bit. Now, by contrast, it is not even a closed book – if it is there are all, it is propping up the broken back leg of an old wardrobe.

Common Worship’s *Calendar* has made this phenomenon much worse; building boldly on such signs as, say, the destruction of Whitsun as men of my age will remember it. No holiday —how feeble the Church was, in the face of Government proposals—and some silly, archaic name for the day, alien to this country: Pentecost.

Then the A.S.B. brought in *Sundays after Pentecost*, just to compound the felony. At least we have retreated from that mistake! But the Common Worship *Calendar* has left ordinary people, if they know anything at all, or care, very confused; rather like the difference with the Orthodox about Christmas and Easter. We now have Sundays that are out of step. If the Epiphany falls on a Sunday, as it did this year, for traditionalists the following Sunday is the First Sunday *after* the Epiphany: for the Synod’s confusers, it is the Second Sunday *of* Epiphany. In the same way, Easter Day has become the First Sunday *of* Easter, while those using the Book of Common Prayer see that it is Low Sunday which is described therein as the First Sunday *after* Easter.

It makes life quite hard for visiting clergy in Parish Churches where there is not a Sunday Service every week, and the clergyman writes up the Register: “Ah”, he thinks, “Does this Church call today Easter 3 (or III.) or Easter II. (2)?”

Then there are the rules about transference of Saints’ Days (especially after Christmas), and the particular position of the Sunday which many of us are used to keeping with the Collect of the Circumcision. St. Matthias, on whose day I am writing this, and St. Thomas get a very hard deal—banished to immemorability—especially hard on those clergy who were ordained on the Feast of St. Thomas, as so many once were.

I could go on—the importing of Roman Catholic Feast Days, the effective loss of Stir Up Sunday and the well-loved Advent pattern, the derogation from the Conversion of St. Paul, a unique commemoration, by lumping him in with St. Peter,

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and, for those who systematically change frontals and pulpit falls, or the vesture of the Minister, the amazing riot of confusion about *which colour is it today, Vicar?*

Not myself given to swearing, I can imagine some confronted clergyman muttering in the vestry, “Might as well use the red—it’s all such a b...dy mess”.

The occasional Churchgoer, perhaps with vague remembrances of childhood attendance, or youth-club enthusiasm (that pretty brunette and her hopeful swain at Evensong at the back of the South Aisle....ah!) may even think they don’t know what they’re doing, up there at the sharp end. They don’t. They are just taking away the little he has. “I’m sure”, he thinks, “being called Thomas, that 21st December is St. Thomas’s Day?”

So there is one nice muddle—worthy of Laurel and Hardy.

Easter as usual saw parishioners and their incumbent or priest-in-charge choosing churchwardens – assuming they can get more than one. And I hear of places where there are none. But I also note that hardly anybody actually observes the really wrong-headed provisions of the Churchwardens Measure 2001. What was in the long centuries of our experience relatively simple and informal has been made complex and inhibiting. Do you, in your parish, have nominations in writing, for example, and only such nominations, and know that they are now required to be handed in before the meeting?

The English Clergy Association was amongst the many who objected to the draft provision in the Measure which would have enabled the bishop to dismiss any churchwarden for any reason. The Ecclesiastical Committee of Parliament agreed with us, and the Measure went back to General Synod for that undemocratic provision to be removed. It might have given Prime Ministers ideas! To be able to dismiss any M.P., just like that, ah... Churchwardens, as officers and representatives of the people, the parishioners at large, are in an elective office even older than that of an M.P.

A word about Common Tenure, which has now developed a little differently from what was first envisaged. The original plan was that all Churches and Parsonages would become diocesan property, but, with that proposal defeated in General Synod, the accompanying half-promise, or prediction, that Patrons and Incumbents would benefit because there would be so much less need for Suspensions of Presentation,

and therefore Priests-in-Charge, has not worked out like that—Priests-in-Charge are still appointed all too often to enable diocesan control of the future of the parish properties, i.e., Church and Parsonage.

However, there was also a raft of proposals about tenure. True, freehold of office (as distinct from the Parson's Freehold of property) has gone, so far as all future appointments are concerned. But there is actually, nevertheless, a new security under Common Tenure, which also applies not just to beneficed Rectors and Vicars but to all Licensed Clergy, almost without exception – the right to hold a post until retirement age, subject to freedom from transgression, as before, and to the new possible Capability Proceedings. Action against Clergy, under the Discipline Measure as well as through Capability Proceedings, has become sufficiently frequent as to impose a large extra financial burden upon the Church Commissioners, in their subventions to bishops for this.

There seems little sign of the Grievance Procedure proving so effective as to be much used, however, by the inferior clergy; but on the other hand dioceses seem to have a fairly light touch about compulsory CME, and the bishop's power to direct what shall be learnt, although Ministerial Review has indeed become mandatory. But we now have diocesan and parochial bullying policies to moderate excesses.

Not all the freedoms of the Clergy have gone. It is still the case that an Incumbent is not an employee, but an Office Holder, with all the independence in that role that the law gives to him. It remains the case that the bishop through the Oath of Canonical Obedience is able to enjoin upon a cleric *only* those orders which the law empowers the bishop to issue. Again, so far as “working hours” are concerned, which are now within the bishop's control under Common Tenure, a light touch can be discerned. We shall have to see if there is any change over months, or perhaps years.

Whether women can be bishops has divided us. The Association has a policy to have no policy about this. Jim Hacker would go with that! However, we should like, valuing both male and female clergy amongst our members, to see an accommodation which would facilitate peaceful co-existence, as it were.

The proposals – and here I speak entirely personally, and not for the Association - seem to me to have started off on quite the wrong foot. If the essence of the problem is that on the one hand all diocesan bishops must be equal, and on the other that some people, congregations even, may request alternative pastoral care, and perhaps jurisdiction, how about this simple solution?

Parson & Parish

To satisfy one party, legislate for the Crown to appoint a Residentiary Canon in each Cathedral, with firstly the present right to officiate throughout the diocese under Canon C8, which is the existing automatic privilege by law, without any need for the permission of the diocesan; some such Episcopal Canons pluralists, covering more than one diocese where the burden is light; each in Episcopal Orders and, secondly, by a new statutory authority able to do anything the diocesan can do as a lawful Commissary, by statute, of the diocesan *except* that the same law would give the diocesan a power to restrict what such a bishop could do as Commissary. The law would give; but the bishop might take away. Obviously there would be some give-and-take. But even where no Commissary powers were left in place, such an Episcopal Canon would still be able to officiate, by invitation of an incumbent, and to exercise pastoral care.

J.W.M.



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