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ABSTRACT

I.D.FARLEY

J.C.RYLE - EPISCOPAL EVANGELIST

A study in Late Victorian Evangelicalism

This thesis identifies, describes and assesses the leading features of Evangelicalism as exhibited in the writings and episcopate of John Charles Ryle, first Bishop of Liverpool, 1880-1900. Chapter One attempts a synthesis of his theology through his extant sermons. Chapter Two describes his understanding of the dangers facing the Church of England on account of the Disestablishment of the Irish Church and the presence of 'Romanism' within the Church. Chapter Three outlines Ryle's strategy of evangelism in the city of Liverpool, while Chapter Four identifies his involvement in contemporary social issues. Chapters Five and Six look at ways in which this mission activity was hindered and obstructed by other clergy, by other diocesan activity, by financial constraints and by the problem of Ritualism, especially the prosecution of James Bell Cox. As a result of this study it is possible to identify changes in both Evangelical theology and practice in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

J.C.RYLE - EPISCOPAL EVANGELIST

A Study in Late Victorian Evangelicalism

A Thesis by

IAN DAVID FARLEY

Submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the
University of Durham, Department of Theology.

1988

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19 SEP 1988

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Declaration

No part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree in this or any other university.

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INTRODUCTION

The late nineteenth century is a comparatively neglected area in the field of Victorian religion. Much interest has been shown in the state of Methodism, the rise of Anglican Evangelicalism, and the political and social influence of William Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect in the early years of the century. Thereafter the political affairs of the Church and the emergence of the Oxford Movement dominate the scene. Some works have purported in their titles to carry the study of Victorian religion into the closing years of the century, but in practice they have not done so. John Kent's Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism really terminates with Moody's mission of 1873 and the beginnings of the 'Holiness' movement.¹ The work of both Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics after 1880 is simply dismissed. Ian Bradley in The Call to Seriousness: The Evangelical Impact on the Victorians stops his survey in 1860.² Peter Marsh in The Victorian Church in Decline only goes as far as 1882.³ Edward Norman's Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England only has one document dealing with the last two decades of the century.⁴ Even Brian Harrison's monumental study Drink and the Victorians stops in 1872.⁵ In all these cases the use of the word 'Victorian' is over-generous.

The image of Evangelicalism in the late nineteenth century has suffered from this neglect. Despite the absence of any thorough work on the period (other than political works such as G.I.T.Machin's)⁶, scholars have not been slow to reach summary conclusions largely of a negative nature. It was the period of irreversible Anglican decline, the churches 'having nothing to say to the general public', paving the way to the collapse of the British Protestant Churches.⁷ It was a period of 'lamentable disputes over trivial matters of ritual and ceremonial'.⁸ Evangelicalism had changed from being a burning desire for a holy life to 'a narrow conventional code of behaviour'.⁹ Evangelicals were too weak and unenthusiastic to be able to bring life into the Church of England.¹⁰ They were a dying force by the middle of the century.¹¹ They were a 'narrow party' whose theological views did

'irreparable harm' to the cause of Christianity in England. They were marked by cant rather than practical piety.¹² Indeed, by the 1880s the whole of the Church of England had declined from a position of prominence to 'the inconsequential lowlands'.¹³ Church work in Liverpool at the same time has been described as 'a time of frustration, of wasted effort and aimless self-sacrifice'.¹⁴

It has been suggested that these conclusions have been reached because most historians of the Victorian Church of England have had Tractarian sympathies and because the Anglo-Catholic tradition was dominant within the Church of England in the first half of the present century.¹⁵ A further reason is that the controversies quickly came to be seen as irrelevant and therefore of little interest.¹⁶ Evangelical leaders of the time, if commented on at all, have been dismissed as anachronisms. Hugh McLeod sees the start of Christian Socialism in High Church Clergy persecuted by Low Church Bishops.¹⁷ John Griffin concludes 'it is hard to discern a theme so prominent as that of driving the 'Puseyites' out of the National Church'.¹⁸ Ian Bradley claims that the Evangelicals and not the High Church party 'must take most of the responsibility' for the squabbles of later Victorian religion.¹⁹ G.I.T. Machin blames the Church Association for the Bell Cox controversy.²⁰ Ryle, the foremost Evangelical of the late nineteenth century, has been passed over with quick dismissive phrases: 'the most rugged and conservative of all Anglican Evangelical personalities'²¹; 'a partisan Evangelical'²²; 'an anachronism'.²³ Just occasionally he is mentioned as a tract writer but never as a preacher.²⁴

Similarly, in the field of theological thought, Evangelicalism is dismissed as having nothing to contribute. Geoffrey Best describes Evangelicals as cut off from intellectual and scientific progress; what intellectual prowess they possessed in the early nineteenth century had degenerated into 'No Popery' by the late 1830s.²⁵ Owen Chadwick regards Ryle as completely out of step with accepted modern doctrine by 1885.²⁶ Bernard Reardon outlines a shift from the concept of God as a Transcendent Creator, Lawgiver and Judge to being an immanent Power progressively manifesting itself; a shift which left Evangelical

theology weak and old fashioned. Inevitably scholarship has focused on what was 'new, searching and tentative'.²⁷ Darwinism, Higher Criticism, Gore and Lux Mundi are naturally seen as progressive watersheds introducing concepts which dominate twentieth-century theology, in which light Evangelical theology appears glib and unspeculative.

The aim of this study is to redress this image of neglect, negativism and irrelevance and to encourage further study of the Church of England in the later years of the nineteenth century. Some works on particular areas have already appeared, but these have concentrated on social-geographical studies.²⁸ The purpose of this thesis is to look at the Church of England through the activity of the most prominent Evangelical of the late nineteenth century: J.C.Ryle. There is a discrepancy between the assessments of him quoted above and earlier commentators. He was described as 'that man whose name is better known throughout that part of Christendom where the English language is spoken than that of any other except Charles Spurgeon'.²⁹ It was asserted that hardly anyone else did so much for God in the nineteenth century 'in the world' as J.C.Ryle.³⁰ He was designated 'The Prime Instructor of the English People' in religion in the second half of the nineteenth century.³¹ If these assessments are correct then the image of Evangelicalism needs to be redressed.

There are three major reasons for concentrating on J.C.Ryle. First, his sermons, available as printed tracts, form probably the largest available collection of such material in the Church of England extant from the period. It is possible, therefore, to reconstruct from them Evangelical theology as preached week by week from the pulpit to ordinary people. In contrast to works like Bernard Reardon's, which reject dealing with 'the grass roots of popular belief'³², this thesis attempts a synthesis of the spoken word and not an analysis of systematic written theology. The first two chapters outline the content of Evangelical theology from Ryle's sermons and platform addresses. In this setting an assessment of the purely written material (Expository Thoughts on the Gospels and various historical works) is not attempted.

Second, in being preferred to the see of Liverpool in 1880, Ryle automatically moved from relative obscurity to public limelight. The natural interest of a new see in the commercially significant port of Liverpool kept the affairs of the Church high on the agenda of the Press, and the city boasted a strong local newspaper industry, especially the Liverpool Daily Post. It is possible, therefore, to reconstruct Ryle's activity as Bishop 1880-1900. Although there has been considerable interest in Wilberforce of Oxford and Blomfield of London, and some assessment of the Sumners, on the whole works on Victorian Bishops have tended to be panegyrics written immediately after their death by relatives or friends.³³ Material on Ryle's life before he became Bishop is scant and three small chronological biographies have already appeared.³⁴ These tend to hero-worship him uncritically. This thesis, in contrast, concentrates in comparison on a thematic criticism of his work as Bishop.

Third, if history can be defined as the study of the past in the light of the present for the sake of the future, then Ryle is an appropriate focus of study for the 1980s.³⁵ In this decade the Church of England has emerged from relative quietude to public controversy. This renewed interest has centred around the failure of the Church to have much impact on the inner cities ('Faith in the City' report); arguments over whether or not there is an accepted essential corpus of belief (the pronouncements of the Bishop of Durham); a resurgent move towards authoritarian religion (the challenge presented by the growth of the House Church Movement, the burgeoning growth of Evangelical theology colleges, the suicide of Dr. G.V. Bennett); a reappraisal of the position of Scripture as authoritative in the Church (over the Ordination of Women); and the question of what to do with clergy who misbehave (in this case practising homosexuals).³⁶ These issues, when put in general terms, were precisely the ones that Ryle faced a hundred years ago. Archbishop Tait's prediction that the controversies of his lifetime would not be the controversies of the future has been proved false.³⁷ This study investigates and analyses Ryle's understanding of Scripture, his dealings with misbehaving clergy and his attempts to bridge the gulf between the Church of England and the masses of the inner city. Against

this background, the hitherto neglected area of late Victorian religious history in general, and that of Evangelicalism in particular, may be shown to have a new significance.

Attention has already been drawn to the available biographies of Ryle, but a brief synopsis here will help sketch the setting of this thematic study.³⁸ Ryle was born in Macclesfield on 10 May 1816, the son of a wealthy banker. He was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford, and after a short stay in London returned to Macclesfield. It is likely that he would have either succeeded his father in business or possibly sought to enter Parliament, but these plans were dashed by his father's bankruptcy in 1841. (It was just such a parental bankruptcy which was experienced by both John Henry Newman and Henry Edward Manning, who was deflected by it to the Church from the prospect of a parliamentary career). Ryle left Macclesfield in June 1841 and was ordained by Bishop Sumner of Winchester in December. It appears that financial necessity was the cause of this step. After a brief three years in Fawley and Winchester, he moved in May 1844 to become rector of Helmingham (1844-61), and subsequently vicar of Stradbroke (1861-1880), in the diocese of Norwich. His life in these thirty-six years was marked by family turmoil, the routine of a country parish life and involvement in the Evangelical societies. His adoption of an Evangelical Churchmanship appears to have been the result of his personal study of the Bible and English Church history. He married Matilda Plumptre in 1845, but she died within three years leaving him with a baby daughter. He married again in 1850, but his second wife, Jessie Walker, was also ill and died in 1860, leaving him with another daughter and three sons. He was married for a third time in 1861 to Henrietta Clowes.

Apart from his parish activity centred on preaching and rebuilding the church at Stradbroke as well as building two schools, Ryle became involved in the C.M.S., the Colonial and Continental Church Society, the London Society for the Propagation of Christianity amongst the Jews and the Church Association. This gave him some scope for preaching both in London and other cities throughout the country. This wider ministry was compounded by his involvement in the Church Congresses. Nevertheless,

his appointment as Bishop of Liverpool in 1880 was, and remains, something of a surprise. Once there he concentrated almost entirely on the affairs of the Church in the city and did not seek involvement in the wider national life of the Church. Although he was 64 years old when elevated to the episcopal bench, and consequently regarded as a stop-gap Bishop, his episcopate lasted twenty years.

CHAPTER ONE

THE THEOLOGY OF J.C.RYLE

PULPIT SERMONS

I deliberately say that I would rather preach before the University at Oxford or Cambridge, or the Temple, or Lincoln's Inn, or the Houses of Parliament, than I would address an agricultural congregation on a fine, hot afternoon in the month of August. ¹

Ryle is remembered today not so much for anything that he did, but rather for what he said and wrote.² When his books began to be republished in the 1950's, Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones regarded the event as one of the most encouraging and hopeful signs for modern-day Evangelicalism.³ Ryle's manual on the practice of Christianity is described as one of the best there is.⁴ The most well-known book is Holiness, which the centenary reprinted edition eulogised as 'a feast, a goldmine, a spur and heart warmer, food, drink, medicine and vitamin tablets, all in one. Tolle, lege - take it and read it.'⁵ Peter Toon and Michael Smout wrote their short biography of Ryle in the light of the benefit which thousands had obtained from reading his publications.⁶ Marcus Loane assesses Ryle's writings as one of his most profitable endeavours, surpassing any expectation Ryle himself may have had of them.⁷ Ryle was to write two to three hundred tracts and twenty to thirty books.⁸ William Mackray was probably not far off the mark in designating him 'the prince of tract writers',⁹ as it is estimated that more than twelve million copies of these were sold in his lifetime and translated into at least a dozen languages.¹⁰ His influence on popular Christianity through such tracts, has been described as incalculable.

Despite this judgement, there has been no detailed study of Ryle's works. Peter Toon and Michael Smout cover his style in four pages, and

summarise his theology in two.¹² Marcus Loane concentrates on summarising his books.¹³ Ryle does not feature at all in Michael Hennell's Sons of the Prophets, subtitled, Evangelical Leaders of the Victorian Church, and in Peter Toon's work on Evangelical theology only in two passing references.¹⁴ Other more general histories of Victorian religion also pay scant attention to one of the most prolific writers of the time. James Bentley dismisses Ryle as an anachronism.¹⁵ Owen Chadwick in the definitive general work on the Victorian Church, refers to Ryle's opposition to Higher Criticism as being out of step with the general trend in the Church of England; to his comments at the 1886 Church Congress on the decline of the village church; to his opposition to the sale of patronage and to Cathedrals; and to his involvement in Ritualist prosecutions.¹⁶ But he makes no reference at all to Ryle's preaching and writing. Yet his works provide the clearest, most detailed and comprehensive description of Evangelical theology in the reign of Victoria. His works can be divided into three distinct fields: sermons, with a basic pastoral goal; theological pamphlets, reflecting on issues of debate of the day; and historical works, which formed the starting point of all his works.

Apart from the series of expository works on the gospels, all of Ryle's main books (Christian Leaders of the Last Century(1869); Knots Untied(1874); Holiness(1877); Old Paths (1877); Practical Religion (1878); The Upper Room (1888); Light from Old Times (1890); A New Birth (1892)), were simply collections of sermons written earlier in his ministry. In this light Marcus Loane's statement 'the flow of books, tracts and pamphlets went on without ceasing,'¹⁷ is facile and potentially misleading. It is not the case that Ryle began with sermons and moved through controversial dogmas to large books. The fact is that the material for the books read in the cities, mainly presumably of London and Liverpool, was preached in the small rural parishes of Helmingham and Stradbroke twenty years before. Ryle's publisher, William Hunt of Ipswich, was not slow to reprint Ryle's work as he became known to a wider circle than that of his immediate parish.

This increasing prominence in the wider public eye occurred in three distinct stages. The first was a combination of a move from the diocese of Winchester to that of Norwich coupled with events relating to his second marriage. When Ryle was ordained in December 1841 he took up a curacy in Exbury, in the New Forest, under the Rector of Fawley.¹⁸ The Rector was largely absent and Ryle described the area as 'a very dreary, desolate place.'¹⁹ Typhus and scarlet fever were rife, ten percent of the population of 700 being stricken with the latter.²⁰ Ryle resigned in November 1843 because of his own ill health.²¹ He convalesced at Leamington for one month on a diet of water, mutton chops twice a day, with a little boiled rice, and frequent cold shower baths.²² He served a short five months as Rector of St. Thomas', Winchester, before taking up the living of Helmingham in Suffolk, in the Easter of 1844.²³

Helmingham was a backward step for Ryle. Winchester was an influential town, and St. Thomas' had a population of 3,000.²⁴ Helmingham was a typical Norwich diocesan rural parish of only 287 people.²⁵ What it did have, however, was a prominent Lord of the Manor, John Tollemache, MP between 1841-72.²⁶ As the rectory was in no fit state for habitation, Ryle stayed at the Hall and was consequently thrown at once into a varied society of notable figures in church, Government and high society. Tollemache rarely had fewer than eighteen to twenty people for dinner.²⁷ Ryle, whose standing in society as a prospective MP himself had been shattered by his father's bankruptcy, had thus exchanged the poachers and smugglers of Exbury for people in a high position. Ryle names the Harcourts, Admiral Sir Henry Hope, Captain George Hope, the Marquis of Cholmondeley and Archbishop Sumner, among others, as friends.²⁸

While at Helmingham, Ryle's first wife, Matilda, died after only three years of marriage, never really recovering from the birth of her daughter in April 1846.²⁹ Ryle was remarried in February 1849 to Jessie Walker. They had three sons and one daughter, and she and Ryle appear to have been happily married. But the significant feature of their marriage was her constant ill-health from within six months of the

wedding, continuing through to her death of Bright's disease in 1860. She was never well for more than three months at a time and during her illnesses she and her husband stayed in London. It was these enforced residences in the capital for months at a time which brought Ryle into wider public notice. Consequently, Ryle became known to the leading Evangelical clergy and laity. He wrote that he 'was brought forward continually as a speaker and preacher in every part of the metropolis. I once reckoned that I preached in no less than sixty church pulpits in London and might have had a church there myself half a dozen times if I had liked.'³⁰ It was the circumstance of his wife's illness and the society of his patron which drew Ryle out of being merely a rural minister.

In 1857, J.T.Pelham replaced Samuel Hinds as Bishop of Norwich.³¹ He was not unsympathetic to Evangelicals, and in 1861 offered the living of Stradbroke to Ryle.³² This marked promotion for him, and the 1860s and 1870s showed his steady progress upwards in diocesan affairs. Stradbroke was one of the wealthiest livings in the diocese, valued at £1,051 when Ryle took up the post.³³ With a population of 1,537 including a large workhouse, it was also one of the largest parishes in the diocese.³⁴ Ryle busied himself in the next twenty years with the normal affairs of an active and moderately successful rural minister: the repair of the fabric of the church, the building of schools, and involvement in diocesan administration.³⁵ He became rural dean of Hoxne in 1870 and an honorary canon of Norwich in 1872.³⁶

Nevertheless, these advances did not promote his tracts. Agricultural labourers did not buy tracts, and business in the affairs of the archdeanery of Suffolk made Ryle known in Ipswich but not elsewhere. Ryle's second stage of wider public notice was promoted by two events other than a successful rural ministry in the diocese. The first was the prominence given to religious questions on a national level by two controversial events. In the early 1860s two significant new views of Biblical Criticism were published: Essays and Reviews (1860) and Bishop Colenso's The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined (1862), and, on 28 March 1865, W.E.Gladstone

announced his conversion to the policy of disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, which subsequently became a key political issue.³⁷ Both within the Church, and within the reading political world, the attack on Establishment and the attack on orthodoxy caused widespread interest, and Ryle had strong views on both.³⁸

The second element was the emergence of regular Church Congresses in the 1860s and 1870s. Ryle was known in London pulpits from the 1850s and, within Evangelical circles, had spoken at clerical conferences in Weston-Super-Mare and, subsequently, Southport.³⁹ However, it was the regular Church Congresses that threw Ryle into public notice at a national level. The Church Congresses were voluntary, discursive and broad in support. Many Evangelicals avoided them as associations of 'liberals' and 'high' churchmen, with no effective power. While Ryle did not pretend to like them,⁴⁰ he supported them and made an important speech at the Congress in Southampton in 1870, about the evidence of Christian Antiquity as to ritual, which established his reputation as a platform speaker.⁴¹ Certainly, throughout the 1870s, he was a regular platform speaker and participator in debates.⁴²

The third stage of growing public prominence was Ryle's appointment to the newly created see of Liverpool in April 1880.⁴³ The formation of a new see was an event sufficient of itself to keep the Bishop in the wider public eye, but this would wear thin with the passage of time. But, again, Ryle was kept in a prominent position. Liverpool's importance as a commercial centre, especially its connections with the atlantic trade to America, meant that its chief public figures acquired a significance denied to their counterparts in other cities. Thus Ryle appeared more noticed than the traditionally more respected older sees, whose cities were becoming of mere historic interest. At the same time, particular ecclesiastical disputes, notably that involving James Bell Cox, contrived to prevent Ryle from sinking into the relative obscurity of diocesan administration.⁴⁴

Far from there being a continuous outpouring of more and larger works from Ryle throughout his nearly sixty years in the ministry of the

Church of England, there were, in fact, specific bursts of publication related to these three stages of wider public notice. At Exbury, Ryle distributed tracts obtained from the Religious Tract Society at Southampton.⁴⁵ He stitched them together himself and only lent them or sold them, being too poor to give them away.⁴⁶ At Helmingham, he printed and circulated his first address privately.⁴⁷ In January 1846, William Hunt, an Ipswich publisher, printed Ryle's address for the close of his second year of ministry in Suffolk.⁴⁸ There were a few other publications in the 1840s, but the real take-off took place in the early fifties as Ryle became known in the capital. It was necessary to warn purchasers of Ryle's tracts, by June 1853, of the existence of imitations. Genuine tracts were published only by William Hunt & Son, of Ipswich, and Ryle's name was always printed on the title page.⁴⁹ From 1854 Hunt began to reproduce the tracts in a collected form, under the title Home Truths.⁵⁰ By 1859 there were seven volumes in this series.⁵¹ There was a lull in Ryle's writings at the start of the sixties as he adjusted to having five children and no wife. But as his third marriage settled, and in the course of the events described above, he began to produce more polemical and political material. He published at least four such pamphlets in 1868.⁵² This led on to the books which, as has been noted, were collections of earlier sermons. William Hunt was not slow to capitalise on Ryle's promotion to the episcopal bench, by simply reprinting his first works under Ryle's title rather than his name. The titles were also altered. Thus, Thoughts on Sickness for Invalids and their Friends (1884), was actually He whom thou lovest is sick (1859); Thoughts for parents (1886), was Train up a child in the way he should go (1846); Thoughts on prayer (1886), was Do you Pray? (1852) and was reprinted again in 1888, entitled Always to Pray; Dead or Alive (1889), was Living or Dead (1848); Dost thou believe? (1891), was Where are your sins? (1858); Are there few? (1892), was Shall you be saved? (1852); Are you weary? (1892), was Come (1859). The direct application of Ryle's tracts apparently spanned forty years, since About the Holy Ghost, subtitled, 'A subject for the times', 1894, was a reprint of Have you the Spirit? A question for 1854. Even Ryle's very first privately printed pamphlet, I have somewhat to say unto

thee of 1845, became This is for you in 1890, a gain in colloquial snappiness. ⁵³

Ryle wrote a great deal of new material as Bishop, but it was largely in the form of addresses to the clergy of Liverpool, either at consecration services, institutions of incumbents, confirmations and charges and addresses at Diocesan Conferences. It is not true that the Bishop of Liverpool was 'a prince of tract writers'. It would be more accurate to say that the prince of tract writers became the Bishop of Liverpool. Not only were his tracts reprinted verbatim, but they were also produced in a variety of different formats, by simply missing whole sections out or including only a few sentences under each heading in the text. The normal full length pamphlet was thirty or thirty-two pages, but most of Ryle's tracts were available at half that length, or in eight pages, four pages, or even one page.⁵⁴

The constant reduction in size of Ryle's pamphlets was possible because they were clearly divided up into several sections, each with its own distinct heading. This was something that Ryle learnt to do. When he started preaching he wrote his sermons out in full, in what he himself described as a 'far too florid' style.⁵⁵ As time went on he realised that something more direct and simple was needed, if he was to keep the attention of agricultural labourers on hot August days. Hence he arrived at the format of precise division of his material into small manageable sections. Since the written pamphlets were produced straight from the sermon notes the style was quite distinctive.⁵⁶ Every sermon was divided into introduction, main headings, words of application. So, to take an early example from the 1840s, a sermon on Lot was divided into four headings: (i) What was Lot himself; (ii) What the text already quoted tells you of him; (iii) What reasons may account for his lingering; (iv) What kind of fruit his lingering brought forth.⁵⁷ Once Ryle hit on this format he retained it for the rest of his preaching life, as an example from each decade will show: The Cross was divided into (i) Let me show you what the apostle Paul did not glory in; (ii) Let me explain to you what he did glory in; (iii) Let me show you why all Christians should think and feel about the cross like Paul.⁵⁸ Are

you free? was divided into, (i) I will show you, in the first place, the general excellence of freedom; (ii) I will show you, in the second place, the best and truest kind of freedom; (iii) I will show you, in the last place, the way in which the best kind of freedom may become your own.⁵⁹ Come Out was divided into, (i) First, I shall try to show that the world is a source of great danger to the soul; (ii) Second, I shall try to show what is not meant by separation from the world; (iii) Third, I shall try to show in what real separation from the world consists; (iv) Fourth, I shall try to show the secret of victory over the world.⁶⁰

All of Ryle's sermons were divided in this way. Often he went a step further and individual paragraphs would be given their own headings. Sometimes these would be enumerated, but more usually a word, or phrase, would be italicised. An elaborate example of this is the tract, Be Zealous (1852). There were three main headings: (i) What is zeal in religion?; (ii) When a man can be called rightly zealous in religion; (iii) Why it is a good thing for a man to be zealous in religion.⁶¹ But each of these sections was subdivided. In the first section zeal was the characteristic of all the Apostles; the characteristic of the early Christians; the characteristic of Martin Luther; the characteristic of our own English Reformers; the characteristic of all the greatest missionaries.⁶² Section two defined zeal as being according to knowledge; from true motives; about things according to God's mind, and sanctioned by plain examples in God's word; tempered with charity and love; joined to a deep humility.⁶³ And in section three zeal was explained as being good for a Christian's own soul; good for the professing Church of Christ generally; and good for the world.⁶⁴ It is quite clear that Ryle had a good understanding of the concern of modern educationalists over the attention span of people to purely verbal messages.

Clear division of his text into manageable portions was the basic recipe for success in Ryle's preaching and writing. However, it is not the only aspect of his style which contributed to his popularity. There are three other significant aspects: the atmosphere of urgency which he

managed to embed every sermon in; the way in which, whatever position the reader of the tract or the listener to the sermon occupied towards the Christian faith, he or she was drawn personally into the argument, and forced to make some sort of response; and a vivid illustration, which brought the possibly abstract content of sermons into visual concrete realities. The combination of these different aspects meant that it was impossible not to understand what Ryle was saying, nor to confuse what was expected in response to the sermon.⁶⁵ This was true even for an agricultural labourer: for every single one of Ryle's tracts was preached before the rural villagers of Helmingham and Stradbroke before they were published for a wider congregation.⁶⁶ An analysis of these three factors of Ryle's style reveals the heart of his Evangelical theology.

(1) URGENCY

(a) Language

The purpose of the short introduction to each tract was simply to persuade a potential reader that the tract, which he might have incidentally picked up, dealt with an issue of vital significance to life. It ought, therefore, to be read to the end for the reader's own benefit. This goal was achieved in three ways. First, and most crudely, Ryle used hyperbolic language in his opening sentences:

Reader, 6,000 years have well-nigh passed away since this question was first asked. Millions of Adam's children have lived and died, and gone to their own place. Millions are yet upon the earth, and everyone of them has a soul to be lost or saved. But no question ever has been, or even can be asked more solemn than that which is before you: Whose art thou? Where art thou in the sight of God?⁶⁷

Ryle himself, however, found a number of questions of equal solemnity and importance. His tracts on holiness, the Cross of Christ, prayer, the narrow gate, justification, Lot's wife, hope, the soul,

repentance, coming to Christ, having a right heart, election, looking to Jesus, separation from the world, and eternity were all questions of deep solemnity and importance.⁶⁸ Most of them were designated as the one issue above all else that the reader ought to face. It would be difficult to rank the issues that Ryle deals with into an order of significance, because he asserted in each tract that the issue outlined was of fundamental significance.

(b) Contemporary Issues

The second way in which Ryle imbued his sermons with a sense of urgency was to claim that they were dealing with issues which, while being always of some importance, were of a special relevance to the reader at the particular time of writing. Many of his tracts were therefore subtitled 'a tract for the Times.'⁶⁹ The decades in which he wrote, from the late 1840s onwards, were marked by vast economic changes, political upheavals and religious controversies over points of ritual, which themselves were founded on particular doctrines. In each of these areas Ryle preached, and wrote, in the light of the changes he saw happening around him.

(i) Economics

Ryle was clearly amazed at the growth of wealth in London in the 1850s. Although Stradbroke was eight miles away from the nearest train station⁷⁰, Ryle's frequent stays in the capital made him see a world marked by speed, bustle and the acquisition of personal wealth. This vision was probably sharpened by the stigma associated with his father's bankruptcy and the subsequent years of poverty. A main concern of his autobiography was to relate the change in financial fortunes in his life, and to warn his children about not marrying into the right level of society and, therefore, money.⁷¹ Bishop Chavasse publicly drew attention to Ryle's poverty when he succeeded him in Liverpool.⁷² Consequently, Ryle frequently mentioned the new wealth of Britain. But his remarks were usually negative, either criticising the pursuit of wealth rather than godliness, or denouncing the grumbling, ungenerous nature of wealthy so-called 'Christians'. He sought to warn the owners

of new wealth to put a right value on their prosperity, i.e. that wealth meant little in an eternal perspective:

You may have youth, and health, and riches, and rank; you may have money, and lands, and houses, and horses, and carriages; you may have honour, love, obedience, troops of friends. It is well. Be thankful for it all. But have you peace?⁷³

He issued a persistent warning to the wealthy that their riches were not permanent:

From money counting and earthly scheming, from racing after riches... to be hurried away to meet the King of Kings, how tremendous the change! From dancing and dressing, from opera going ... to be summoned away by the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, how awful the transition.⁷⁴

At the point of the judgement of God, "We shall not say, 'Where is my money?', or 'Where are my lands?', or 'Where is my property?' Our only thought will be, 'My sins! My sins! - Where are my sins?'"⁷⁵ While Ryle believed that the capacity to earn money through work was essential to human happiness, he denied that riches were a source of happiness.⁷⁶ The same letters in 'acres' spelt 'cares' and the acquisition, keeping, using and disposing of money each involved trouble.⁷⁷ Ryle cited Lord Byron as a specific case of someone who knew no poverty and yet was a 'miserable man'.⁷⁸ And he sweepingly categorised five out of every six city businessmen as having brows lined with deep furrows of anxiety.⁷⁹ 'Worldliness' was a 'desperate' disease⁸⁰:

I cannot forget that our lot is cast in a world which is just now extravagantly taken up with material things. We live in an age of steam engines, of machinery, of locomotion, and of invention. We live in an age when the multitude are absorbed in railways, and docks, and commerce, and trade, and banks, and shops, and cotton, and corn, and iron, and gold.⁸¹

This pursuit of wealth by so many was a new feature according to Ryle. It was the particular disease, spiritually speaking, of Victorian England: 'I believe there never was a time when warnings against worldliness were so much needed by the Church of Christ as they are at the present day. Every age is said to have its own peculiar epidemic disease. The epidemic disease to which the souls of Christians are liable just now, is the love of the world.'⁸²

Worldliness, in the form of the pursuit of wealth, was so prevalent that Ryle regarded it not only as a major obstacle to interest in Christian things by non-Christians, but also as a chief weakness of the church. In a sermon on behalf of the Colonial Church and School Society, at St Dunstan's in the West, London, in May 1852, Ryle launched an attack on 'lazy, easy, sleepy Christianity'.⁸³ One of the chief features of this Christianity was the way it limited its giving to the standard one guinea subscription.⁸⁴ Never had individual Christians been so wealthy, yet never was there such a large disparity between income and giving to works of charity.⁸⁵ Ryle went on to quote an old divine as giving a precise description of many current day Christians by the phrase, 'the surface above goldmines is generally very barren.'⁸⁶ Selfishness was the characteristic character of most people.⁸⁷ In a sermon, in 1866, on behalf of the Church Missionary Society, Ryle was 'humiliated' at the continuing evidence of this selfishness. He described England as, 'the first of nations', 'the heart of the world', with more wealth, power, revenue and commerce than any other nation on earth.⁸⁸ But the net result of all this wealth was a total giving of less than a million pounds, most of which was spent on objects at home.⁸⁹ Out of 16,000 churches in the Church of England only 4,000 supported the society; only 5,000 out of 18,000 clergy. The society's income had stood still for seven years.⁹⁰ 'Missionaries must live', Ryle went on, 'and they cannot live without money.'⁹¹ He urged more liberality in giving, even a ten-fold increase would hardly be personally felt by the subscribers.⁹² Until such a change occurred Ryle could only conclude that materialism was the dominant ethos of the age, and evangelism of little import:

Verily, verily, no Christian man can think of our national wealth and then look at the sums given towards sending the Gospel to the heathen and not feel utterly ashamed ... we have scarcely shaken the outskirts of the devil's kingdom ... we have barely made the darkness visible.⁹³

(ii)Politics

It was not only economic changes to which Ryle addressed his sermons. He also referred to political events, to suggest to his listeners and readers that there was an urgency about the issues he brought before them. But he rarely made specific comments about particular political issues, either at home, or abroad. In 1866, he used discussions on Parliamentary Reform to preach on the topic of freedom.⁹⁴ His concern, however, was with the guilt and power of sin.⁹⁵ In 1868, the general election enabled him to produce a pamphlet entitled Your Election. Again, his concern was with the doctrine of Election as a Calvinist tenet of the Church of England.⁹⁶ All references to the political election were limited entirely to the introductory paragraphs and simply served the purpose of gaining attention. Indeed, in both these tracts Ryle revealed a deep conservatism about domestic politics. He defended representation against a political system of tyranny, but warned people not to expect too much from politicians, and certainly not to be partisan in their support.⁹⁷ He spoke strongly in favour of political freedom in England, roundly condemning Negro slavery, and praising men in English history who were champions of freedom.⁹⁸ He urged Englishmen to be grateful for their freedom and not to run 'eagerly after every one who proposes sweeping changes', as these might easily lead to worse government, not better.⁹⁹ In one of his earliest sermons he had specifically criticised the concept of equality promoted by Radicalism:

So long as the world is under the present order of things, this universal equality cannot be attained ... reader do not listen to those vain and foolish talkers who say that all men were meant to be equal ... beware of expecting a millennium to be brought about by any method of government, by any system of education, by any political party.¹⁰⁰

But Ryle's usual ground was to deny any particular political standpoint, and to avoid mentioning specific issues.¹⁰¹

Ryle took a wider perspective on the world of politics than that of a commentator on single issues. He saw in particular two issues: national sins, and the breakup of the existing political order. From this observation he drew two key doctrines: the Sovereignty of God in the affairs of nations and the Second Advent.

In 1866 there was an outbreak of cattle plague in England, supposedly originating from Russia.¹⁰² Almost every county was affected.¹⁰³ As befitting an agricultural diocese, Bishop Pelham called for a day of special prayer on 8 March, and most businesses in Norwich closed at three o'clock on that day.¹⁰⁴ Ryle preached a sermon, This is the Finger of God, in which he clearly stated that the cattle plague was sent by God, as a judgement for national sins.¹⁰⁵ He identified seven sins in order of importance: (1) covetousness, (2) love of pleasure, (3) neglect of Sunday, (4) drunkenness, (5) adultery, (6) favourable leanings towards the Roman Catholic Church, (7) growing scepticism and infidelity.¹⁰⁶ He distinguished between the private life of an individual and the public life of a nation. At the judgement day only individuals would be judged, therefore the sins of nations must be judged now, in the present world.¹⁰⁷ He backed this theology up with references to the judgement of nations by God recorded in Isaiah and Jeremiah.¹⁰⁸

In the same way, ten years earlier, Ryle identified three other specific judgements of God against England in the form of the cholera, the Irish Potato famine and the Crimean War, notwithstanding the

successful outcome of the last.¹⁰⁹ Each of these events pointed to the Sovereignty of God in the affairs of nations, usually with a view to checking national pride.¹¹⁰ Ryle regarded these national sins as evidence of the beginnings of the end times. This view had originated in the turmoils of 1848, which he described in his sermon, Assurance:

When I see old kingdoms and dynasties shaking to the very foundation, when I see kings and princes and rich men and great men fleeing for their lives, and scarce knowing where to hide their heads... I feel deeply for you in these latter days of the world.¹¹¹

A decade later, Ryle still held the same views:

The world is growing old. The last days are come upon us. The foundations of the earth are out of course. The ancient institutions of society are wearing out and going to pieces. The end of all things is at hand.¹¹²

Twenty years on from the 1848 Revolutions, Ryle concentrated a number of tracts on the subject of the end times: a collection of essays on prophetic subjects, Coming Events and Present Duties (1867); a tract, Are we not in Perilous Times (1868); a sermon, Are You Looking? (1869); and a reprint of an 1855 tract entitled, The Signs of the Times (1870). His justification for this concentration was his belief that never in the history of England was there a time when the horizon on all sides, both political and ecclesiastical, was so thoroughly black and lowering.¹¹³ He identified Disraeli's 'leap in the dark', the arrival of secular education, the proposed abolition of the House of Lords and confiscation of the property of the landed nobility, Fenianism and strikes, as evidence for this conclusion within British politics.¹¹⁴ More generally, he identified six continuous events as heralding the coming return of Christ. Religiously, he observed the phenomenal growth in missions to the heathen over the previous seventy years and a renewed interest in unfulfilled prophecy. Socially, he observed the dramatic change in communications, heralded by steam

navigation and railways. Politically, he observed a renewed interest in the Jewish nation, and the prolific wars of the past seventy years. The most significant event, he thought, which linked his two political observations, was the surprising decay of the Turkish Empire. Ryle constantly compared the current weakness of that Empire with Luther's use of it as the supreme illustration of worldly power.¹¹⁵

The theological result of this understanding of 'the signs of the times' was that Ryle believed that the second coming of Jesus was about to occur. He believed this was a neglected doctrine.¹¹⁶ He urged Christians,

You are to go forth in the morning, ready if need be to meet Christ at noon. You are to lie down in bed at night ready, if need be, to be awakened by the midnight cry, 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh.'¹¹⁷

To be looking forward to Christ's Second Coming was one of the sure marks of the work of sanctification in a believer.¹¹⁸ In this light, most of the activities, and arguments, of the Church in England, could be described in terms of children building little houses of sand, at low tide, by the water's edge, when the sea was about to rush in.¹¹⁹ Ryle believed that Christ's coming would be real, literal, personal and in a body.¹²⁰ He did not expect everyone else to hold the same view.¹²¹ Nevertheless, a constant reminder that 'the first resurrection draws near' was a persistent theme in the sermons.¹²²

Conversely, the negative side to the theology of the Second Advent was a pessimism about the achievement of anything positive in the world, this side of Christ's return. 'Truly', Ryle wrote, 'when I look at the world, I marvel we can ever smile at all.'¹²³ The world was a dark, lonely and disappointing place.¹²⁴ It was ill-natured.¹²⁵ It was more and more barren as each year went by.¹²⁶ A world shot full of evil.¹²⁷ A world growing old.¹²⁸ A shipwrecked world.¹²⁹ In some ways Ryle saw no difference between the world after Christ's incarnation, and the world before it. In both cases, the world was a place of trials, separations

and death.¹³⁰ The Christian dispensation was no different to the Patriarchal, or Mosaic dispensations, it would be 'overturned' by God.¹³¹ In his eyes it was clearly about to come to an end:

Few things are so remarkable in the present time as the universal anxiety and suspense about the future. On all sides and among all classes, you hear of want of confidence and gloomy forebodings of coming evil ... The cement seems to have fallen out of the walls of society. The bands which kept nations together seem to be decaying, snapping and giving way ... Never to my mind, was there such a striking fulfilment of the words of our Lord in St Luke: 'the powers of heaven shall be shaken.' Whichever way I turn my eyes, I see something very like an accomplishment of these words. Whether I look to Europe or to America, whether I look to the continent or my own country, whether I look to England or to Ireland, whether I look to political matters or to ecclesiastical ...¹³²

In summary, the devil was the prince of this world and Christ's kingdom was yet to come. Only at the Second Advent would there be a change of masters.¹³³ The fact that Ryle believed that change of masters was just around the corner was a key contributing factor to the sense of urgency that permeated his sermons.

(iii) Religion

The third area of 'signs of the times' was in the field of disputes within the religious world. It was in the area of religious controversies more than any other that Ryle spoke and wrote, especially over the nature of the sacraments and the role of the church. These controversies are dealt with in the next chapter.

(c) DEATH

The last element which contributed to the air of urgency was Ryle's persistent reference to death. A number of his tracts were written at the turn of the year and he made good use of this circumstance.¹³⁴ These tracts were often subtitled either 'A Christmas Thought', or 'A Word for the Year...'¹³⁵ Ryle's introductions usually made some reference to the annual family visiting that occurred at Christmas time. While he

regarded this as an age-old tradition in England,¹³⁶ he also thought that Victorian England was making much more of the occasion.¹³⁷ Ryle was very much in favour of this, even to the extent of regarding happy extended family times as a good thing that survived the Fall,¹³⁸ a somewhat puzzling expression. However, the purpose of enthusiastically drawing attention to this aspect of English social life, was to make the stark interjection that every year there would be 'gaps' in the family circle.¹³⁹ Indeed, anyone who reached the age of thirty would have a long list of missing faces.¹⁴⁰

Death came unexpectedly, suddenly, and soon, in most people's lives. It was this belief that motivated Ryle's whole ministry. The key reflection on life was not that it was hard, but that it was short.¹⁴¹ 'A few more winters and our place in the family circle will be empty,' was an unusually generous statement by Ryle.¹⁴² More often than not he directly challenged the reader of the tract with the thought that this time next year he, the reader, might very well be dead. 'The trees perhaps are cut down, out of which our coffins will be made', he wrote.¹⁴³ Or again, 'The next time the daisies bloom, it may be over your grave.'¹⁴⁴ In the light of the uncertainty of life Ryle thought it foolish to procrastinate over eternal issues.¹⁴⁵ While the example of the thief on the cross meant that it was possible to enter heaven at the last moment of life, Ryle warned that death-bed repentances were not usually effective: 'let us not have to hunt up stray words and scraps of religion in order to make out that you are a true believer.'¹⁴⁶ The time to think of Christ was now; a Christmas would come when it will be too late:¹⁴⁷

There are some missing at Christmas parties this winter, who a year ago were alive and well. There are some now gathering around Christmas firesides, who a year hence will be lying in their graves. Reader, how long have you yourself to live? Will another Christmas find you alive?¹⁴⁸

It was not so much the end of life in this world that Ryle lamented, as the fact that 'real' life began at the moment of death. It was the

realisation that suddenly, at any moment, someone passed from the transient state of earth to the permanent state of the next world:

Another year is rolling on towards its end. A new year is coming in sight. We see its January very near us, but who shall see its December? Its beginning is close at hand. But, who shall live to see its end? Time flies very fast. Writing and preaching, -reading and working, -doubting and speculating, -discussion and controversy, -all, all will soon be past and gone forever. Yet a little while and there will remain nothing but certainties, realities and eternity.¹⁴⁹

The eternal certainty that Ryle had uppermost in his mind was the existence of hell. He strongly denounced the idea of the existence of any third sort of habitation after death other than heaven or hell. There was no such thing as purgatory.¹⁵⁰ Ryle was especially concerned to attack any doctrine which suggested universal salvation. This was to be 'resisted to the death'.¹⁵¹ He also opposed the idea of an inner spiritual light in every man.¹⁵² He further opposed the idea that God was so loving that He would not condemn anyone.¹⁵³ Again, he opposed that idea that, while men might do some wrong things, basically everyone had a good heart at bottom.¹⁵⁴ Ryle maintained a clear distinction between God being for everyone, but only being in those who responded to His love, in repentance and faith.¹⁵⁵ The destination of those who died unrepentant was hell. The Devil was a real person and hell an actual place, occupied forever.¹⁵⁶ The alternative to heaven was not a life of fun on earth, followed by nothingness:

The worm that never dies, the fire that is not quenched, the blackness of darkness forever, the hopeless prison, the bottomless pit, the lake that burns with fire and brimstone - all, all are but feeble emblems of the reality of hell.¹⁵⁷

The belief that the unrepentant were literally hanging over the brink of a bottomless pit certainly filled Ryle himself with a sense of urgency.¹⁵⁸ He had no time for fellow ministers who were so afraid of

hurting people's consciences that they would not speak out boldly on such matters as death and hell:¹⁵⁹

I believe the time is come when it is a positive duty to speak plainly about the reality and eternity of hell ... it is a question which lies at the very foundation of the whole gospel ... the grand object of the gospel is to persuade men to flee from the wrath to come, and it is vain to expect men to flee unless they are afraid.¹⁶⁰

One of the key characteristics of Ryle's sermons and tracts, then, was the air of urgency which pervaded them. This characteristic was created by the use of hyperbolic language; by an analysis of ecclesiastical, economic and political events which drew the conclusion that the current time was in some way special; and by a particular emphasis on death as the key event in an individual's life. Each of these elements, but especially the latter, contributed to drawing the reader personally into the argument of the text.

(2) PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

Some people bought Ryle's tracts regularly, though usually with a view to distribute to others.¹⁶¹ However, Ryle himself did not assume that anyone would read more than one of them.¹⁶² Consequently, except when invited to speak to a particular group, he directed his tracts to everyone as if it was the one and only tract they would read. Nearly all his tracts finished with some words of application. Ryle divided everyone into three groups: those who were definitely outside the Christian Faith, those who almost believed or only just believed, and 'real' Christians.¹⁶³ The state of anyone in each of these categories was a serious matter, and Ryle saw the heart of his ministry as preaching particular words about eternal realities to each of them. He believed, further, that the hearing, or reading, of his very words could affect the lives of the non-Christian, the nominal Christian, and the real Christian: 'I write to persuade you to become a child of God this day ... this very day old things shall pass away and all things become new.

This very day thou shalt be forgiven, pardoned, accepted in the beloved. This very day thou shalt have a new name given to thee in heaven. Thou didst take up this tract a child of wrath. Thou shalt lie down tonight a child of God.¹⁶⁴ The particular word that Ryle spoke to each group was, naturally, different in emphasis, although the person and work of Christ were central to each. To the non-Christian he concentrated on the topic of sin; to the nominal, or almost, Christian he concentrated on the precariousness of their position and the need to be thorough; to the real Christian, he concentrated on proclaiming the true extent of their privileges.

(a) The Non-Christian

At heart Ryle was a missionary. He saw a broad and distinct gap between the man 'in Christ' and the man 'not in Christ'.¹⁶⁵ But the yearning of his heart was to invite the man 'not in Christ' into a relationship with God, not simply to categorise him as outside of heaven, and justly deserving hell. Over and over again Ryle's sermons express his personal desire for the salvation of those who were at the time rejecting Christ. The loss of a soul was the greatest loss in the world.¹⁶⁶ Ryle would therefore 'speak strongly' and 'plead warmly' to prevent such a loss.¹⁶⁷ He mourned over sinners.¹⁶⁸ He prayed fervently for the Holy Spirit to change lives.¹⁶⁹ To save sinners was his 'ruling passion - the absorbing thought' of his heart.¹⁷⁰ It was in these terms that he described the work of the ordained ministry:

We are sent to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. We are sent to persuade men to flee from the wrath to come. We are sent to draw men from the service of the world to the service of God, - to awaken the sleeping, - to crave the careless, - and by all means to save some.¹⁷¹

Ryle was very much a defender of the Church of England, but he publicly stated that there was a higher priority in his life, namely, that souls would be saved.¹⁷² Therefore it was necessary to break with customs, in order to 'pluck some brands for the burning'.¹⁷³ Hence he supported the

purpose of Exeter Hall meetings, initiated the first mission services for men in Birmingham, and encouraged Moody and Sankey.¹⁷⁴ Above all, it was this principle, of the paramount importance of drawing sinners to Christ, which governed many of his practical decisions when promoted to the episcopate.¹⁷⁵

Throughout his life, Ryle never lost his love for those outside the Christian faith. He was concerned that, even in private conversation, he should 'speak boldly and faithfully about the things of God.'¹⁷⁶ He was surprised that ministers could spend whole evenings 'in speaking only of politics, literature, arts and sciences.'¹⁷⁷ He urged all ministers to follow the example of Wilberforce and 'prepare launchers', to get the conversation round to spiritual things.¹⁷⁸ Ryle felt great sorrow for those who ignored God.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, he would say and do anything to save them. He pictured himself as standing in a lifeboat, alongside a wreck to which people were clinging, entreating them to get in the boat.¹⁸⁰ He did not believe in setting little evangelistic goals, but rather adopted the motto 'he that shoots at the moon, will shoot further than the man who shoots at the bush.'¹⁸¹ It was his love for people which enabled him to reach out to the non-Christian constantly throughout his life. His one desire was for their happiness.¹⁸² He identified that in their salvation. Their salvation was the motivation of his preaching and writing.¹⁸³ His first two tracts revealed his heart for the whole of his ministry: 'I tell you it is my heart's desire and prayer to God for you, that you may be saved', and 'I have no greater happiness than to find any member of my congregation walking in the Truth.'¹⁸⁴

There were two main doctrines in Ryle's missionary appeal to non-Christians: an awakening to the reality of sin, and a personal faith in Jesus Christ. A belief in the absolute necessity of the latter depended on a right understanding of the former. So Ryle's starting point was sin. He acknowledged that most people would not claim to be 'good', but equally they would not describe themselves as 'sinners'. Most people would describe themselves as 'not quite what they ought to be.'¹⁸⁵ Ryle regarded this attitude as the Devil's 'grand snare'.¹⁸⁶ It was a grand snare because people 'thought that only a little alteration would make

them fit for heaven, since their case was not that bad.¹⁸⁷ But Ryle saw the situation of the non-Christian as much more extreme. His case was desperate, his danger great.¹⁸⁸ It was not possible to begin to come near to God, unless a man first understood how bad he was.¹⁸⁹ Ryle tried in various ways to describe the enormity of sin. On one occasion, he called it a huge mountain between man and God.¹⁹⁰ On another, he described it mathematically, working on a basis of two sins per hour in a fifteen-hour waking day. This meant 210 sins per week, 840 per month, 10,080 per year, 100,000 every ten years.¹⁹¹ And this, of course, was an entire understatement. It would be more accurate to multiply the figure ten fold.¹⁹² Another way of highlighting the enormity of sin was to make comparisons with Christian saints of the past, since one of the chief marks of a Christian was his awareness of sin. Ryle quoted the example of the Reformer, John Bradford, who signed his letters, 'that wretched sinner, that miserable sinner, John Bradford', and who said, whenever he saw a man going to be hanged, 'There goes John Bradford, but for the grace of God.'¹⁹³

By far the most common way of highlighting the enormity of sin was simply to describe the state of the man 'not-in-Christ' as irredeemable by his own efforts. 'Your own life and doings ... what are they all but a huge mass of imperfection?', Ryle asked.¹⁹⁴ Any works of men were 'defective in many things and need a large forgiveness ... the best things we do have somewhat in them to be pardoned ... I believe that no man can be justified by his works before God in the slightest possible degree.'¹⁹⁵ Ryle piled up adjectives of hopelessness: 'We were by nature poor dying creatures ... imprisoned debtors ... shipwrecked and cast away ... we were sinking in the midst of the waves, shiftless, hopeless, helpless and powerless.'¹⁹⁶ All of this was clearly laid out in the formative tract, Living or Dead (1849), which was still used to advertise other tracts at least ten years later, and was reprinted in Old Paths nearly thirty years later.¹⁹⁷ The basic aim of this tract was to describe all non-Christians as 'dead', which meant the vast majority of people.¹⁹⁸ But most people did not see this reality, caused by sin, and simply thought that they were more or less alright. Ryle drew up a contrast between the man who thought that way, and the man who understood

the enormity of sin. The former believed he had a good heart; it was easy to get to heaven; he thought little of Jesus; he thought little of sin; he thought little about the means of grace; he disliked earnest Christians; and he loved the world. By contrast, the man alive to the reality of sin believed there was no heart as bad as his; the road to heaven was narrow; Jesus was the pearl above all price; he hated sin; he made much of the Bible, praying and sermons; he regarded earnest Christians as 'the excellent of the earth'; and the world was merely a lodging inn.¹⁹⁹

Without this recognition of sin there would be no turning to Jesus.²⁰⁰ Sin was the starting point of Ryle's evangelism. He never ceased to stress it, for without it he could not get on to the good news of free salvation in Jesus. A right understanding of the position of Man was a necessary prerequisite to a right understanding of the position of Christ. Ryle, typically, used the words of a Reformer to encapsulate the reality of sin:

I cannot pray, but I sin: I cannot hear or preach a sermon, but I sin: I cannot give an alms, or receive the sacrament, but I sin: nay I cannot so much as confess my sins, but my confessions are still aggravations of them. My repentance needs to be repented of, my tears want washing, and the very washing of my tears needs still to be washed over again with the blood of my Redeemer.²⁰¹

Once this truth was grasped then the second main doctrine, that of the need for a personal faith in Jesus, inevitably followed. At this point there was an overlap between Ryle's appeal to non-Christians and his concern for the 'almost' Christian or nominal Christian. Dividing the world up into sheep and goats with no grey area of 'nice' people in between was not a particularly unique theology, and the appeal to personal faith in Jesus was a traditional tenet of Evangelicalism.²⁰² But Ryle wanted to carry the division into the churches and argue that most people who attended church were 'goats' and not 'sheep'. He regarded 'churchianity' as the disease of the mid- nineteenth century.²⁰³ 'Dead' people were to be found not just in graveyards, but inside the

church.²⁰⁴ The number of real Christians was so small that it was difficult to find half a dozen together in one place.²⁰⁵ The age of saints had passed away and the age of nominal Christianity was blossoming.²⁰⁶ There were 'millions' against Christ, only 'thousands' for Him. There was not a single parish in the whole of England where the Devil did not have more followers than God.²⁰⁷ It was a rarity to find a family in which every member was a Christian.²⁰⁸ Even in the special year of 1875, with the impact of revival through the preaching of Moody, Ryle thought most people were Christians only in an outward and formal sense, and not from the heart.²⁰⁹ Nominal Christianity was 'the grand defect of the Christianity of our times'.²¹⁰ Ryle sought to warn people against it: 'Keep clear of any system of religion which confounds the world and true Christians and makes no broad distinction between those who are true children of God in a congregation and those who are not'.²¹¹

(b) The Nominal Christian

Ryle was puzzled by nominal Christians.²¹² He described them frequently as 'borderers', 'waverers', 'lingerers'.²¹³ They were people with too much religion to enjoy the world, and too little religion to enjoy God.²¹⁴ They represented 'lazy, easy, sleepy Christianity' which did no real work for God.²¹⁵ Such people

believe in heaven, and yet seem faintly to long for it, - and in hell yet seem little to fear it. They love the Lord Jesus, but the work they do for Him is small. They hate the devil, but they often appear to tempt him to come to them. They know that the time is short but they live as if it were long. They know that they have a battle to fight, yet a man might think that they were at peace. They know they have a race to run, yet they often look like people sitting still. They know the judge is at the door, and there is a wrath to come, and yet they appear half asleep ... they spend their lives in trying to make the gate more wide and the cross more light.²¹⁶

The main problem with such people, as with the non-Christian, was the lack of a definite personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This was the key to real Christianity. Ryle quoted George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, elucidating in 1612 the fact that there was no point in

believing Christ is a Saviour, unless you believed He was so 'unto me'.²¹⁷ Or again, there was Luther's statement that many people would be lost because they could not use possessive pronouns.²¹⁸ Ryle often described real Christian Faith by missing out the key feature in a symbolic description, which highlighted being near to the Christian Faith and yet remaining outside it. So, for example, in a simple analogy, there was no point in gazing at the lifeboat, while you were floundering helplessly in the sea, you had to actually get in it.²¹⁹ So also, the majority of shipwrecks occurred almost immediately outside the harbour.²²⁰ In another illustration, Ryle pointed out that it was all very well to be inside the king's palace, to speak with the attendant servants, to enter the inner banqueting hall and to eat of the banquet itself, but all of this meant 'nothing', unless there was personal conversation with the king himself.²²¹ All the aids of Christianity (church services, sacraments, bible), were like a lantern. They were excellent helps in a dark night. But they were not home.²²² To have a bright lantern was not enough, 'the man who is content to sit down in the road by the side of his lantern, must never be surprised if he dies of cold.'²²³ You must be at home by the fireside. It was essential to have personal dealings with Christ:²²⁴

You cannot enter the Kingdom of God on the credit of your parents' religion. You must eat the bread of life for yourself, and have the witness of the Spirit in your own heart. You must have repentance of your own, faith of your own and sanctification of your own.²²⁵

Ryle believed that it was possible to assess a personal relationship with Christ. He thought that it was not possible to show the fruits of such a relationship, unless you had the roots.²²⁶ Thus a very distinctive feature of his sermons was a constant cry for evidences. If evidences were visible, then the precarious doubtfulness of a nominal Christian could be dismissed. Thoroughness, boldness and decision were what was required: 'Come out boldly and act decidedly. Be thorough, thorough, thorough in your Christianity and set your face fully towards the sun.'²²⁷ There was a natural overlap here with Ryle's words for the

'real' Christians, who ought to show more evidences of their faith: victory was the proof of regeneration.²²⁸ A true relationship with Christ would show itself in hard work and effort, 'the boasted policy of non-interference, the 'masterly inactivity' which pleases so many statesmen, the plan of keeping quiet and letting this alone - all this will never do in the Christian warfare.'²²⁹ At the end of the day every Christian must have evidences of his faith in Christ:

Evidence, evidence, evidence will be the one thing wanted when the great white throne is set ... the question will be not how we talked and what we professed; but how we lived and what we did.²³⁰

Ryle identified five areas of evidences that ought to be present in any individual Christian: (1) exhibiting the 'fruits of the Spirit'; (2) avoiding sin; (3) diligence about the means of grace; (4) looking for the Second Advent; (5) being separate from the world.

In the first two areas, Ryle was neither elaborate nor specific in outlining precisely what he meant. He castigated people who knew their Bibles to the letter and could engage in detailed theological controversy, but who lacked the real evidence of the fruit of the Spirit.²³¹ His elaboration of the latter consisted, however, simply of mentioning charity, meekness, gentleness and humility by name.²³² Elsewhere he called the fruits of the Spirit 'passive graces', pointed out how much they were written about in the New Testament, and observed that they tended to be ignored.²³³ Ryle professed them to be a higher evidence than 'active graces', because they were harder to attain and were more effective in influencing the world.²³⁴ This was an unusually long comment on the fruit of the Spirit, and in other places he reverted to listing them.²³⁵ Occasionally, biblical or historical examples of people exhibiting a particular fruit would be added.²³⁶

Despite majoring on Sin, Ryle rarely went into details about sins. Any known sin should be shunned, but what such sin might be Ryle did not say.²³⁷ As with the fruit of the Spirit, a short list was sometimes

included. This usually mentioned sins appropriate to private relationships such as lying and cheating²³⁸, as well as some social activity, such as attendance at the theatre, opera, balls and racecourses.²³⁹ Drunkenness, sometimes specified as taking place secretly at home, was mentioned more often.²⁴⁰ But by far the most sweeping condemnation was reserved for breaking the commandment to keep the Sabbath holy. Ryle devoted several whole tracts to this particular issue.²⁴¹

Ryle wrote at more length on the means of grace, by which he meant Bible reading, private prayer and regular attendance at public worship.²⁴² If these were merely tolerated, then that was a sure mark of nominal Christianity. A 'real' Christian would not only regard them as essential, but would actually enjoy the doing of them.²⁴³ Georgina Tollemache was held up as a prime example of a real Christian, because of her unwearied diligence about the means of grace.²⁴⁴ Ryle's first printed sermon identified the searching of the Scriptures, unceasing prayer and regular attendance in public worship, as the three distinguishing marks of 'real' Christians.²⁴⁵ Conversely, it was precisely the absence of these three aspects which Ryle most observed and lamented amongst Christians of his day.²⁴⁶ Of the three it was private prayer which he regarded as the most crucial, even going so far as to say that it was 'absolutely needful' to salvation.²⁴⁷ Yet it was the most neglected of religious duties.²⁴⁸ Backsliding began with the neglect of private prayer and happiness depended on the exercise of it.²⁴⁹ If there was one habit Ryle yearned to change, it was that of the absence of prayer: 'I want the times we live in to be praying times. I want the Christians of our day to be praying Christians. I want the church of our age to be a praying church.'²⁵⁰ Often, the one thing he requested others to do for him was to pray.²⁵¹ Revival in England, within the Church of England, would be the result of prayer.²⁵²

Ryle offered no details about the time and nature of Christ's return, except that it was bodily and literal. What he did emphasise was the effect that believing in the fact of the Second Advent ought to have on Christians. Primarily, it ought to make them 'doers' in their

Christianity and not merely hearers.²⁵³ In the words of the parable of the nobleman, they were to 'occupy till I come'.²⁵⁴ This did not mean either sitting around in patient expectation, or to engage frantically in some special Christian work.²⁵⁵ It meant rather being useful on earth by soberly carrying out lawful callings and earthly affairs.²⁵⁶ It meant living 'with a heart packed up and ready to be gone.'²⁵⁷ Above all it meant making the most of every opportunity to use time wisely for God:

make a good use of time. Regard it as the stuff of which life is made, and never waste it, or throw it away. Your hours, and days, and weeks, and months, and years, have all something to say to an eternal condition beyond the grave.²⁵⁸

Modern-day Christians spent too much time concentrating on the sufferings of Christ and not enough time reflecting on His return as the crowned King.²⁵⁹ If they spent more time on the latter, they would be stirred up to use their lives working for God, and leave 'great evidences' behind when buried.²⁶⁰

In the last area, that of separation from the world, Ryle was reluctant to be specific. The main thrust of his key text on this issue was not so much to encourage Christians to be separate, but to teach them to be separate in the right way.²⁶¹ The monastic model of holiness, by complete separation from the world, was foolish because it failed to deal with the heart.²⁶² The right model was to carry faith into business.²⁶³ To be separate did not mean giving up all trades; it did not mean having no social intercourse with non-Christians; it did not mean only taking an interest in religious affairs; and it certainly did not mean wearing peculiar clothes, speaking in a peculiar voice, or adopting peculiar manners.²⁶⁴ However, there were ways in which a Christian needed to stand out against the worldliness that was endemic of the times.²⁶⁵ Ryle warned against an absorption in business life, and a concern for wealth, which intruded on the means of grace.²⁶⁶ His main concern, however, was over the use of leisure time. This was something which he had not initially thought much about in his ministry, but, as time passed, he came to see it as of crucial importance.²⁶⁷ Evening was a dangerous

time. The Devil used it to lure the poorer classes into public houses, the artisan classes into inn parlours, and the wealthy classes into ballrooms.²⁶⁸ None of these were right places to be; so also racecourses and theatres were to be avoided, because they were 'inseparably' bound up with sin. Ryle was not against watching horses running at speed or Shakespeare's plays. But the former was invariably connected with gambling, the latter with fornication, and both with drunkenness.²⁶⁹ Ryle further distinguished between the people Christians should be involved with in leisure time. It was necessary to have acquaintance with non-Christians, in business for example, but social intimacy was quite another thing, and impossible to maintain with vital Christianity. Ryle sidetracked to add that this principle should govern the choice of a partner by an unmarried Christian man or woman. It was better to die than marry an unbeliever.²⁷⁰

Although Ryle spoke strongly on these specific issues relating to leisure time, his remarks were balanced by caution and encouragement in some recreational activities. He recognised that the issue of leisure in Victorian England was a significantly new one, throwing up 'scores of doubtful cases' in which the path of duty was not easy to define. He did not attempt to lay down specific rules, but only offered some 'suggestions' to guide behaviour, suitably broad to allow personal freedom of action.²⁷¹ In two particular cases, those of ball-going and card playing, Ryle relegated his comments to footnotes, because they were 'delicate and difficult subjects'. There was nothing wrong with dancing itself, but Ryle was against the long, and late, hours given to it, as well as the vanity which dressing up encouraged.²⁷² Nor was card playing a sin, and indeed it was to be encouraged as a means of promoting health in old people, incapable of doing much else. Ryle's main objection was that servants in the kitchen would imitate masters in the parlour in the game, but add the vice of gambling.²⁷³ In both cases Ryle did not claim infallibility and expressed his opinion with diffidence. He was convinced, by contrast, that recreation was good, especially for younger people and those whose labour was hard toil, whether of mind or body.²⁷⁴ The material world was not of itself evil, but was part of God's good creation and to be enjoyed.²⁷⁵ There were 'hundreds' of lawful

recreations, though Ryle did not list them!²⁷⁶ He put himself squarely in favour of muscular Christianity:

I see no harm in cricket, rowing, running, and other manly athletic recreations. I find no fault with those who play at chess and such like games of skill ... Anything which strengthens nerves, and brain, and digestion, and lungs, and muscles, and makes us more fit for Christ's work ... is a blessing and ought to be thankfully used.²⁷⁷

(c) The Real Christian

All the above evidences were urged on both the 'nominal' and 'real' Christian. Ryle had two particular words for the real Christian, however, which confirmed his drawing-in of all types of people, personally, into his sermons. These were: the cultivation of a missionary spirit and a tone of cheerfulness and thankfulness in life. The first he inherited in the Evangelical tradition. The second was a surprising feature of a leading Victorian Evangelical. Ryle saw both as natural responses to understanding 'the full amount of the treasure to which faith in Jesus' entitled believers.'²⁷⁸ The doctrines of final perseverance and assurance, for example, were not essential for salvation, but they were 'gospel privileges'.²⁷⁹ A firm grasp of such truths meant that a Christian lived in June and not January.²⁸⁰ Another more advanced doctrine was that of the current intercessory work of prayer carried on by Christ in heaven. A firm grasp of this truth freed a Christian from worries about his own life and a narrow concern for matters only involving his own immediate surroundings.²⁸¹ So, also, the sovereignty of Christ over the precise affairs of an individual believer meant that he was freed from any fear of premature death.²⁸² Further, the fear of hell and hope of heaven might lead to conversion, but the break out of selfishness and living for others would only come from feeling the love of Christ.²⁸³

Perhaps the key emphasis to 'real' Christians, however, was the way in which Ryle highlighted the kindness of Christ. He was concerned for those who felt they could not possibly do anything for God, because they

were always doubting whether they were 'real' Christians or not, due to the continued prevalence of sin in their lives. He condemned the doctrine of imputed sanctification.²⁸⁴ Throughout his life he sought to maintain clearly that Christians were sinners, and that it was wrong to expect too much from themselves.²⁸⁵ While recognising that every Christian had a new heart on conversion, the work of redemption was not complete until the Second Advent. There were not two heavens, one hereafter and one now. So the heart of man now, a Christian man that is, was weak, wayward, faint, unstable, doubting and fearful.²⁸⁶ It was a fallacy to think that someone was not a Christian because he did wrong:

Believe me you must be content to go to heaven as a sinner saved by grace. And you must not be surprised to find daily proof that you really are a sinner as long as you live.²⁸⁷

Ryle was determined to resist the idea that Evangelicalism was judgmental and not merciful.²⁸⁸ The boundless mercy of Christ was not just for sinful non-Christians, but it was also for sinning Christians.²⁸⁹ Christ dealt gently with all; no-one was treated roughly. If people went astray, Christ brought them back; if they fell, He helped them up; if they sinned wilfully, they were chastised for the purpose of making them better, not to reject them. In short, for all, 'a feast of fat things is always provided.'²⁹⁰ Ryle urged close consideration of the way in which Christ dealt with His disciples while on earth.²⁹¹ Christ was full of pity and tender mercy, restoring, commissioning, blessing men who 'are not at all to be commended.'²⁹² And as Christ treated them, so he would treat the Christian in Victorian England, caring for the least and weakest, as well as the greatest and strongest, and giving none up.²⁹³ Ryle concludes triumphantly:

Let all the world know that the Lord Jesus will not cast away His believing people because of shortcomings and infirmities ... Oh! no! it is His glory to pass over the faults of His people, and heal their backslidings - to make much of their weak graces, and to pardon their many faults.²⁹⁴

With a firm grasp then of these six truths (assurance, final perseverance, the intercessory prayer of Christ, the sovereignty of Christ, the sense of Christ's love, His kindness to sinful Christians), a 'real' Christian's life should be marked by missionary endeavour and joyful thanksgiving. Part of the motivation for evangelism was that it brought rewards in heaven²⁹⁵, and part was the realisation that unconverted friends, neighbours and relatives, no matter how amiable, moral and courteous they were, were bound for hell.²⁹⁶ But brash outspokenness inspired by fear and promise were not the central, or most frequent, tenets of Ryle's advice. Rather, he concentrated on the goodness of the message and the right use of opportunities. Christians were to repeat the invitation of Moses to Hobab, 'Come with us and we will do you good.'²⁹⁷ The light of God was sweet.²⁹⁸ They were to speak of the blessings they themselves had found in Christ.²⁹⁹ They were to share that the way of God was pleasant and good.³⁰⁰

A Christian was to regard it as a painful thing to go to heaven alone.³⁰¹ Indeed a Christian who did not lead others to Christ ought to regard himself as a 'monster'.³⁰² He should, therefore, never tire of speaking of Christ.³⁰³ He should be zealous and bold to proclaim Christ.³⁰⁴ He should be positively miserable about non-Christians.³⁰⁵ All Christians should follow the example of Georgina Tollemache: 'she was always trying to win individual souls to Christ. It seemed a constant employment to her ... the salvation of souls seemed never out of her mind. Her life was a constant endeavour to draw others to Christ.'³⁰⁶ Every lawful effort was to be used and no pains spared.³⁰⁷ Nevertheless, this should not be a matter of 'Bible-bashing'. The right opportunities had to be watched for, the occasion had to be 'proper'.³⁰⁸ Words had to be spoken at the right time and in the right manner: 'without wisdom and spiritual tact he (the Christian), may do more harm than good ... we need common sense and discretion, as well as faithfulness and zeal'.³⁰⁹ Indeed, it was not necessary to speak at all. Witnessing could be done by daily conduct in kind tempers, gentle manners, unselfishness, patience, readiness to help, and pleasant words.³¹⁰ Ryle believed that all Christians converted other people, but that often they would live and

die without knowing it.³¹¹ Some convert by preaching and speaking, some in their deaths, some by books and writings long after their deaths, but more convert others,

by the beauty of their daily conduct and behaviour. There are many quiet, gentle, consistent Christians who make no show and no noise in the world, and yet insensibly exercise a deep influence for good on all around them. They win 'without the Word'.³¹²

The second main feature of Ryle's words for 'real' Christians was his constant urging that Christians should be joyful and thankful. He had no time for those who went around as if life consisted of a succession of funerals.³¹³ He counteracted the idea that it was spiritual to be doleful.³¹⁴ He even went as far as to say that grumbling was a national sin, distinctive in England like no other country in the world.³¹⁵ Ryle concluded that, 'alas, I fear God has a controversy with us for our unthankfulness'.³¹⁶ There were only three possible reasons for a Christian looking unhappy. It could mean that he was not a 'real' Christian at all, but only a 'nominal' Christian. It could mean a failure to grasp the true extent of Gospel privileges. Or it could mean concern for non-Christians.³¹⁷ Happiness was actually a test of the reality of Bible Christianity. Ryle did not expect 'real' Christians to have perpetual smiles on their faces, as personal sins, their own illnesses and the souls of others, caused their sense of joy to ebb and flow: 'But as a general rule, the true Christian has a deep pool of peace within him, which even at the lowest is never entirely dry'.³¹⁸ Neither poverty, nor sickness, nor public calamities should take away the happiness of the man whose heart was in the right position before God.³¹⁹ This was a work of grace, therefore his happiness was based on sources 'entirely independent of this world'.³²⁰

In this light, a Christian ought to be able always to find something to be thankful for.³²¹ Sometimes Ryle actually named things: equal rights for all and security for life and property, and an open Bible freely available for all in the English tongue, were two prominent

ones.³²² But, usually, it was simply the fact of being a child of God, the son of the King³²³, that was sufficient for a spirit of thankfulness. For such a person 'the lines are fallen to him in pleasant places, and he has a goodly heritage'.³²⁴ Morose Christians were like the spies who went into Canaan and brought back gloomy news of the good land.³²⁵ Part of Ryle's answer to cultivating joyfulness was to be more 'thorough', as outlined above, but there was also the matter of care about the little details of life:

I am firmly persuaded that inattention to little daily things, is one cause why many believers have no comfort in their Christianity.³²⁶

Ryle had in mind, unamiable ways of speaking, being impatient and irritable in the vexations of daily family life. Such little things acted like a handful of gravel in machinery, making everything jar and creak.³²⁷ The Christian should resolve to 'make conscience' of the little things in daily life.³²⁸ The least things of life should be done well ... let them be even more than full weight.³²⁹ Courtesy was a little grace, yet it ought to be a marked feature of every Christian.³³⁰ Just as the simple positioning of little furnishings in a room made all the difference in its appearance, so Christians should work hard at courtesy and making their religion lovely, beautiful and attractive.³³¹ Ryle was puzzled that a Christian could be anything other than joyful:

Praise God more every day you live. Praise Him more in private. Praise Him more in public. Praise Him in your own family. Praise Him above all in your own heart. This is the way to be in tune for heaven. The anthem there will be, 'What hath God wrought!'³³²

Ryle's goal in his preaching, therefore, was to speak specific words to everyone in the congregation. This he regarded as his life's work. He provided a succinct summary of all his preaching in his second printed

annual address, in 1846: 'I have told you one and all the longings and desires of my heart. Conversion for the unconverted, decision for the wavering, growth in grace for the believer'.³³³

(3) ILLUSTRATIONS

Ryle was never satisfied with anything he preached and regarded himself always as a learner.³³⁴ He worked hard at making his sermons easy listening, in the knowledge that his rural, labouring congregation contained people who enjoyed Sunday at church because they could sit comfortably, put up their legs, have nothing to think about, and go to sleep.³³⁵ To keep the attention of such people necessitated plenty of 'pains and trouble'.³³⁶ He sought above all to turn what was largely a verbal exercise into a visual one. He adopted the Arabian proverb 'He is the best speaker who can turn the ear into an eye'.³³⁷ Sometimes he did this by actually using a visual object such as a watch or a bunch of keys.³³⁸ But his real gift was his handling of language so as to impress vivid images on the minds of the listeners. There were six different ways by which he kept his congregation awake: (a) the repeated use of single words; (b) ear-catching pithy statements; (c) the piling up of a whole succession of adjectives; (d) the observation of events in everyday life; (e) short, one-line, comparisons; (f) stories.

(a) Single words

Ryle admired Dr. Thomas Chalmers as a man, but criticised his sermons for their longwindedness.³³⁹ He objected to colons and semicolons and urged preachers to use commas and full stops. In this way they would learn to speak as if they were asthmatic or short of breath.³⁴⁰ Ryle's sermons were always written in this way. They were marked by one word sentences, often repeated. Where are your sins? is a good example of this. People who picked it up were urged, 'Read it! Read it to the end'.³⁴¹ They were all, 'Guilty. Guilty. Guilty in the sight of God'.³⁴² But 'nothing, nothing, nothing' would persuade them of this fact.³⁴³ Famous people of the past were all, 'dead, dead, dead'.³⁴⁴ The readers all needed 'faith, faith, faith'.³⁴⁵ With regard to their sins, they were to, 'give it up, give it up, give it up', or 'lay it aside, lay it

aside, lay it aside'.³⁴⁶ Usually this style was used to heighten some required action on the part of the listener or reader. Thus to be a 'real' Christian meant venturing all on Jesus, 'looking to nothing, resting on nothing, trusting in nothing but Christ-Christ-Christ'.³⁴⁷ Or put more simply, you had to, 'come, come, come' to Christ.³⁴⁸ So, also, anything to do with death and eternity lent itself to this short, violent, ejaculatory style. People were not simply told that sooner or later they would face death, but rather 'we are all going, going, going ... and shall soon be gone'.³⁴⁹ 'Scattering, scattering, scattering' was the hallmark of even the happiest home.³⁵⁰ Eternity was 'coming, coming, coming very fast upon us'.³⁵¹ And if you were not looking forward to the future life then your religion had done 'Nothing! Nothing! Nothing at all' for you.³⁵²

(b) Pithy Statements

Ryle thought that proverbs and epigrammatic sentences were of 'vast importance' in giving force to sermons, and gave twelve examples from a little-known book, Papers on Preaching by a Wykehamist.³⁵³ Another source was Sinclair's Anecdotes and Aphorisms.³⁵⁴ Sometimes, Ryle would not give a specific reference but would use quotation marks as, for example, defining bold prayer as 'bolts shot up into heaven'.³⁵⁵ He frequently used sayings which he had obviously culled from his own reading: 'Once born, die twice, and die forever; twice born, never die, and live forever'.³⁵⁶ But, more often than not, his own phraseology was catching enough, without the need to resort to other people's vocabulary. The bulk of mankind he described as 'setting their watch by the town hall clock', to convey behaviour determined by the common rule³⁵⁷; Jesus' love was no 'summer day fountain', but faithful and permanent³⁵⁸; to encourage missionary activity he urged, 'the way to do a thing is to do it'³⁵⁹; he described the devil's work with, 'the foe we have to do with keeps no holiday'³⁶⁰; and on the activity of the invisible Christian church, 'the bridegroom was a man of sorrows. The bride must not be a woman of pleasure'.³⁶¹

(c) Adjectives

Wherever possible Ryle would use a whole succession of descriptive

adjectives, rather than one, bringing home the particular point by burying the listener under it. If he was using single words, he usually reserved this style for key theological concepts. To give three examples, the world was 'an inn, a tent, a tabernacle, a lodging, a training school', i.e. transient and of no permanent value.³⁶² Assurance was 'health, strength, power, vigour, activity, energy, manliness, beauty', and consequently ought to be sought after as a characteristic most to be desired.³⁶³ The Christian with a bare knowledge of a few doctrines would 'go doubting, limping, halting, groaning, along the way to heaven', instead of victoriously overcoming the world by being personally close to Christ.³⁶⁴ However, Ryle also used short descriptive phrases, as well as single words, to focus attention on particular points, but in this case the use was more general. He compared most of his congregation with features of the church, to convey the fact that they were not really awakened to Christian truths. Each individual was 'as cold as the stones on which he treads as he enters our church - unmoved as the marble statue which adorns the tomb against the wall - dead as the old dry oak of which his pew is made - feelingless as the painted glass in the windows'.³⁶⁵

By far the clearest example of this style is in the tract The Cross, where Ryle employs it on three distinct occasions. In the first, he describes the man who reads the Bible without understanding that Christ crucified is the key to the whole volume: 'Your religion is a heaven without a sun, an arch without a keystone, a compass without a needle, a clock without springs or weights, a lamp without oil'.³⁶⁶ In the second place, he describes the minister who does not base his ministry on the Cross as 'a soldier without arms, -like an artist without his pencil, - like a pilot without his compass, -like a labourer without his tools'.³⁶⁷ And finally, a church which put other things above the Cross would be little better than,

a cumberer of the ground, a dead carcase, a well without water, a barren figtree, a sleeping watchman, a silent trumpet, a dumb witness, an ambassador without terms of peace, a messenger without tidings, a lighthouse without fire.³⁶⁸

(d) Everyday Life

This elaboration of the last quotation is due to the use of Biblical imagery. But Ryle was also conscious of the need to earth his sermons in illustrations based on observation of the life around him. He thought this was a key feature of successful preaching.³⁶⁹ Most of his own observations related either to nature, or to current -day events, or to history, although this latter was more a source for full stories. Nevertheless, he did make passing historical allusions to draw out abstract points. So the discovery of Australian 'savages', Handel's music and the life-style of American Indians were all used in this way.³⁷⁰ Ryle's use of 'signs of the times' and his attitude to English mid-Victorian society have been outlined above, but he also used nationally-known public events to illustrate sermon points. Thus, to draw attention to the uselessness of worldly wealth in an eternal perspective, he dwelt, at some length, on the wreck of the ship *Central America*, en route from Havanna to New York, with three or four hundred Californian gold diggers on board.³⁷¹ In talking about the promised rewards of Christ to his faithful followers as certain, despite hard times on earth, he painted the somewhat pathetic scene of the return of the Guards from the Crimean War, with depleted ranks, and the way in which Queen Victoria came down from her platform and pinned the VC. on a wounded officer who could not walk.³⁷² However, Ryle was not confined to using such dramatic events as these. He equally well made use of observances of more everyday affairs. One of his more graphic such illustrations was that of describing his listeners as occupants of a house on fire, and it was his job to wake them up and get them out. This might involve rough handling, but the image made the necessity of that clear.³⁷³

Ryle's most common observation of life around related to that of the sea. He likened the Christian life to a journey by ship from one harbour to another. He frequently insisted that Christians should make sure they made the journey 'under full sail'.³⁷⁴ Too many Christians were unrigged, unarmed, unstored and not fit for service. It would take

months to get out to sea at all.³⁷⁵ Ryle used the imagery of the sea in different ways. Thus, on another occasion, he employed the illustration of emigrants setting off on a sea voyage in a leaky ship, to make the point that if one knew that fact, one would do anything to stop them. In the same way, ministers should stop people heading for spiritual destruction.³⁷⁶ Or again, the gospel was a lifeboat, the unconverted, a man floundering in the sea.³⁷⁷ Further, Christians were often childish and engaged in worthless activities, like children building sandcastles at the water's edge at low water.³⁷⁸ Occasionally, Ryle elaborated the allegory: eternal life was a haven, life contained stormy waters, shipwreck was caused by conformity to the world, make sure of a compass (the Bible), and a pilot (Jesus), otherwise one would be lost.³⁷⁹

(e) Short Comparisons

Ryle made greater use of contrasting images than descriptive adjectives or the allegorical use of naturally observed events. Sometimes these were quick passing allusions, usually in pairs. So the non-Christian might obtain a sort of happiness, but compared to Christian joy, this was moonlight to sunshine, brass to gold.³⁸⁰ Giving a man something short of the forgiveness of sins was like opiates to an ill man and dreams to a lunatic; they left them ill and mad.³⁸¹ Christians were completely saved by God, but it was not a matter of being plucked from the sea and being left on the beach.³⁸² More often than not, however, Ryle ran up a whole list of contrasts together. The happiness of an unconverted man in heaven was as likely as that of a caged eagle, a sheep in water, an owl in the noonday sun or a fish on dry land.³⁸³ As the root was to the tree, the mainspring to the watch, the fire to the steamengine, so the heart was to man.³⁸⁴ Life on earth was not the end but the way, not the harbour but the voyage, not the home but the journey, not age but school.³⁸⁵ The mysterious continuance amidst rise and falls, of the Christian, was like a candle, fluttering on a gusty night out in the street, but staying alight; like a little boat, bobbing up and down in a stormy sea, but staying afloat; like a small child, making his way down a crowded street, staying upright.³⁸⁶ The man who tried to find salvation by formal religious duties was like one trying to climb a precipice of ice, or pouring water into a cask full of holes, or

rowing a boat against a rapid stream, or building a wall of loose sand, or striving to keep a sinking ship afloat.³⁸⁷ The man who confessed his sins to a minister rather than Christ, was living in prison when he might be free, starving and in rags when he might be full and rich, cringing for favours from the servant when he might boldly go to the Master, living in rushlight instead of the noon-day light of the sun.³⁸⁸

(f) Stories

Finally, Ryle told stories, which he regarded as an excellent way of making people sit up and listen.³⁸⁹ He did not approve of over elaboration of detail, and they were supports to draw men to Christ, not ends in themselves.³⁹⁰ Nevertheless, he encouraged preachers to be abundant in their use of stories.³⁹¹ He often finished his sermons with a poignant story.³⁹² Some of these smacked of Victorian bathos and involved people whose conditions evoked pity. So Ryle related the story of an itinerant preacher coming across an uneducated, poor, Welsh boy, perpetually smiling. But when asked 'What is your hope?', the boy skips around saying 'Jesus Christ is plenty for everybody, Jesus Christ is plenty for everybody'.³⁹³ Ryle graphically described his visit to a young woman, bedridden for years with a disease of the spine, living in a garret with no fire, and with the straw thatch-roof not two feet above her face. But she was always happy, because Jesus was with her.³⁹⁴ Then there was the story of the daughter who ran away from home, most likely becoming a prostitute, and staying away for years. Yet she returned home and became a Christian. How? Because her mother prayed night and day, and never went to bed at night without leaving the front door unlocked and the door on the latch. Her daughter arrived at night, found the door open, and so came in.³⁹⁵

The idiot, the incurably ill, the reclaimed runaway daughter, were classic Victorian literary figures. But Ryle described each of these as true encounters. However, he also used more normal characters in his stories. Everyday personalities, with no names, allowed the listener to identify with the characters, rather than to be inspired by, or contrasted with them. Thus there was the story of the traveller in Scotland making a tired and weary ascent of the long, steep and winding

pass of Glencoe. Reaching the top he comes across a stone engraved with the words 'Rest and be thankful'. Ryle used the story to illustrate the way into heaven, with the intention that everyone could put themselves in the traveller's shoes.³⁹⁶ To bring home the point that there is no place for uncharitable people in heaven, Ryle told the story of the boy who remarked 'If grandfather goes to heaven, I hope I and brother will not go there'. On being asked why not, the boy went on, 'If he sees us there, I am sure he will say, as he does now - 'What are these boys doing here? Let them get out of the way.''³⁹⁷

A third type of story was the historical one. In these Ryle ranged from immediate past history, through the time of the Reformation and back to Antiquity. He recounted the story of a Puritan minister, one Mr. Doolittle, to highlight the truth that no-one regretted following Christ. Just as he was about to preach, Mr. Doolittle observed a stranger come into the church and guessed that he was a disturbed non-Christian. So he turned to an old Christian and asked him if he ever repented of serving Christ. The old man replied that God had done him nothing but good. Mr. Doolittle repeated the question before another man who said he was never happy until he followed Christ. The preacher then challenged the stranger to follow Christ. The man stood up and gave his life to Christ there and then.³⁹⁸ In encouraging Christians to let nothing come between them and God, Ryle told the story of Alexander the Great asking an Athenian philosopher what he desired most in life, and receiving the reply 'that you would stand from between me and the sun.'³⁹⁹ Trying to bring home to his listeners precisely what Jesus did on the Cross, Ryle told the story of two brothers in Athens, just after the battle of Marathon against the Persians. One brother was put on trial for a capital charge with strong and unanswerable evidence against him. Suddenly, his brother stepped forward to be heard on his behalf. Asked what evidence he had to give, the brother said nothing, but simply lifted up his arms. They were mutilated stumps. He had lost both hands in the battle. Without question his brother was released and the charge dismissed.⁴⁰⁰

With stories such as these, in sermons aimed at every type of person, and spoken with urgency, there was little danger of Ryle's agricultural labourers falling asleep, even on hot summer days. Ryle kept his congregation's attention with the use of hyperbolic language, reflection on the economic, political and religious changes of the day, and the portrayal of the imminent return of Christ. All of this was spoken in the setting of the possible sudden death of the listener. Ryle's use of particular words, directed at the non-Christian, 'nominal Christian and 'real' Christian, ensured that no-one listening was left out of the argument of the text. Clear division of the material, together with a language that created vivid images in the minds of the congregation, meant that everyone could clearly understand the point of the sermon. These sermons of John Charles Ryle contain the clearest enunciation of mid, and late Victorian Evangelical theology. They reveal a surprising emphasis on joy and thanksgiving. While starting with a clear condemnation of worldliness and sin, the heart was the good news of salvation in Christ, which should result supremely in missionary activity and joy. Earnestness for Ryle did not stem from anxiety about sin but from an awareness that the Gospel was something important to share with others.⁴⁰¹ Eternal certainties had serious consequences. So he worked hard at his sermons. In an address to clergymen in 1859, he concluded, typically, with a story to illustrate the seriousness of their calling:

he was visiting Cambridge and saw a picture of Henry Martyn, bequeathed by Charles Simeon. The picture used to hang in Simeon's rooms. When he (Simeon) was disposed to trifle in the work of the ministry, he used to stand before it and say, 'It seems to say to me, Charles Simeon, don't trifle, don't trifle; Charles Simeon, remember whose you are, and whom you serve'. And then the worthy man in his own peculiar way, would bow respectfully, and say 'I will not trifle, I will not trifle; I will not forget'.⁴⁰²

It is easy to imagine Ryle himself behaving in the same way. Certainly his desire not to trifle, but to regard his work with the utmost seriousness, involved him in a succession of controversies throughout his ministry.

CHAPTER TWO

THE THEOLOGY OF J.C.RYLE

PLATFORM SPEECHES

God washes all our hearts on earth, and in heaven He will also wash our brains.¹

Ryle did not seek to be controversial from the pulpit. As such the content of his sermons at Helmingham and Stradbroke centred around a personal response to the Gospel. By themselves the sermons only reveal a half of his theology. In the 1860s and 1870s, however, as well as preaching from the pulpit Ryle engaged in platform speaking at a variety of clerical gatherings and it was here that his understanding of wider theological issues, other than salvation, was revealed. His views were not conventional and Ryle was often not understood either by the Evangelical wing of the Church of England or by other schools of thought. In 1879 he published together two separate papers entitled Church Principles and Church Comprehensiveness. In a short introduction he drew attention to the surprise, and even shock, caused by some of his remarks.² He concluded 'Both parties may say that they do not understand me. Be it so I cannot help that. I have a clear conscience. I understand myself, and I think God understands me also. To my own Master I stand or fall.'³ The specific cause of this confusion was Ryle's attendance at the annual Church Congress, but this confusion at his action was simply one expression of the deep disunity of the Victorian Church of England. Most of the issues surrounding this disunity were related to the question, 'What is the Church?'. A question which was imposed on Victorian Anglicans by the Oxford Movement,⁴ and which was perpetuated by the activities of Ritualist clergy.⁵ Ryle had very clear views on these matters, but they did not fit the conventional shibboleths

of Evangelicalism. In short, Ryle approached the questions of his day, not with inherited standard cliches, but with an open independent mind, and this earned him the criticism of conservative Evangelicalism.⁶ At the same time, he firmly maintained Evangelical doctrine, a stance resulting in strong verbal clashes with High Churchmen.⁷

(1) THE DISESTABLISHING OF THE IRISH CHURCH

The impetus to Ryle's involvement in the Church Congresses was a specific political event, Gladstone's proposal to disestablish the Church of Ireland. Ryle later described the attendance at a Church Congress as being largely made up of people closely resident to the location of the Congress.⁸ It was in this light that he himself attended the Congress at Norwich in 1865. His only contribution was in a discussion on preaching, at the end of the Congress.⁹ He played no part in the following two Congresses. But in 1868 he made the long journey to Dublin to join the Congress. He had not been invited to speak, and his only involvement was in discussion. Nevertheless, he announced that the long journey and little prominent participation was worth it, merely to show by his attendance his sympathy for the Church of Ireland 'in this her hour of trial'.¹⁰ It was from this time that he actively supported the Church Congresses.¹¹

Gladstone's proposals on Ireland so affected Ryle that he produced, in 1868, his one and only political tract.¹² Before this issue arose he had maintained that it was wrong in principle for a clergyman to vote.¹³ But in 1868 he not only voted but actively opposed candidates who supported Gladstone.¹⁴ Ryle read deeply on the issue of disestablishment in Ireland and was 'utterly unconvinced' that Gladstone was right.¹⁵ He outlined six reasons for his opposition.¹⁶ In the first place, disestablishment in practice meant the establishment of godless government. It marked the deliberate giving up of government by Christian principles. Second, disestablishment was a direct breach of the Act of Union. It undermined faith in any promises or agreements made by the Government. Third, disestablishment in Ireland was a 'direct help to Popery'. This was a step beyond liberty. It was a specific rejection

of the Protestantism which was 'the strength and glory of Britain'. Fourth, Ryle criticised Gladstone's policy as ineffective on the grounds that it did not meet the real needs of Irish Romanists. What they really wanted was land. (Ryle was very perceptive here. He even hints also at desire for independent government). Fifth, the proposal would do immense harm in antagonising that part of the Irish population, the wealthiest and most intelligent, which was most loyal to the Union. Finally, disestablishment in Ireland 'will certainly lead' to disestablishment in England.¹⁷ He went on to conclude that he had 'very great fears' for the Established Church in England.¹⁸

Ten years earlier, in the concluding address to the Weston-Super-Mare clerical gathering, Ryle had identified the proceedings of rulers and legislators as one of the present-day dangers to the Church of England.¹⁹ He specifically referred to the endowment of Maynooth, the admission of Jews in Parliament (mentioning Disraeli by name), the attack on Church Rates and the debate over using the Bible in schools in India.²⁰ Despite all this, however, he expressed no fears for the future of the Church of England.²¹ He included a strong plea for public testimony against the India Bill.²² But, typically, his practical advice centred on standard Evangelical insights: more private prayer, more dedicated personal lives, more effective preaching based on reading and study, and the better conduct of religious meetings.²³ Now, however, the situation was very different. There was an inevitable progression from disestablishment in Ireland to the re-establishment of Popery in England.²⁴ In this light, the standard Evangelical advice to action was insufficient. Another civil war was preferable to the policies of Gladstone.²⁵ For the rest of his life Ryle was haunted by his belief that Gladstone would cause the collapse of the Church of England, and in endeavouring to prevent this he advocated three measures: an awakening of Evangelicals to the reality of the situation; unity between the different schools of thought within the Church of England; a comprehensive policy of Church Reform.

(a) Awakening Evangelicals

When Ryle spoke in 1868 at the Islington Clerical Meeting, mainly

composed of Evangelicals, he addressed the issue of forming a well-organised union of Evangelical Churchmen. The title of the subsequent published tract was 'We must unite!'. The first reason for so doing was, of course, the threat facing the Church of Ireland. The gap between speaking and publication saw this threat realised, and in a footnote Ryle commented that Evangelicals had fallen sadly short of their duty. 'The day of retribution will come. We shall reap as we have sown.'²⁶ The political threat was not the only reason for united action. There was the problem of Ritualism, 'the greatest evil which has arisen in our church since the days of Laud'.²⁷ But there was also a whole host of secondary issues, relating to the 'machinery' of the church, such as Convocation, Congresses, Diocesan Synods, the increase of the Episcopate, and the role of lay readers.²⁸ On all these matters the Evangelicals had no concerted opinion. Ryle equated the situation with that of 1662 and argued that had the Puritans acted together and all accepted Bishoprics and deaneries, the whole subsequent church history of England would have been different. But 'want of union' led to the most disastrous episode in English Ecclesiastical history.²⁹ He feared that the same thing would happen again.

However, urging Evangelicals to unite and actually getting them to do so, were very different things. Ryle accurately saw the division of Evangelicals, often describing them as like the Spanish guerillas in the Peninsula War, brave and good but hopelessly disorganised.³⁰ In the aftermath of the battle of Sedan he updated his comparison and equated them with the French, who thought any number of men with muskets would suffice against trained and organised soldiers.³¹ Both the Spanish and French were hopelessly overrun, and the same would happen to Evangelicals. Ryle went on further to criticise the way in which they condemned the conduct of their own brethren,³² instancing the invitation to a neighbouring Evangelical missionary to preach, and having to lend him a black gown because he had preached only in a surplice for thirty years. Yet many Evangelicals would have judged the visitor 'sharply' for preaching in a surplice.³³ Ryle also told the story of how he and twenty-four other Evangelicals were invited to Lambeth Palace, secretly, to discuss unity within the Church of England. The Evangelicals spoke

against any unity with 'romanisers', yet were criticised in the Evangelical press for supposedly organising a peace.³⁴

Ryle failed to deal effectively with acrimonious division within the Evangelical party and get it to act unitedly, because he had no answer to the problems posed by three theological insights inherent in Evangelicalism. The first was the principle of private judgement. Protestant liberty of thought, based on an open bible in the vernacular tongue, and resting on the absence of any intermediary priesthood between an individual and God, lay as a bedrock of Evangelical theology. One consequence of this was a natural reluctance to follow anyone else, or to join together in combined action.³⁵

The second problem was that Evangelicals were only Episcopalians in theory. In practice they were Independents. Visiting, school-work, home duties and sermon preparation, if effectively worked at, confined a clergyman to the boundaries of his own parish. Ryle concluded that 'hundreds' of clergymen were in this position.³⁶ He dubbed them 'cave and garden' Evangelicals,³⁷ and regarded them as presenting the 'most melancholy spectacle that English Church history has exhibited for three hundred years ... with nineteen Evangelical men out of twenty, the interests of the church at large seem as nothing compared to those of their own parishes. And yet they call themselves Episcopalians!'³⁸ Elsewhere he described the parish system as like islands in the Pacific Ocean, within sight of one another, yet isolated and separated by 'a deep sea rolling between'.³⁹ There was some unity through the great religious societies, but they were involved in some particular work of evangelisation.⁴⁰

The fact that such unity as there was amongst Evangelicals lay in the work of evangelisation points to the third problem for Ryle, namely that many Evangelicals did not see the 'secondary' issues facing the Church of England as important. In trying to encourage their involvement, Ryle admitted that the points in dispute were not ones which affected the issue of salvation.⁴¹ Ryle's counter to the accusation that therefore Evangelicals should not be involved in such issues, was to

argue that times had changed and if Evangelicals were to survive they must face the reality of living in the present day and dealing with present-day issues, not the issues of previous generations:

The times are changed. The tactics and line of action which our Evangelical forefathers adopted were well suited to their days. Fifty years ago Congresses, and convocation and diocesan conferences, and ruri-decanal synods, and special missions were things unknown. The weapons of Scott, and Cecil, and Simeon, were good and true 'Jerusalem blades'. We shall never improve on them. But these worthy men knew no more of some of the questions we have to face than of electric telegraphs, ironclads, breechloaders, guncotton, and torpedoes. The condition of the Church of England is completely altered as to outward machinery and organisation, and we must not shut our eyes to the fact. In altered times we must alter our tactics.⁴²

Ryle criticised parish evangelistic work as old fashioned.⁴³ Although the issues were secondary they were important: 'Meat and drink are not the only things necessary to make up a banquet. Wise men do not despise plates and knives and forks and tables and chairs.'⁴⁴ The majority of Evangelicals were not such wise men and rejected Ryle's attempt to modernise them. Ryle himself promoted the London Church Association as the best vehicle for uniting Evangelicals.⁴⁵ But his contemporaries preferred to shut themselves up in their own little corners.

(b) Church Unity

If Ryle's attempt to get the Evangelicals to work together as a united body was a conspicuous failure, his attempt to get more unity of action from the different schools of thought within the Church of England was little more successful, despite setting a prominent personal example. Anything he said in this area was greeted with suspicion because of his previous sharp-tongued speaking and his supposed leaning towards Dissent.

(i) Ryle's Character

It seems clear that Ryle did not find personal relationships easy. A number of elements contributed to this trait in him. His commanding physical presence and competitive nature naturally set him apart from

others. The Vicar of Staines, C.W.Furse, recalled fagging for him at Eton: 'and I know what his awful drives used to be - it was as much as a boy's life was worth to try to stop them; he was a hard hitter, a character which he has kept up through life, and wherever I go into battle, either in great or small things, I always hope to be at his side if he will take me with him.'⁴⁶ It was Ryle's long beard and six-foot plus build which most caught the attention in his first address in St. James' Chapel as Bishop.⁴⁷ Ryle was 'every inch a man', a dominating personality of unceasing energy and impassioned fervour.⁴⁸ His influence can be seen in that when his son, Herbert, arrived at Eton, he alone of the whole school faced west in the creed, thus looking into the faces of all the other boys, until his father gave him permission to face east.⁴⁹

A second point contributing to Ryle's standoffishness and distance from others, was the disgrace of his father's bankruptcy. Fitzgerald describes him as bitter as a result, but gives no evidence in support of this claim.⁵⁰ It is clear from his Autobiography that it was a great blow to Ryle.⁵¹ Clearly one of the aspects that most affected him was the drop in social standing from being the heir of an estate to being no better off than 'butlers and footmen'.⁵² He contemplated suicide.⁵³ His friends did not help and left him to swim for himself.⁵⁴ 'I felt that I was a poor, penniless, despicable beggar' he wrote.⁵⁵ In practice, Ryle avoided almost all social intercourse. This did not change with marriage. The early death of his first wife and the constant illness of his second meant that he was responsible for bringing up the children. He concluded his Autobiography:

Few can have any idea how much wear and tear and anxiety of mind and body I had to go through for at least five years before my wife died. I very rarely ever slept out of our own house in order that I might be in the way if my wife wanted anything. I have frequently in the depths of winter driven distances of twelve, fifteen, twenty or even thirty miles in an open carriage to speak or preach, and then returned home the same distance immediately afterwards rather than sleep away from my own house. As to holidays, rest, and relaxation in the year, I never had any at all; while the whole business of entertaining and amusing the three little boys in an evening devolved entirely upon me. In fact the whole state of things

was a heavy strain upon me, both in body and mind, and I often wonder how I lived through it.⁵⁶

A final element contributing to Ryle's difficult relationship with others was his own theological understanding of his job. He read the Puritans and early Evangelicals through somewhat rose-tinted glasses.⁵⁷ His contrast between the life-style of these people and the clergy of his own day was invariably in favour of the former. In sermons and in platform addresses he constantly criticised his religious colleagues for their lack of distinctive Christian lifestyle.⁵⁸ Hence, for the first twenty-seven years of his ministry Ryle himself fitted into the category of Evangelicals whose only concern was with 'meat and drink' and who ignored the secondary issues of 'plates ...'. He was in the serious business of urging spiritual revival and his main object was to preach Christ.⁵⁹ Furthermore, that preaching must 'strike and stick'.⁶⁰ Even in the Church Congresses, he was renowned for plain speaking.⁶¹ It was only the 'terrible infliction' of Gladstone on the country which broadened Ryle's horizons and caused him to see the need for Evangelicals to change their tactics.⁶²

Ryle never fully overcome these handicaps, but from the late 1860s he at least sought to understand other people's views and urged courtesy and kindness towards them. Both privately and publicly, he admitted that his behaviour and language had been wrong. In his Autobiography, he acknowledged to his children that what he did could not be defended, although he still thought that the young clergy of the day (he wrote in 1873) socialised too much.⁶³ In a remarkably frank speech, printed as Can a greater amount of Unity be obtained among zealous and pious Churchmen of different Schools of Thought?, he confessed that he had been an offender in speaking discourteously and uncharitably about those who disagreed with him. He was sorry for things he had said, and hoped he was wiser with age.⁶⁴ He went on to distinguish between 'strong' language and 'violent, offensive and abusive' language. A clergyman ought never to use the latter, and was especially wrong to apply particular criticisms sweepingly to a whole body of people. It was necessary for public speakers to beware of saying 'smart things' and

'having the last word'. It was essential in debate to be 'men of courtesy, charity and love'. All this, he knew from personal experience, was very difficult to do.⁶⁵ At least Ryle recognised and confessed his faults, and tried to change his ways.

(i) Ryle's attitude to Dissent

Ryle's supposed leanings towards Dissent were the second major obstruction to anyone paying any attention to his plea for greater unity among Churchmen. There were good grounds for doubting his loyalty to Anglicanism. His family were close friends of John Wesley, and he worshipped in the only Anglican church in Cheshire in which Wesley had preached.⁶⁶ (Later, when Bishop, he contributed to the restoration of a plaque commemorating his grandfather's friendship with Wesley).⁶⁷ In the six months he spent in London, after leaving Oxford, he went to Baptist Noel's church.⁶⁸ He attended the non-episcopalian Scottish Presbyterian Church when in Scotland.⁶⁹ He frequently spoke and wrote in praise of the Puritans and Nonconformist ministers, notably in his own time, Robert Murray McCheyne.⁷⁰ He was on friendly terms with the Baptist minister in his own village of Stradbroke.⁷¹ He blamed the emergence of Dissent on the failure of the Anglican Church to provide for the needs of its enthusiastic members, and in particular he blamed 'the abominable bigotry or shameful neglect of English Bishops.'⁷² Charles Spurgeon personally encouraged Ryle to leave the Church of England.⁷³ In the light of all this it is not surprising that at the Congress in Croydon, Ryle confessed 'I have found that some persons ... regard me as a Nonconformist myself, and one said 'Here comes that dreadful Ryle; he is nothing better than a Dissenter.''⁷⁴

This suspicion of Ryle's position towards the Church of England was compounded by his well-known theology of the Church, set out as early as 1852.⁷⁵ He identified four different usages of the word 'church' in the New Testament, but concluded that its use to describe anyone who had undergone the act of Baptism was rare, whereas its use to mean 'the elect' or 'baptised Christians of a particular place' was common.⁷⁶ From this biblical interpretation Ryle turned to the definition of the church in the Prayer Book Communion Service, i.e. 'the mystical body of Christ

which is the blessed company of all faithful people.'⁷⁷ With extensive quotations from English Divines in his footnotes, Ryle defended this interpretation of the only true, holy, apostolic church as being the 'elect', the 'converted', the 'true Christians'.⁷⁸ They were identifiable by bearing the marks of repentance, faith and holiness, worked in them by the Holy Spirit.⁷⁹ In short, the members of this Church had 'direct personal communion with Jesus.'⁸⁰

The practical application of this theology was that the 'church' was invisible. It was not to be equated with any existing visible denomination.⁸¹ From this point of view, the two distinctive features of the Church of England, namely a liturgical worship, enshrined in the Prayer Book, and an Episcopal structure of church organisation, were not essential. They were certainly not divine in origin.⁸² All the visible churches were simply husks surrounding the 'true church', which was a hidden kernel.⁸³ In theory, it was possible to be a member of this 'true church' while being in any visible church, even the Roman Catholic Church.⁸⁴ Ryle believed that grace in the heart was compatible even with grave error in the head. He even publicly praised some Roman Catholics as 'good men' (by which he meant having the grace of God and loving Christ), naming Ferus(Johann Wild), Jansenius, Pascal and Quesnel.⁸⁵ In practice, therefore, Bishops could be dispensed with, and Ryle was not prepared to call Nonconformist orders invalid. Home reunion did not depend on re-ordination.⁸⁶ Further, since the mode of worship was not a determinant factor of 'the true Church', Ryle could countenance in principle many improvements to the Prayer Book.⁸⁷ When these matters were discussed at the Church Congresses, there was no shortage of people to disagree with Ryle, and he was clearly in a minority.⁸⁸

However, sympathy for historic Dissent, courtesy to current Dissent and a theology of the invisible church, while perhaps ground for some confusion in understanding Ryle's position towards the Church of England, do not substantiate the claim that he was a Dissenter. Ryle was firmly and totally committed to the Church of England. There were clear limits to his dealing with Dissenters. There were three discussions on relationships with Nonconformity at Congresses which Ryle attended.⁸⁹ On

each occasion he stressed that Churchmen should behave kindly and courteously towards Nonconformists⁹⁰: 'Let us regard the Nonconformist ministers as men and brethren - let us deal with them as gentlemen.'⁹¹ Where possible, Churchmen should cooperate with Nonconformists. He mentioned, specifically, involvement in the British and Foreign Bible Society.⁹² This was, nevertheless, as far as Ryle would go, and the main thrust of his argument was that the Church of England should so behave as to prevent people choosing to go to Nonconformist places of worship. He was firmly persuaded that the 'great body of Dissenters' had no real objection to liturgy, Episcopacy or cathedrals.⁹³ If only Anglicans would not flirt with Rome, and get on with preaching the gospel and doing evangelistic work, then Dissent would crumble.⁹⁴ Ryle praised the Bishop of Manchester for his addresses to railway servants at railway stations.⁹⁵ Action like this would check the spread of Dissent and prevent the Church of England from dying of dignity.

Ryle believed that, 'well administered', the Church of England would always be preferred to any Nonconformist Church.⁹⁶ In 1870 he produced a pamphlet to counter the charge that he preferred Chapel to Church.⁹⁷ Assuming that the gospel was preached in both, he outlined six reasons why he would choose the Church of England. First, in the Thirty-nine Articles, it possessed a legal doctrinal statement which every parishioner could insist on. The chapel, in contrast, had no such standard. Second, Episcopacy, though badly displayed in oversized dioceses, was a better form of church government than any other. Third, the Prayer Book was better than extempore worship, largely because of the high content of Scripture. Fourth, endowment was a better system of finance than voluntarism. Fifth, the territorial system of the Church of England meant that everyone in England was cared for. Sixth, the church put the responsibility of membership onto the people themselves, whereas the chapel made its own assessment of who could be a member.⁹⁸ So, while Ryle would give thanks to God if the chapels preached Christ and saved souls, it would be 'childish impatience' to leave the Church of England and join them.⁹⁹

Nor was it simply a matter of, in a straight fight, choose the Church of England. For the purpose of his pamphlet, Ryle assumed that the gospel was preached in the chapel. Yet although he was never satisfied with the general preaching standard of his fellow clergymen, he was sure that, on the whole, they were better communicators than Nonconformist ministers.¹⁰⁰ More than this, Ryle believed that the Nonconformist ministers of his day were adrift from the position of their predecessors, who on the whole had been firmly in favour of a Church-State union.¹⁰¹ Dissent, in the 1860s, had moved from being a restricted religious body rightly pressing for toleration, to a tolerated body pressing for equality.¹⁰² This move necessitated an attack on the Establishment and Ryle observed the support Dissent gave to Gladstone.¹⁰³ This political aggression Ryle interpreted as a mark of religious decline. The President of the Baptist Union in 1877 observed that of 1,740 churches, 420 had no pastors and that £80 per annum was an optimistic wage as 900 of these churches had fewer than fifty members. He advised pastors to take other paid work.¹⁰⁴ Pastors in training were not completing their call to ministry. Of a sample twenty-eight at college in one year, ten never started in ministry, one died, two went abroad, four joined the Church of England and only eleven entered the Baptist ministry.¹⁰⁵ It was even proposed not to insist on Baptism as a requirement of membership in order to increase numbers.¹⁰⁶

Ryle was critical of this new aggression. In anticipating a successful campaign for disestablishment, he predicted four changed circumstances: the Bishops would no longer sit in the House of Lords; tithes would be appropriated by the state; the church would keep its buildings, life-interest and endowments of the last two hundred years, and the state would have nothing to do with religion (e.g. prayers in Parliament, chaplains in prisons and the Armed Forces, and a Protestant monarchy would all cease).¹⁰⁷ But Ryle was adamant that disestablishment would not give Dissenters a clear field, or greater freedom. The disestablished Church of England would hold more firmly to both liturgical worship and Episcopal government.¹⁰⁸ There would certainly not be any greater peace or unity between the Church of England and Nonconformity. The opposite would happen, as the rural clergy, dependent

on tithes, would be financially ruined and would blame Dissent for their discomfort.¹⁰⁹ Ryle justified this enmity:

The Bible says, 'If any man take thy coat, let him take thy cloak also'. But the Bible nowhere says that we are to regard the man who has violently taken our coats and cloaks as an honest man, and to shake hands with him as a dear friend.¹¹⁰

He predicted two hundred years of ill-feeling should aggressive Dissent bring about disestablishment.¹¹¹

Ryle's strong feelings against Dissent and in favour of Establishment were most clearly seen in his opposition to Mr. Morgan's Burials Bill. Some leading Anglicans had met to discuss the issue with leading Nonconformist ministers and reached a settlement. But Ryle described this as 'a general surrender along the whole line'.¹¹² Nonconformists wanted to be able to conduct burial services in the Church of England graveyards. Ryle thought this proposal subversive and unjust. It was subversive of the first principles of a National Church, which allowed everyone the right to worship in the parish church and to be buried in the churchyard. This did not mean that anyone had the right to dictate the kind of service to be used.¹¹³ The proposal was completely unrestrictive; it allowed Roman Catholics and Socinians the same rights as Nonconformist ministers.¹¹⁴ Further, since no-one could predetermine fine weather, the first rain or snow would lead to pressure to hold services inside the church.¹¹⁵ It was an unjust proposal, because it allowed other ministers to hold whatever kind of service they liked, while restricting the parochial clergy to one service.¹¹⁶ Meanwhile the abolition of church rates in 1868 had thrown the expense of the upkeep of the churchyard, which was by no means small, onto churchmen, yet now anyone was to be allowed to use this facility.¹¹⁷ Ryle saw the Burials Bill as one part 'of a great strategical movement' for disestablishment, and warned of the fable of the axe who asked the trees for only enough wood for a handle and then cut the whole forest down.¹¹⁸ The Bill must be strongly opposed, and Ryle remarked that 'Even Job in his best

moments' would have found this attack by Dissent on the Established Church 'rather trying'.¹¹⁹

Far from leaning towards Dissent, from 1868 onwards, Ryle campaigned to draw the divided Church of England together in order to oppose it. He believed the future of England depended on the conduct of churchmen in this moment of crisis.¹²⁰ So long as the Church remained so openly divided, she would fail to have any impact among the masses; would fail to exercise any influence on the House of Commons; and would not attract ministers of quality from students of Oxford and Cambridge.¹²¹ One of the ways of overcoming this division was to play down the differences between the different groups within the church. This was something that Ryle constantly sought to do. At the Congress in Swansea, in 1879, he affirmed that there were actually only 'a few' clergymen within the Church who were unfaithful to her.¹²² On several occasions he repeated the story of Dr. Johnson's comment on the marriage of a couple who never had a row or disagreement: 'I think it must have been mighty flat'. Ryle used this to argue that the disagreements in the Church were a sign of positive life.¹²³ He denounced the idea that churches within the Church of England should be like the railings around Hyde Park, of uniform height and colour.¹²⁴ At the same time, he stressed that many of the things about which the clergy differed were 'non-necessaria of religion', and cited wearing the surplice, chanting the psalms, turning to the East and holding daily services as examples.¹²⁵ On all these issues he encouraged Evangelicals and High Churchmen to tolerate diversities of opinion courteously and to stop getting hot and throwing mud.¹²⁶ In pressing 'the great duty of cultivating brotherly kindness and avoiding quarrels', he related the story of a divided chapel which appealed in writing to an old minister, who on the same day was asked advice about certain agricultural matters. But he mixed the letters up in his replies and the reply to the chapel ran, 'You must make up your gaps and your fences and mind you take care of the old red bull'. The chapel interpreted this that they must work together to keep the Devil at bay. Ryle urged the same advice to Churchmen.¹²⁷

Another way of encouraging union within the Church of England was simply to promote meeting together. Ryle believed a major cause of disunion was no more than ignorance of one another, although he admitted that he had himself been slow to realise the true extent of this ignorance.¹²⁸ He described it graphically:

I often think they (High Churchmen), know no more about us (Evangelicals), than a native of Timbuctoo knows about skating and ice creams, or an Esquimaux knows about grapes, peaches and nectarines.¹²⁹

His remedy for this was two-fold. In the first place, each party ought to make themselves familiar with the books and writings of other schools. In short, there was no escape from the work of reading and studying.¹³⁰ Ryle thought it was a poor reflection on all the parties that none of them could support a quarterly review, and that even the monthly newspapers were languishing.¹³¹ But, secondly, they ought to meet each other face to face. This was his cri de coeur. This was his motive for regularly attending Church Congresses. Over and over again, he urged personal meeting as a means of promoting union.¹³² He repeated the story of Charles Lamb hating someone and not wanting to see him because 'If I once see a man face to face, I find it hard to hate him'.¹³³ Walking together and spending quiet evenings together would lessen the distance between churchmen.¹³⁴ Ryle took this belief one step further and sought to establish an informal meeting of leading members of the different schools. He first proposed this at the Nottingham Congress in 1871, and elaborated on it the following year.¹³⁵ He suggested that twelve people meet at an agreed place and time, with no newspapers and only the Bible and Prayer Book for reference. He was not able to organise his other suggestion of a means for drawing churchmen closer together - persecution!¹³⁶

In essence Ryle's appeal for greater union was a plea to churchmen to trust one another, to believe that they were all really on the same side. Hence his use of Berridge's quotation that if there were disagreements of the mind, at least they all had the same hearts.¹³⁷

This was an astonishing thing for a leading Evangelical to say, as Ryle himself recognised.¹³⁸ Far from being a successful rallying cry, however, it merely earned Ryle criticism from the Evangelical press.¹³⁹ Although the numbers of Evangelicals at the Church Congresses increased, this in itself did not lead to effective union within the Church of England.¹⁴⁰ A major reason for this was that the Church Congresses themselves were criticised as being simply talking shops, as E.R.Wilberforce revealed at Croydon in 1877, quoting an unspecified paper:

A Church Congress supplies the machinery of an extensive clerical dissipation, and the materials of a clerical Donnybrook. The neighbourhood in which the Congress is held is a scene of wild excitement. Hungry incumbents and hungrier curates billet themselves on the divines resident in the vicinity, and the larders of the country for miles around are desolated by the inroads of ecclesiastical locusts. The scandals and free fights in the discussion rooms only serve to whet the clerical appetite. In the houses of the unfortunate entertainers it is an endless series of meals the whole day through. Unshaven, unwashed and not too much washed, the ecclesiastical barbarians troop off from a tumultuary breakfast to the wild war of profitless words; with the stains of battle and toil resting upon them, they sit down to dinner, after the day's idle labour is over.¹⁴¹

Ryle had encouraged reluctant Evangelicals to go to Church Congresses precisely because they were an opportunity of showing the public at large what churchmen thought about the chief ecclesiastical questions of the day.¹⁴² Half the attenders, roughly 2,000 people, would be local Christian leaders, either lay or clerical, each a little sphere of influence.¹⁴³ If the speakers failed to exercise any influence themselves over these people then it was their own fault.¹⁴⁴ Whatever some of the general impressions of a Church Congress, Ryle himself saw it as a vehicle for proposing a widereaching reform of the Church of England. This was his third measure to combat his fear of the collapse of his beloved Church.

(c) Church Reform

Ryle made various proposals of Reform over the years 1871-1879 at the Church Congresses.¹⁴⁵ But they were simply public platform presentations of already formulated schemes, which he had comprehensively covered in a series of pamphlets on Church Reform published in 1870. If the Government disestablished the Church of England, it was in effect treating people as 'civilised gorillas without souls'.¹⁴⁶ It was no good, however, simply to moan about this. There were clearly faults with the Church which had to be remedied. Like a ship preparing for war churchmen had to clear the decks and throw the lumber overboard.¹⁴⁷ The Church must show itself to be elastic not cast iron.¹⁴⁸ She must rearrange her army: 'shall we maintain, because our ancestors fought well with long bows at Crecy and with flint locks at Waterloo, that the weapons of our warfare need no alteration?'¹⁴⁹ Ryle lightheartedly referred to the sentence of excommunication if the 'sacred synod' was questioned, and to the forbidding of light-coloured stockings, to suggest that in some ways Church practice was obsolete.¹⁵⁰ But there were also more serious issues to consider.

(d) Convocation

Perhaps the most talked about reform was that relating to the recently revived Convocation. Ryle regarded its revival as one of the greatest blunders of Archbishop Sumner.¹⁵¹ At the Nottingham Church Congress he skated over the issue, simply describing the constitution of Convocation as 'preposterous'.¹⁵² The following year he gave a full paper on the reform of Convocation, arguing for amalgamation of the separate bodies of York and Canterbury; the expansion of clerical representatives at the expense of 'official' members; and the inclusion of the laity in equal numbers with the clergy, and sitting together.¹⁵³ Two other papers, on the diaconate and cathedrals, were included in the same Congress session, but virtually all the discussion was on Ryle's paper and most of it was critical.¹⁵⁴ In particular, he was condemned for his proposal for lay inclusion. It was argued that the laity made all the Church laws in the House of Commons, tried all Church cases in the courts, chose all the Bishops and half the clergy, and exercised an undue influence on the Church through the press.¹⁵⁵ The real need was

for a separate and united priesthood. Ryle was accused of 'utterly and entirely' mistaking the position of Convocation.¹⁵⁶ Another speaker accused him of 'introducing an organic revolution into the whole Constitution.'¹⁵⁷ It was wryly suggested that Ryle be elected to the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury so that he would appreciate that, in fact, it did a very good job.¹⁵⁸

Two years later Ryle defended himself against these charges, and continued to maintain the rightness of his proposals arguing that they were not a threat to the Constitution as Convocation, reformed or unreformed, had no legislative powers.¹⁵⁹ A separate lay house would not induce good men to come forward as they would regard themselves as of secondary importance to the clerical house. Furthermore, separate houses would fail to implement the most wanted change: to stop the speeches by clergy from being full of wind!¹⁶⁰ Ryle did admit that there was confusion over how the laity were to be elected. When he first proposed reform, he outlined the qualification of a public declaration of membership of the Church of England, and evidence of regular attendance. This was not to include women, who had 'joys and sorrows enough at home without being dragged into the excitement of elections.'¹⁶¹ Now he was prepared to let a Royal Commission settle the thorny issue.¹⁶² If all of this was a revolution then the circumstances called for it and the Church had better get a move on or it would be too late: 'We are sitting over a volcano ... as serious as that of 1640 ... it (Reform of Convocation) has been talked of, and talked of, and talked of, till men are weary of talk and want some action. It is yearly dangled before our eyes and nothing is done'.¹⁶³

Ryle was no more persuasive this time. It was correctly pointed out that the York Convocation had effectively reformed itself.¹⁶⁴ Ryle was criticised for living with his head in the clouds and proposing totally unrealistic reforms.¹⁶⁵ The good work which the committees of Convocation had done was pointed out, and a lay contributor, Mr. F.H.Dickinson, argued that a slow reform of the Canterbury Convocation had been going on since 1841.¹⁶⁶ The Prolocutor of the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury, Archdeacon Bickersteth, naturally produced

a list of practical results from the action of his maligned body.¹⁶⁷ There was still frequent criticism of Ryle's inclusion of the laity on equal terms with the clergy.¹⁶⁸ With no reform apparent in another three years, Ryle's language in 1877 became more violent. This was partly because of the Burials Bill and talk of a Rubrics Bill.¹⁶⁹ In the light of what could be imposed changes by the House of Commons, which was certainly no longer the voice of the laity of the Church, it was vital that the Church create 'an organised instrumentality whereby the Church may speak to the State'.¹⁷⁰ The defects of Convocation were 'patent, crying, rank, and utterly destructive of its usefulness'.¹⁷¹ Although supported in discussion by the Dean of Chester on lay involvement, Ryle failed to make any headway in a body now tired by the debate and most participants centred on other issues.

(ii) Diocesan Synods

A major problem for Ryle was that not many people saw the times as being as desperate as he made out. The penultimate speech in the above debate, by the Bishop of Carlisle, painted a very bright picture of the Church of England in contrast to fifty years before. He drew attention in particular to the building of churches 'at railway speed'; the division of parishes ('no man, woman or child ever went to bed at night knowing in what parish he might wake up in the morning'); brighter and fuller services; Church Congresses; reform of York Convocation ('we admit ladies'); the growth of ecclesiastical art, and the emergence of Diocesan Conferences.¹⁷² The rise of the latter took Ryle somewhat by surprise. The first two were called together to deal with specific religious controversies in 1850 and 1851.¹⁷³ Nothing followed from these experiments for nearly twenty years until the Dioceses of Ely and Lichfield set up Conferences, the Bishop of the latter bringing his extensive colonial experience into the management of a home diocese.¹⁷⁴ Within six years fifteen of the twenty-eight English and Welsh Dioceses had established some form of Conference or Synod.¹⁷⁵

Ryle allowed some of his pet ideals to govern common sense when he turned his thoughts to Diocesan Synods. Virtually all the Synods operated on an elective principle. In most cases this was carried out

through the rural-decanal meetings. In Salisbury, for example, the lay members of the rural-decanal meeting elected the lay members of the Diocesan Synod, either six or nine from each rural deanery depending on the size.¹⁷⁶ There were, however, exceptions to this. Bangor was small enough to include all the clergy and for direct lay voting from the parish to the Synod.¹⁷⁷ This was held up as the ideal. In Scotland all the clergy were included and any lay member had the right to come. None did, until the Bishop wrote to each congregation inviting them to send two representatives.¹⁷⁸ Most dioceses had ex-officio members of their Synods, although this was complained about.¹⁷⁹ In England the one diocese which rejected the elective principle was Norwich.

Ryle was against elective Diocesan Synods. He both wrote a pamphlet attacking them in 1871 and spoke against them at the Brighton Church Congress in 1874.¹⁸⁰ He was honest enough to admit that a major reason for his opposition was that Evangelicals, being a minority, would not get elected.¹⁸¹ They formed less than twenty-five percent of the clergy south of the Trent and in the Norwich Diocese out of forty-eight Rural Deaneries, fewer than twelve Evangelical clergy would be elected.¹⁸² But he also thought the elective principle was both out of date and would simply leave threequarters of the parishes uninvolved in the affairs of the Synod.¹⁸³ Some who had experienced the elected Synods supported these contentions.¹⁸⁴ The Bishop of Norwich therefore included all the clergy, all the churchwardens and an elected lay representative for every 1,000 people.¹⁸⁵ This necessitated five separate Conferences, each discussing exactly the same topics.¹⁸⁶ This was a failure. Ryle frankly admitted it was so and confessed he had been wrong.¹⁸⁷ He now argued the reverse of his first line of thought in order to persuade his still reluctant colleagues to attend.¹⁸⁸ The main gain, of course, was in meeting face to face and learning from one another:

I want to get at their brains and to be taught what is the right way to go to work and what is the wrong ... I have made many foolish blunders and humbling failures from sheer want of knowledge of the right way to go about things.¹⁸⁹

And to encourage mutual learning he listed no fewer than thirty-five crucial topics to be faced by the Church of England in East Anglia.¹⁹⁰

(iii) Enlarged Episcopate

The reform for which Ryle found most support was that of increasing the Episcopate. Bishops were simply overworked in their outsized dioceses and, no matter how zealous they were, had no chance of doing a decent job.¹⁹¹ Apart from the counties of Rutland, Westmoreland and Huntingdon which were too small, and Yorkshire, Lancashire and Middlesex, which were too large, Ryle thought the dioceses ought to be equated with the counties.¹⁹² Bishops ought not to sit in the House of Lords, except for five representative seats.¹⁹³ With reduced size of diocese and reduced external commitments, the Bishop's salary could be cut.¹⁹⁴ Others saw the answer to the problem of overworked Bishops in the appointment of suffragans, a policy tried in Lincoln.¹⁹⁵ Ryle thought this most objectionable as it failed to tackle the problem of Bishops in the House of Lords, failed to free money to pay for more Bishops and, above all, created a sort of two-tier Episcopacy. The Times supported Ryle.¹⁹⁶

In two of his additional proposals related to increasing the Episcopate Ryle ran into more opposition. In order to finance the extension he envisaged sweeping changes of the Cathedral system, which he regarded as the weakest and most vulnerable part of the Church of England.¹⁹⁷ He saw no place for Deans and Canons in the Church of the 1870s and proposed to close down the lot on vacancies (carefully excluding only his old college, Christ Church, Oxford).¹⁹⁸ The Bishop would become Dean, in the sense of being responsible for the Cathedral services, but in practice he should delegate this to two permanent chaplains.¹⁹⁹ Since the Bishop would live in the Dean's accommodation, not only would money be saved by the abolition of Cathedral officers but also in selling off the episcopal palaces.²⁰⁰ In contrast, others argued for the revival of the Cathedrals by developing them as centres of theological learning, as necessary reminders of the faith of previous generations, or as centres of daily 'beautiful' worship, or even as the

centres of diocesan administration and activity.²⁰¹ Nothing came of Ryle's proposals here.

The other issue was the old bugbear of lay involvement. While Ryle wanted to increase the number of Bishops, he wanted to limit their power by the creation of a Bishop's Council, including lay members.²⁰² This was part of his grand principle that 'nothing ought to be done in the Church without the laity'.²⁰³ So just as Convocation should have lay members, so should Bishops' Councils. Further, no conclave of Bishops should ever meet without a lay presence and, at the other end of the scale, no incumbent should run a parish without constantly consulting the laity.²⁰⁴ Ryle concluded: 'In the whole field of Church Reform I know no point of such real importance as that which I have tried to handle in this paper' i.e. lay involvement.²⁰⁵ Such proposals appeared incredible to others.²⁰⁶ Ryle admitted that the parochial clergy were unwilling to see the necessity for change, disliked any new proposals and were singularly unable to adapt to new circumstances.²⁰⁷ He was ahead of his time. But the Church generally was not:

Like some fossilised country squire who lives twenty miles from a railway and never visits London, the poor dear old Church of England must still travel in the old family coach, shoot with the old flint-locked, single-barrel gun, and wear the old jack-boots and long pigtail.²⁰⁸

(iv) The Ministerial Office

Involving the laity was not the answer to everything. In particular he would exclude them from the functions of the ministerial office.²⁰⁹ The major problem here was that there were simply not enough men and they were too restricted in what they were allowed to do. Ryle envisaged a two-fold increase in numbers by both a vertical extension, and a lateral extension, of the ministry.²¹⁰ He meant by the first, a revival of the office of sub-deacon.²¹¹ This would allow men of the age of 17-20 to enter the ministry.²¹² These men at the moment were forced by financial considerations to enter secular employment, since they were too young to enter the ministry. They could be paid

£70 per annum, read the prayers, engage in visiting and take services in non-consecrated rooms.²¹³ By attracting such candidates at an earlier age the chronic shortage of men in the ministry might well be overcome.

By lateral extension, Ryle meant the creation of a new class of ministers called Evangelists, who would be chosen for their peculiar powers of preaching.²¹⁴ They would have the freedom to preach anywhere in the diocese, for whatever length of time seemed appropriate, and would be directly responsible to the Bishop and his Council.²¹⁵ The most significant aspect of this concept was that no incumbent would have the right to exclude them from working in his particular parish.²¹⁶

The need for an increased ministry was clearly noted, and Ryle obtained great sympathy for his aim. But others thought they had better schemes. Some proposed to increase the diaconate without cost.²¹⁷ Others were keen on promoting the idea of 'Brotherhoods' as the best way of encouraging missionary work especially in large towns.²¹⁸ Continual division of method caused the aim to be unfulfilled, despite agreement on its necessity.

Most of Ryle's comprehensive programme for Church Reform was not realised, though he himself was to gain from the increase of the Episcopate. Although with time many of his ideas were realised, from his perspective they were ignored. Thus each of his actions in response to Gladstone's disestablishment of the Irish Church failed to achieve anything. Ryle did not expect them to succeed.²¹⁹ Nevertheless, his love for the Church of England and fears for its survival drove him into promoting unity amongst Evangelicals, closer union with High Churchmen and into far-sighted proposals of Church Reform. These actions effectively put him outside the standard Evangelical circle concerned only with parish matters and missionary societies. The year 1868 had awakened him to a peril which cured him of narrow-minded Independency and any leanings towards Dissent. It revealed that he was a Churchman. He was firmly persuaded that the

Church was in danger.²²⁰ Furthermore, the statesman most likely to cause the danger was 'still Prime Minister with an immense majority'.²²¹ And Ryle feared that other people's apathy would cause the Church's downfall:

The feeling of the vast majority, even of thinking men, seems to be that 'it is all a muddle and a confusion, but we suppose it will last our time'. I advise them not to be too sure. The deluge may come rather sooner than they think. 'Tomorrow shall be as this day' was the saying of many in Noah's time. Yet the flood came suddenly and destroyed them all. 'Tomorrow shall be as this day' was the saying of Belshazzar's companions at his feast. Yet that very night the Persian army broke in, and the feast ended in bloodshed, destruction and confusion. 'Tomorrow shall be as this day' was the saying of Louis XV's profligate courtiers. Yet many of them lived to see Church and State upset, and the guillotine at work in the streets of Paris. 'Tomorrow shall be as this day' was the feeling of Irish Churchmen three years ago. Yet ... the year 1870 sees them stripped, plundered and turned out of doors - Oh, that we may not see something of the same sort on our side of the Channel! Oh, that English Churchmen would try to be in earnest about other matters beside hunting, and shooting, and dancing, and dressing, and farming, and railways, and cotton, and iron, and coal!²²²

Ryle, like Simeon, could certainly not be accused of trifling.

(2) ROMANISM IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

There remains one proposal of Ryle's yet to be considered, that of reforming the Church services. But this opens up a vast area of conflict which was not specifically related to the disestablishment of the Irish Church. It lasted the whole of Ryle's life and was centred around the role of the Sacraments, the role of the minister, and the authority of the Bible. These were fundamental questions which brought Ryle into conflict with both High Churchmen and Broad Churchmen. A modern Anglican Evangelical has dismissed this controversy as a fight over secondary issues, which in fact contributed to the weakening of Evangelicalism within the Church of England.²²³ In Ryle's eyes,

however, right doctrine was crucial to the survival of the Church of England.

As early as 1855, Ryle described two-thirds of all professing Christians in England as unsound in their beliefs.²²⁴ In outlining the dangers facing the Church, he observed that 'thousands' of parishes only had formal services where, in practice, there was no true Christianity.²²⁵ 'Hundreds' of clergy were Tractarians, i.e. members of a school of teaching of a 'downright Romish tendency'.²²⁶ Further, the controversy over the Gorham case revealed that there was a deliberate campaign to exclude Evangelical clergy from the Church.²²⁷ A decade later, the continued growth of Tractarianism caused Ryle to be more outspoken: 'The time is passed for mincing matters and beating about the bush ... let us gird up the loins of our minds and resolve that the struggle shall be made ... we must look the danger manfully in the face and fight'.²²⁸ So Ryle was party to resolutions pressing Parliament to legislate against Ritualism; the call for a campaign of information against erroneous doctrine through the Press, pamphlets and public lectures; the forming of an Evangelical Union; and the establishment of a £50,000 fund to support individuals who went to the Law Courts to ascertain the law on any point involving 'Romanizing doctrines'.²²⁹ He also declared Galatians to be the handbook for the times, drawing attention to such passages as 'Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed'.²³⁰ The increase of Romanism within the Church of England was so great that Ryle saw it as an indication that they were 'in the Last Days and Perilous Times have come'.²³¹

Twenty years after his first warnings against unsound doctrine within the Church, the evident failure to check the evil caused Ryle to produce a spate of pamphlets on the issue. 'False Doctrine', he warned, was 'eating out the heart of the Church of England and perilling her existence'.²³² Evangelicals should not have any scruples about entering the controversy with vigour, for it was initiated by the Ritualists.²³³ Ryle spoke strongly to those who thought they should

sit still and do nothing, thinking that with time everything would calm down. It was too late for waiting, as 'the conspiracy waxes stronger every year'.²³⁴ Evangelicals ought to be up and fighting, for Ritualism was nothing less than an organised attempt to unprotestantise the Church of England.²³⁵ Indeed a lax response to the crisis was itself 'a pestilence that walketh in the darkness'.²³⁶ The net result was that the agents of the Roman Catholic Church 'creep in everywhere, like the Egyptian frogs'.²³⁷ The final outcome, if not resisted, would be that England would sink to the level of Portugal and Spain: 'The distinctive manliness and independence of the British character will gradually dwindle, wither, pine away and be destroyed'.²³⁸ The inevitable consequence of Ritualism was the triumph of Roman Catholicism in England.²³⁹

Thirty years after his first warnings, Ryle was moaning that 'I see nothing before us but disaster and damage'.²⁴⁰ The common response to Romanism within the Church of England was to adopt a laissez-faire attitude of allowing any doctrine to be upheld, provided the man was 'earnest'. But Ryle had no time for those who still argued for toleration for any views and the creation of an Anglican ark encompassing every kind of theological stance. Panthean religion was an absurdity that would provide no answers in the harsh realities of life.²⁴¹ If the Church of England continued to tolerate the Ritualists, then Ryle predicted the laity would emigrate to Dissent, a large body of the clergy would secede, and the position of the Bishops would become ridiculous.²⁴² The latter took promises 'to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word, and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to do the same'.²⁴³ In a Noah's Ark Church this would be impossible. The Bishops would have to be members of all schools of thought. There would be no laws or rules, no order.²⁴⁴ Since order was the first law of heaven, the absence of it would mean no Church but rather a Babel.²⁴⁵ Ryle could only conclude that 'a wave of colour-blindness about theology appears to be passing over the land'.²⁴⁶ The Church of England was 'drifting, drifting, drifting'.²⁴⁷

Nearly forty years after his first warnings Ryle was still captured by his vision of the Church in Danger. The Church was sailing among rocks and shoals and was in great danger of shipwreck.²⁴⁸ Although the Church had multiplied its services ten-fold since the days of his youth, and the services were much more attractive and the Lord's Supper was far more frequently administered, Ryle questioned whether there had been any increase in 'real' Christianity.²⁴⁹ The thing that was eating like a canker into the vitals of English religion was, of course, the dislike of clear statements about right doctrine.²⁵⁰ The newspapers were vague on religious issues, novels invariably exhibited Christian morality with no reference to belief, and individuals praised 'earnestness' irrespective of what a man was earnest about. All this was evidence that 'a dislike of doctrine is a widespread evil of our times'.²⁵¹ Consequently there was:

a 'jelly-fish' Christianity in the land; that is, a Christianity without bone or muscle or power ... of which the leading principle is, 'No dogma, no distinct tenets, no positive doctrine.' We have hundreds of jelly-fish clergymen, who seem not to have a single bone in their body of divinity ... We have thousands of jelly-fish sermons preached every year - sermons without an edge or a point or a corner, smooth as billiard balls, awakening no sinner and edifying no saint. We have legions of jelly-fish young men annually turned out from our Universities, armed with a few scraps of second-hand philosophy, who think it a mark of cleverness and intellect to have no decided opinions about anything in religion... and last, and worst of all, we have myriads of jelly-fish worshippers - respectable church-going people who have no distinct and definite views about any point in theology ... They think everybody is right and nobody is wrong, everything is true and nothing is false, all sermons are good and none are bad, every clergyman is sound and no clergyman unsound.²⁵²

Against the prevalent jelly-fish Christianity Ryle urged all true-hearted Churchmen to speak out clearly and let their testimony be 'not Yea and Nay, but Yea and Amen; and let the tone of our witness be plain, ringing and unmistakable'.²⁵³ If the battle was not fought, then Ryle saw nothing but danger 'coming, coming, coming' fast upon the

Church, though he himself might die first.²⁵⁴ Disruption, disestablishment and disendowment would follow. And in the end, union with Rome 'the worst disaster that could befall our Church'.²⁵⁵ Such a Church of England would not be worth preserving, for with the restoration of the sacrifice of the mass God would remove His blessing from her.²⁵⁶

For the whole of his life Ryle saw the need to write and speak against an apparent Romeward drift in the Church of England. He believed that drift was the result of a deliberate campaign, and therefore he distinguished between the old High Church party, which was loyal to the Church of England, and the new Ritualist party, which was disloyal.²⁵⁷ He dated the emergence of Ritualism to a precise event: John Keble's sermon On Tradition.²⁵⁸ Its growth was facilitated religiously, by the Tracts for the Times, and socially, by the spread of liberalism.²⁵⁹ In trying to stir up opposition to Ritualism, the major problem for Ryle was getting people to distinguish between symbols and 'the thing symbolised'. Many people saw no difference in importance between having lighted candles on the communion table in daylight and attending Church Congresses. If Ryle could wait for heaven to wash brains about the one why not also the other? Ryle's most comprehensive statement about his understanding of the dangerous doctrines implied in Ritualism came in a tract I fear. He identified five key teachings of the Ritualists:

- (1) They seek to turn the Communion Table into an 'Altar' and the Lord's Supper into a 'Sacrifice' and encourage the idea of a real material presence of Christ's body and blood, under the forms of the consecrated bread and wine.
- (2) They encourage habitual auricular confession to a priest.
- (3) They deny the sole authority of Scripture and add to it the voice of the 'Church'.
- (4) They scoff at the Reformers.
- (5) They say that the doctrine of Rome and England is the same and pray for union between the two churches.²⁶⁰

In addition to these doctrines held by most Ritualists, Ryle also identified other beliefs and practices, such as holding there are seven

sacraments; saying prayers for the dead; such practices as using incense; using lights and vestments in the Communion Service, and reserving the Sacrament. These, however, he saw as less common.²⁶¹ Ryle's definition of Evangelical Religion, given in 1867, was in practice a response to a speech by Archdeacon Denison defining High Church Religion (meaning the new Ritualist version), in November of the same year.²⁶² The Archdeacon succinctly summarised Ritualism as holding that the Christian life began with regeneration in Baptism and was perfected by reception of the Real Presence of Christ in Holy Communion.²⁶³ And the Church had authority in matters of faith.²⁶⁴ When faced with the question, what must I do to be saved?, Ryle and Denison would give different answers. The controversy was not, therefore, about mere trappings but about the very foundations of the Gospel.²⁶⁵

(a) Baptism

The controversy centred on the role of the Sacraments, but in practice there was little discussion about Baptism. Ryle only wrote two tracts on the subject.²⁶⁶ There were two reasons for this lack of contention. First, the issue was thrashed out in the Gorham case, the result of which was to decide against any definite theology of baptism, by preventing the Bishop of Exeter from instituting Gorham.²⁶⁷ Second, Ryle was strongly in favour of infant baptism, so there was no difference in practice between his behaviour and that of Ritualists: his reasoning was that baptism in the New Testament was the equivalent of circumcision in the Old Testament. In circumcision children were admitted by a formal ordinance, and since the tendency of Scripture was to increase spiritual privileges not decrease them, it could be concluded that baptism at least included this. Further, all Jewish converts would have automatically expected their children to be included in the new faith. If this expectation had been wrong, then the baptism of infants would have been expressly forbidden in the New Testament. The silence of Scripture on this point was therefore conclusive.²⁶⁸

As to what happened in the rite of Baptism, however, Ryle and Denison were poles apart. Baptism was mentioned nearly eighty times in the New Testament, a fact which was sufficient for Ryle to condemn Quakers for ignoring an important ordinance.²⁶⁹ Baptism was an ordinance for admitting fresh members into the visible Church and in the exercise of which 'the highest blessings' could be expected.²⁷⁰ Nowhere in any of his writings does Ryle say what these 'blessings' were, but he was quite clear that they did not necessarily entail regeneration, i.e. becoming a 'real' Christian.²⁷¹ Consequently, all children who died in infancy were saved, irrespective of whether they were baptised or not.²⁷² The key concept was that a regenerate person was known by his fruits.²⁷³ Ryle identified six of these as essential: a regenerate person did not engage in habitual sin; believed Jesus was the only Saviour; was 'holy'; loved other Christians; did not make the world's opinion his rule of right or wrong; and was very careful about his own soul.²⁷⁴ His conclusion was that the system of making the Baptismal Register the evidence of regeneration was nonsense. It was a person's daily life that provided the evidence.²⁷⁵

The major weakness with Ryle's position was the words actually used in the Prayer Book Baptism Service.²⁷⁶ It was the attempt to face this objection that made the tract Regeneration the longest by far that Ryle ever wrote.²⁷⁷ Although Ryle recognised that the Prayer Book was man-made, and therefore contained imperfections which were in principle open to better revision, in practice he thought it foolish to attempt any changes.²⁷⁸ But the words in the Baptism Service caused him great dismay, and he thought the Reformers were at fault for using such potentially misleading expressions.²⁷⁹ He used six arguments against the interpretation that the Prayer Book phraseology meant that in the act of Baptism every child was regenerate. First, he argued that the principle upon which the Prayer Book was formed was that of 'charitable supposition'.²⁸⁰ By this he meant that the compilers believed a devotional book should be drawn up supposing that all who used it were in reality what they professed to be i.e. true believers.²⁸¹ It was never intended to suggest that all who used the book were actually true believers.²⁸² Ryle then took phrases from the collects, the service

for the Churching of Women, the service for Adult Baptism, the Burial Service and the Catechism to support his thesis of 'charitable supposition'.²⁸³ If all baptised infants were regenerate, then all users of the collects had faith, all women who were churched put their trust in God, all people buried were saved and every child who said the Catechism was elect.²⁸⁴ If it was argued in the last four cases that such people were 'not necessarily' of the Faith, trusting, saved or elect, then similarly a child was not necessarily regenerate in Baptism.²⁸⁵

Second, Ryle argued that the Articles did not support the interpretation that regeneration was to be equated with Baptism. In particular, the Articles upheld the Bible to be the plumb-line of doctrine.²⁸⁶ The Bible clearly gave examples of regeneration without Baptism, and Baptism without regeneration.²⁸⁷ Further, three Articles stressed that the Sacraments were only valid when received 'worthily'.²⁸⁸ The seventeenth Article, which defined the Elect, was clearly not applicable to many baptised people.²⁸⁹ Third, the Homilies did not equate regeneration with Baptism. Ryle mentioned specifically the Homilies on Charity, Almsdeeds and for Whitsunday.²⁹⁰ Fourth, in drawing up the Articles of 1552 the Reformers specifically rejected an already existing Article, dating from 1536, in which regeneration was invariably linked with Baptism.²⁹¹ Fifth, when the Irish Church accepted the Thirty-nine Articles in 1634, it was distinctly understood that their reception did not imply any slur on the Irish Articles.²⁹² Indeed, the Irish Bishops insisted on subscription to both sets of Articles at ordination. The significance of this, from Ryle's point of view, was that the Irish Articles expressly declared that only the Elect were regenerate.²⁹³ Finally, he argued historically that the leading English Reformers were all Calvinists and would not have framed a service of Baptism contrary to their own views.²⁹⁴

Baptism was an important ordinance to Ryle but not a means of conversion. It did not give grace where grace did not already exist.²⁹⁵ It was not the foremost thing in Christianity. In fourteen out of twenty-one of the epistles it was not named at all. In five out

of the remaining seven it was only mentioned once.²⁹⁶ Other subjects were spoken of much more frequently, and there were clear statements that the Old Testament equivalent of Baptism, circumcision, depended on a right attitude for its effect.²⁹⁷ So Ryle warned against making an idol of the ordinance, and it was certainly not necessary for salvation.²⁹⁸

(b) The Lord's Supper

Although Ryle wrote more tracts on the Lord's Supper than he did on Baptism, he did not tackle it in the same depth. This was partly because he recognised the issue had forever divided Christians, partly because he recognised that folios had been written to no effect, and partly because he recognised that the definitive modern Evangelical Anglican text had already been written.²⁹⁹ Nevertheless, he saw it as the principal cause of division among Christians in Victoria's reign and that nine-tenths of the spread of Ritualism was caused by a wrong understanding of the Lord's Supper.³⁰⁰ It was a subject which lay at the very roots of saving religion.³⁰¹ It was not possible to reconcile the Evangelical and Ritualist views.³⁰² This was the very issue which had caused the Reformation.³⁰³

Ryle was careful to distinguish between the doctrine of the Real Presence and the ostentatious manner in which Ritualists carried out the Lord's Supper. Surprisingly, he did not simply condemn the latter as wrong. He was not in favour of incense, or vestments, or candles, not because they were wrong, but because they were unhelpful.³⁰⁴ They tended to distract and divert.³⁰⁵ They were likely to lead to idolatry in causing the worship of objects.³⁰⁶ In like manner Ryle criticised fasting communion on circumstantial grounds. It could cause the death of people in delicate health!³⁰⁷ He also criticised the practice of attending the Lord's Supper but not participating, as encouraging the superstition that prayers were somehow more effective in that environment.³⁰⁸ Despite his criticism, Ryle nevertheless implied that all these things were not in essence wrong.

His language on the doctrine of the Real Presence was quite different. It was essential to be right about this; he gave fifteen pages of quotations from English Divines to reinforce the significance he attached to right doctrine on this matter.³⁰⁹ To be wrong on this undermined the atonement, Christ's Priestly office and Christ's real humanity. It also led to wrong conceptions about the Christian ministry.³¹⁰ Ryle firmly maintained that he believed in the Real Presence: the questions were where?, and how was it effected? Archdeacon Denison stated the Ritualist view as being belief that 'Christ's body and blood are really present in the Holy Eucharist under the form of bread and wine i.e. present things'.³¹¹ Worship was due to this presence. The presence was effected by the act of consecration by the priest.³¹² Ryle denied each of these points. In one pamphlet he simply used the phrase 'most certainly not' to answer a series of questions: does any change take place?, is there any real presence of Christ's natural body and blood in the wine after consecration?, ought the consecrated bread and wine to be worshipped?, is there any sacrifice of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper?, is the table in the Lord's Supper rightly called an altar?³¹³ Elsewhere he used the same sources as he did over Baptism and argued that the Articles, the Prayer Book, the Catechism, the Homilies and past English Divines did not support the Ritualist understanding of the Real Presence.³¹⁴

There were, however, three 'unanswerable' arguments on his side, so Ryle thought. The first was the words at the end of the Prayer Book Communion Service. Here it was specifically stated that reception of the elements kneeling was not intended to be an act of adoration, and the bread and wine 'remain still in their very natural substances'.³¹⁵ Similarly, the words at the end of the Communion of the Sick clearly said that it was possible 'to eat and drink the body and blood of our Saviour Christ profitably' without receiving any elements.³¹⁶ Such words were conclusive to Ryle, who remarked: 'If that rubric does not flatly condemn the teaching of Archdeacon Denison and his school ... I am very certain the words have no meaning at all'.³¹⁷

The second unanswerable argument was the biblical texts which affirmed that Jesus had risen from the earth and ascended into heaven with his physical body. These verses included Luke 24:6, Acts 1:11, Luke 24:51, Mark 16:19, Hebrews 4:14 and 9:12-24, Acts 3:21.³¹⁸ Ryle was strong in denouncing the idea that the resurrection was a sort of mystical experience rather than a physical bodily one: 'He took His body with Him, and did not leave it behind ... it did not become dust and ashes in some Syrian village, like the bodies of saints and martyrs. The same body which walked in the streets of Capernaum ... was taken up into heaven, and is there at this very moment'.³¹⁹ To suggest that Christ's body was on earth in the Sacramental bread and wine as well as in heaven was to say, in effect, that He did not have a proper human body. This was to undermine the Incarnation and the humanity of Christ. He could no longer be turned to as a compassionate understander of Man's infirmities, because He never really experienced them since He did not have a real human body.³²⁰ This same argument made it clear that the words 'This is my body', in the gospel accounts of the Lord's Supper, must mean 'This represents my body', otherwise it was saying that Jesus had two bodies and was eating himself, both of which denied Jesus' humanity.³²¹ Ryle concluded, 'Christ, as Man, is in heaven and not on the Communion table ... the consecrated bread is not the body of Christ, and the consecrated wine is not the blood of Christ. Those sacred elements are the emblems of something absent, and not of something present.'³²²

The third unanswerable argument was that of the Priesthood of Christ. The Ritualist understanding of the Lord's Supper entailed the concept of a repeated sacrifice, offered by the priest on behalf of the people. But Ryle affirmed that the Epistle to the Hebrews 'repeatedly' stressed that the last sacrifice was the once for all finished sacrifice of Christ on the cross.³²³ This did not mean that Christ's role as a priest was over. Indeed, His continuing work as a priest was a doctrine which lay at the foundation of all comfortable Christianity.³²⁴ Every day in heaven Christ was continually presenting to His Father the merits of His own sacrifice, the names of His people, the prayers of His people and He was 'receiving sinners'.³²⁵ In other

words, Christ was sustaining His own people and accepting new converts. This was the office of a priest and He had deputed it to no-one.³²⁶ It was Christ's continuing Priesthood which was the secret of a saint's perseverance. It was 'the crown and glory of Christian theology'.³²⁷ Ryle agreed with the Ritualists that there could be no true religion without a priest. But the Priest was Jesus. If once this was grasped there was never any danger of going over to the darkness of Rome.³²⁸

The real presence of Christ was not therefore in the elements, but in the hearts of true believers.³²⁹ The Catechism required the recipient to be repentant, to purpose to lead a new life, to have faith in God's mercy and remembrance of Christ's death, and to be in charity with all.³³⁰ In that sense, there was a 'special' presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper.³³¹ As with Baptism, Ryle saw the Communion Service as important, but not paramount. He was pleased that there were more frequent Communion services and he urged people to be regular communicants.³³² Indeed, he thought real Christians should never be absent when the Lord's Supper was administered.³³³ Reception strengthened and refreshed the soul by giving clearer views of what Christ had done; by humbling the recipient in the reminder of his sins; by cheering the recipient in showing him the shed blood of Christ; by encouraging the recipient to holiness as a response to God's gift; and by restraining the recipient from sin by reminding him of the seriousness of the Christian life.³³⁴ All this was good, but it was not conversion from death to life.³³⁵ It was essential neither to idolise nor to neglect the Lord's Supper, but to put it in its proportionate place in Christian theology(my emphasis):

Does anyone ask now what is the rightful position of the Lord's Supper? I answer that question without any hesitation. I believe its rightful position, like that of holiness, is between grace and glory, - between justification and heaven, - between faith and paradise, - between conversion and the final rest, - between the wicket-gate and the celestial city. It is not Christ; it is not conversion; it is not a passport to heaven. It is for the strengthening and refreshing of those who have come to Christ already, who know something of conversion, who are already in the narrow way, and have fled from the city of destruction.³³⁶

(c) The Role of a Minister

If the main work of a minister in the Church of England was to provide an answer to the enquirer who asked, 'What must I do to be saved?', Ryle and the Ritualists did not agree as to the answer. The Ritualists' answer included both faith and the need to be baptised and receive the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ from the hands of a priest. To Ryle, these sacraments were secondary and subordinate things.³³⁷ The Lord's Supper ought never to be spoken of as a sacrifice and the language of Baptism must always be moderate.³³⁸ There was only one gate to salvation and it was not elastic.³³⁹ The only way to be saved was by having faith in Christ.³⁴⁰ The main role of a minister, therefore, was not in performing ceremonies but in preaching.³⁴¹ The reason why the disproportionate honour given to the ordinances, the excessive decoration and ceremonial, and the concept of a sacrificing priesthood were 'three great and growing evils', was because they obscured the way to salvation by misdirecting the work of a minister.³⁴² The Ritualists' concept of ministry stimulated feelings: 'a sort of gentle animal excitement'.³⁴³ Their concept of holiness, so Ryle thought, was of ostentatious observance of Lent, fasts and saints days, frequent communions, joining Houses of Mercy, doing penance, confessing to priests, wearing odd clothes, having large crosses, and walking in processions.³⁴⁴ This holiness was a delusion, which satisfied only silly young women, brainless young men and Italian bandits.³⁴⁵ 'Real' holiness consisted of a tender conscience based on the ten commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, and the last half of all of Paul's Epistles.³⁴⁶

The first and principal concern of a minister was his sermon.³⁴⁷ Work in schools, visiting the sick and the daily routine administration of the parochial machinery was no substitute.³⁴⁸ Where the sermon was made little of, the worship would not be blessed by God.³⁴⁹ Ministers were not apostles. It was not their job to speak in tongues, do signs and wonders, infallibly expound the Word of God or confer gifts on others.³⁵⁰ The age of apostolic miracles had passed away.³⁵¹ The correct model for nineteenth-century Anglican clergymen was not Paul,

but Timothy. Although ministers were not apostles, they were ambassadors, messengers, servants, shepherds, stewards, overseers, labourers.³⁵² The key thing was to pass on the message:

A minister's sermons should be incomparably the first and chief thing in his thoughts every week that he lives. He must ever recollect that he is not ordained to be a schoolmaster, a relieving officer, or a doctor, but to preach the Word of God.³⁵³

The worst crime a minister could commit was not to preach clear doctrine from Scripture. Ryle condemned sermons that were foggy, hazy, indistinct, cautious, dim, hesitating, timid or fenced with doubts.³⁵⁴ A minister must be careful not to 'corrupt' the Word of God by adding to it the erroneous doctrines of the fathers³⁵⁵; nor by failing to teach the whole counsel of God³⁵⁶; nor by being influenced by wanting a good opinion from others, either in encouraging time spent in polite courtesy visiting rather than studying the Bible, or by being conscious of influential ministers.³⁵⁷ Ryle urged all men to be like Latimer preaching before Henry VIII, who, observing that the king had the power to imprison and execute him, went on:

Latimer! Latimer! dost not thou remember that thou art speaking before the King of kings and Lord of lords: before Him, at whose bar Henry VIII will stand; before Him, to whom one day thou wilt have to give account of thyself? Latimer! Latimer! be faithful to thy Master and declare all God's Word.³⁵⁸

Ryle cited Spurgeon as a contemporary who preached in this way and urged his fellow Anglicans to imitate the Baptist.³⁵⁹

Those who emphasised the sacraments as the work of a minister were failing to see the proportion that Scripture gave to the various means of grace.³⁶⁰ The chief instrument of conversion was preaching.³⁶¹ To preach was the last command of Jesus to the Apostles and the last word of Paul to Timothy.³⁶² It was the preaching of Chrysostom and

Augustine that marked the best era of the primitive church. It was the preaching of Luther, Zwingli, Latimer and Hooper which brought the light of the Reformation to Europe and England. It was the preaching of Whitefield, Wesley and others which saved the Church of England from ruin and England from revolution, in the eighteenth century.³⁶³ In the light of Scripture and history, the modern Ritualist concept of building up the Church by daily services without sermons was a nonsense. It was the old path of preaching that was wanted. The multitudes must be attacked 'through the ears'.³⁶⁴

(d) Confession

The one particular ministerial act that was symbolic of a denigration of preaching and an undue emphasis on ritual was the concept of confessing to a priest. The preacher pointed the sinner direct to God, the confessional priest stood between the sinner and God. This was precisely the danger of all ritual. It broke the personal relationship between man and God which was the essence of 'real' Christianity: 'Of all the mischievous Popish revivals for which they (Ritualists) are responsible in this day this (auricular confession) is the worst' wrote Ryle.³⁶⁵ It was a miserable and detestable practice which led to abominable immorality.³⁶⁶ Ryle agreed with the sentiment that the confessional was the best school of wickedness on earth.³⁶⁷ It was not that he disapproved of the act of confessing. Indeed, he thought that unconfessed sin was the great characteristic of most people in Victorian England, and he deplored such a state.³⁶⁸ He stated starkly that 'without confession there is no salvation'.³⁶⁹ But it was the glory of Christ to save sinners.³⁷⁰ Anything less than confession to Him was of no avail.³⁷¹ The man who confessed to a priest instead of Christ, was

like a man who chooses to live in prison when he may walk at liberty, or to starve and go in rags in the midst of riches and plenty, or to cringe for favours at the feet of a servant, when he may boldly go to the Master, and ask what he will ... He is trying to fill his purse with rubbish when he may have fine gold for the asking. He is insisting on lighting a rush-light, when he may enjoy the noonday light of God's sun.³⁷²

To the objection that Jesus instituted priestly absolution in John 20:23 Ryle had two answers. First, this delegation was not such that they could remit sins authoritatively and effectually, but only declaratively. They could not forgive but only pronounce who was forgiven.³⁷³ Second, the special gift of discerning spirits, which was necessary in order to exercise the conferred power, ceased with the death of the Apostles. They did not pass it on to others.³⁷⁴ Another objection was that the Prayer Book rubric enjoined the confessional in the exhortation in the Communion service and in the Visitation of the Sick. In the case of the Visitation of the Sick, Ryle simply repeated that the absolution merely declared a person absolved who was already absolved by God.³⁷⁵ In the case of the exhortation in the Communion service, he distinguished between an occasional conference and an habitual confession.³⁷⁶ Further, the Prayer Book clearly entailed conversation around the text of Scripture.³⁷⁷ The proper application of this injunction was the 'after-meeting' in the vestry, after a sermon in church.³⁷⁸ Nevertheless, Ryle admitted that the words in the Prayer Book were unhelpful and he would happily remove them.³⁷⁹

(e) The Bible

One of Ryle's main contentions against the confessional was that there was not a single example of it in the Bible.³⁸⁰ It was mishandling of the Bible which lay at the heart of wrong views on Baptism, the Lord's Supper and the role of a minister.³⁸¹ Ryle made two general criticisms of the way Ritualists used the Bible: namely they added to the text and they did not teach the biblical doctrines in the right proportions. It was the Bible alone as the touch-stone of Christian doctrine, and the Bible 'rightly handled', which lay at the heart of both Ryle's theology and his ministry.³⁸² Ignorance of the Bible was the root of all error.³⁸³ It was the text of Scripture and not the assertions of a hundred divines which determined what was true.³⁸⁴ The essence of the fallacy of Ritualism was that it added human ideas to divine revelation. The heart of Keble's sermon On Tradition was to argue that Scripture and Tradition together made up the rule of faith.³⁸⁵ Ryle made much of the account of Paul arguing

against Peter for adding the rite of circumcision to belief in Christ as a necessary means to salvation.³⁸⁶ In Beware, Ryle warned not against vice, or immorality, or persecution, but against those who added anything to the Bible.³⁸⁷ The Ritualists were modern-day Pharisees adding to the Biblical principles from primitive tradition, the writings of the Fathers and the voice of the Church.³⁸⁸ Their line of reasoning was:

We do not want you to give up anything. We only want you to hold a few more clear views about the Church and the Sacraments. We want to add to your present opinions a little more about the office of the ministry, and a little more about episcopal authority, and a little more about the Prayer Book, and a little more about the necessity of order and discipline. We only want you to add a little of these things to your system of religion, and you will be quite right.³⁸⁹

The result of believing this was that hundreds had gone to Rome.³⁹⁰

Ryle's main criticism was the charge that the Ritualists were disproportionate in their handling of Biblical doctrines. His favourite image was that of a doctor's prescription consisting of a number of different ingredients. If the medicine was to work, then the prescription must be made up of all the ingredients in exactly the right proportions, more of one substance and less of another and the whole thing was ruined.³⁹¹ Ryle believed in the plenary inspiration of the Bible.³⁹² Every chapter, verse and word was from God.³⁹³ Indeed, even single letters were important.³⁹⁴ There were no faults in it at all, not even historical.³⁹⁵ The facts that Nehemiah wrote about twenty-nine knives and that Paul was worried about his cloak and parchment were as much the Word of God as Exodus 20, John 17 or Romans 8.³⁹⁶ Every part was precious, even the chronological lists.³⁹⁷ It was, therefore, 'deeply to be regretted' that the Revelation to John was not in the calendar of daily lessons.³⁹⁸ Although he did not say so himself, Ryle supported the idea that the order and structure of the Bible was also divinely inspired.³⁹⁹

Ryle's arguments for the plenary inspiration of the Bible were general. The nature of the content itself suggested inspiration. The Bible revealed the beginning and end of the world, gave a true account of man, true views of God, told the story of Jesus and explained the current state of the world.⁴⁰⁰ In other words, 'Give me a candle and a Bible and shut me up in a dark dungeon, and I will tell you all that the world is doing'.⁴⁰¹ Inspiration was further suggested by the public and private effects that the Bible produced. National prosperity was the consequence of a free Bible.⁴⁰² So also was civic order.⁴⁰³ Furthermore, 'nearly every humane and charitable institution in existence' was derived from the influence of the Bible.⁴⁰⁴ The Bible was the grand instrument of conversion and establishing men and women in a completely new way of life, the way of salvation.⁴⁰⁵ It was the Bible alone which comforted a man in death.⁴⁰⁶ Finally, inspiration was also suggested historically in that love of the Bible was a characteristic of all true Christians. It was a feature of Job, David, Jesus and Paul.⁴⁰⁷ It was a feature of all the saints since the Apostles and of every heathen convert in the nineteenth century.⁴⁰⁸ Further, he argued that love of the Bible would be a characteristic of everyone in heaven.⁴⁰⁹

Ryle repeated these arguments on several occasions, but his main defence was negative. He denied that any other explanation of the Bible was better.⁴¹⁰ He identified five other views: that some books were not inspired at all; that portions of almost every book were not inspired; that only important doctrines were inspired; that the Biblical ideas were inspired but the actual words were not; and that the Bible was mostly inspired but there were occasional mistakes.⁴¹¹ Ryle thought all these views were defective and dangerous.⁴¹² They sprang from a wrong approach. German theologians handled the Bible as if the writers were men like themselves, instead of approaching it with awe and reverence because it was 'holy ground'.⁴¹³ The fact was that the Bible not only contained the Word of God, 'it is the Word of God'.⁴¹⁴ J.S.Casson has rightly assessed that Ryle's criticism of any other theory of inspiration other than plenary sprang from his pastoral concern.⁴¹⁵ Of six reasons defending his viewpoint, three were

pastoral. If the Bible was not inspired in every syllable, how could it be used in religious controversy, in preaching, or in private reading?⁴¹⁶ Doubt about plenary inspiration was 'a flaw in the foundation. It is a worm at the root of our theology'.⁴¹⁷

In meeting objections to his view, Ryle was not a blind obscurantist. He dismissed some objections quickly. He simply denied that the Bible contradicted either the facts of history or the natural sciences.⁴¹⁸ He observed that the Astronomer Royal was as guilty of using popular language as the Bible in describing scientific events.⁴¹⁹ Variant readings were small in number and never involved doctrines.⁴²⁰ Anyway, he only held plenary inspiration for the original Hebrew and Greek and allowed for copying errors.⁴²¹ On the criticism that some parts of the Bible were absurd, such as Eve being tempted by a serpent and Balaam's ass speaking, he upheld the principle of belief in miracles.⁴²² However, Ryle also recognised real difficulties about plenary inspiration. There were discrepancies in the Bible, such as Matthew's reference to Jeremy the prophet, the time differences in Mark and Luke's accounts of the crucifixion, and Stephen's account of Jacob's burial in Acts.⁴²³ There were also mysteries in the Bible that could not be explained rationally, such as how an unconverted person can be invited to look to Christ; the moving of the Holy Spirit; how God can be described in human verbal language, and how the Apostles and Prophets could speak and write by inspiration.⁴²⁴ There were also debatable doctrines in Scripture, about which it was possible to hold varying opinions, such as Election, the coming of the Kingdom of God, the nation of Israel in the current day, and prophecies.⁴²⁵

In the light of these difficulties, Ryle enunciated three principles for the right handling of Scripture that enabled him to hold the concept of plenary inspiration with integrity. In the first place, it was necessary to recognise that the Bible was not a complete account. It often recorded only the keynote of an address by Jesus.⁴²⁶ It certainly kept back circumstantial evidence of events.⁴²⁷ Therefore, the reader must simply be content to wait for further knowledge when faced with problems.⁴²⁸ Ryle advocated the principle,

established by Leverrier, when aberrations of the planet Uranus caused scientists to doubt the whole Newtonian system. The Frenchman argued that their current perplexities must not cause them to reject a known established principle. Leverrier was proved right some years later when the planet Neptune was discovered.⁴²⁹ Ryle defended the same treatment for the principle of plenary inspiration.

The second principle was to interpret the Bible in its plain meaning: 'as a general rule, whatever a verse of the Bible seems to mean, it does mean'.⁴³⁰ The commentaries of learned men were not to be despised.⁴³¹ Ryle himself used them frequently.⁴³² It was far more important, however, to have a right heart than an intelligent mind when reading the Bible.⁴³³ Prayer was much more an aid to understanding than commentaries.⁴³⁴ This was why any real Christian could pick up his own Bible to test the preaching of a minister.⁴³⁵ The precise translation of a Greek or Hebrew word into English might be debatable, but the principle of private judgment on the plain meaning of the text was a central feature of 'real' Christianity.⁴³⁶ So Ryle advised that in disputed issues the reader should count up texts.⁴³⁷ In his own tracts, he frequently quoted a number of Scriptures and concluded: 'I shall make no comment upon these texts. I think it better to place them before you in their naked simplicity and to let them speak for themselves'.⁴³⁸ Where the naked simplicity of various texts seemed to clash he advised: 'I hold it to be an infallible rule in the exposition of Scripture, that when two texts seem to contradict one another, the less plain must give way to the more plain, and the weak must give way to the strong'.⁴³⁹ The greatest error of Rome was that it kept the plain texts of the Bible out of the hands of ordinary people. The Council of Trent refused absolution to those who kept a Bible without a license.⁴⁴⁰ Ryle's solution for the religious controversies of the Victorian era was to get twelve men to sit down together with nothing to read but a Bible.⁴⁴¹

The third principle was to recognise that not all the parts of Scripture were of equal importance.⁴⁴² All the stars in heaven were

bright, beautiful and glorious, yet some were brighter than others. So it was also with Scripture.⁴⁴³ The proportionate value and importance of any doctrine was determined by the frequency with which it was mentioned in the Bible.⁴⁴⁴ On the whole it was the New Testament Epistles that determined doctrine.⁴⁴⁵ Even within them there were some which were more significant than others, namely Romans, Galatians and Hebrews.⁴⁴⁶ It was important to have a systematic understanding of Christianity.⁴⁴⁷ It was at this point that Ritualists went wrong. Ryle was happy to acknowledge that many people preached all the truths that he thought essential to the Christian Faith who would not call themselves Evangelicals.⁴⁴⁸ But although the parts were there, the proportion was not:⁴⁴⁹ 'The first things must not be put second and the second things must not be put first'.⁴⁵⁰ It was the keeping to the right proportions of the truths in the Bible that distinguished Evangelical Christianity from all the other parties.⁴⁵¹ There were certain doctrines which grew 'larger and larger' the more the Bible was looked at.⁴⁵² It was these doctrines that should form the main content of a minister's sermons. About them there was no difficulty and thus they supported the plenary inspiration of Scripture. They were not the doctrines which the Ritualists concentrated on, but they were the heart of the Gospel. To miss them was to miss salvation, which is why Ryle spent his life opposing Ritualism. He identified three such 'large' doctrines: the work of the Holy Spirit, justification by faith and the person and work of Christ.

In the five points of essential Evangelical theology, two related to the work of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵³ In short, the Holy Spirit had to be felt within and seen without.⁴⁵⁴ Ryle was suspicious of feelings in religion and criticised not only the sense-orientated worship of the Ritualists, but also the emotional hot-house of large evangelistic meetings.⁴⁵⁵ Despite abuse, however, feelings were a necessary sign of 'real' Christianity⁴⁵⁶: 'I cannot believe that a man can be a true Christian if he does not feel something within ... the Christian who knows nothing of them (feelings) is not yet converted and has everything to learn'.⁴⁵⁷ The grand defect of

Victorian Christianity was the absence of the presence of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵⁸ The Holy Spirit may be difficult to understand, and almost imperceptible to see, but He must be present in the life of a Christian.⁴⁵⁹ 'No dispensation of the Spirit, no Church', Ryle affirmed.⁴⁶⁰ There were only two things needful to salvation, an interest in Christ's atoning blood and 'the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart and life'.⁴⁶¹ Conversion would not come by schools, or tracts, or ecclesiastical machinery, nor even from preaching, but by the presence of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶² Therefore, the great want of the day was prayer for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶³

The presence of the Holy Spirit in a believer was not hidden but evident.⁴⁶⁴ He was evident because He was necessary. The whole of a Christian's life was marked by fighting and warfare⁴⁶⁵: 'Even on the brink of Jordan I find Satan, nibbling at my heels'.⁴⁶⁶ Far from being exempt from troubles, the Christian was discerned by their presence.⁴⁶⁷ Sanctification was coterminous with struggle and was effected by the indwelling Holy Spirit.⁴⁶⁸ His presence was marked by a deep conviction of sin, a lively faith in Christ as the only Saviour, holiness of life, a habit of earnest private prayer and a love and reverence for God's Word.⁴⁶⁹ These last two Ryle classified as 'means' of growth in sanctification. The neglect of such means was a sure mark of the absence of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷⁰ Elsewhere, he added regular attendance at public worship and regular reception of the Lord's Supper to the list of 'means'.⁴⁷¹ While attendance to the means was an important sign of the work of the Holy Spirit in a Christian, the Bible laid much greater stress on the first two marks of the Holy Spirit i.e. repentance and faith.

Justification by faith alone was the second of Ryle's brighter stars in the Bible. Put simply a Christian was 'one who looks to Jesus'.⁴⁷² Repentance and faith went together and it was not always clear which came first, but they were two distinct things.⁴⁷³ Repentance involved having a knowledge of sin, having sorrow for sin, confessing sin, breaking off from sin and hating sin.⁴⁷⁴ It was 'a

thorough change of man's heart upon the subject of sin'.⁴⁷⁵ But repentance was not justification. Greater repenting did not make a sinner more justified, and imperfect repentance did not mean sins were not forgiven.⁴⁷⁶ A man was justified, i.e. became a son of God, on the day he believed on Jesus Christ for salvation.⁴⁷⁷ Justification was an immediate change of status.⁴⁷⁸ Without faith it was 'drivelling folly' to think oneself saved.⁴⁷⁹ Although Ryle thought that faith was not mysterious but comprehensible to all, he struggled to describe it in anything other than Biblical terminology.⁴⁸⁰ Faith was 'unreserved trust' in Christ.⁴⁸¹ It was the act of 'fleeing' to Christ. It was not a 'work' but a passive receiving, taking, accepting, embracing of a gift given.⁴⁸² It was like the hand of a drowning man which someone else grasps, or simply an eye that looks to someone else for help, or the mouth of a starving man which opens to receive food.⁴⁸³

If the description of faith was somewhat stumbling, the necessity to have it was made abundantly clear. It was faith alone which unlocked all the treasures that Jesus had to give.⁴⁸⁴ A healthy, growing Christian did not mean discovering ever new religious concepts, but simply having more faith year by year.⁴⁸⁵ Repentance and faith was the prime doctrine of the Bible.⁴⁸⁶ It was the keynote of the message ministers had to share. It ought to be the first thing in all their sermons and it ought to come up again and again.⁴⁸⁷ The prosperity of Christ's work in the church could be tested by the frequency with which this doctrine occurred.⁴⁸⁸ It was only the preaching of this doctrine which had done good in every age.⁴⁸⁹ Justification by faith alone was the one doctrine 'essentially necessary' for personal comfort.⁴⁹⁰ It was the absence of this doctrine which accounted for half the errors of the Roman Catholic Church.⁴⁹¹ This was the doctrine which was 'absolutely essential' for a minister's success among his people: 'There will be no blessing from God on that church unless justification by faith is proclaimed from its pulpits'.⁴⁹²

Faith was to be placed in the person of Jesus Christ and what He had done for mankind by His life and death. The third 'brighter star' was Jesus himself:

We are not set apart for no other end than to read services, and administer sacraments, and marry people, and bury the dead. We are not meant to do nothing more than show you the Church, or ourselves, or our party. We are set for the work of showing men the blood of Christ, and except we are continually showing it, we are not true ministers of the gospel ... we want to bring them to the blood of Christ.⁴⁹³

The only anathema pronounced by the Church of England was on those who thought there was salvation anywhere other than in Jesus Christ.⁴⁹⁴ Ryle saw salvation by Jesus as 'the grand object of the Bible'.⁴⁹⁵ In Jesus there was abundant salvation, and out of him there was none at all.⁴⁹⁶ Therefore, Christ ought to be the grand subject which every faithful minister exalts in the pulpit.⁴⁹⁷ The whole point of the Gospel was that peace with God came through faith in Jesus.⁴⁹⁸ The question of questions, then, was 'what do you think of Christ himself?'⁴⁹⁹ The person of Christ, the work of Christ, the office of Christ, the attitude of Christ, the names and titles of Christ, these were the rightful subjects of preaching.⁵⁰⁰ Preachers should imitate Paul, who 'never wasted time in exalting a mere rootless morality, in dissenting on vague abstractions and empty platitudes - such as 'the true', and 'the noble', and 'the earnest', and 'the beautiful' ... Jesus and his vicarious death, Jesus and His resurrection, was the keynote of his sermons'.⁵⁰¹ If a minister was likely to preach only once in a place, he must preach about Jesus.⁵⁰² Ryle's own desire was that men would 'become better acquainted with Christ'.⁵⁰³ Christ was the one subject in religion about which you could never know too much.⁵⁰⁴ A Christian should never be tired of speaking of Christ.⁵⁰⁵

The object of worship was to draw people closer to Jesus.⁵⁰⁶ True Christianity consisted of 'a daily personal communication with an actual living person, Jesus the Son of God'.⁵⁰⁷ Anything that



detracted from this was an 'enormous folly'.⁵⁰⁸ In particular, this relationship rested on an understanding of Christ's death.⁵⁰⁹ It was the Cross of Christ which was the jewel of jewels:

It is not orders, or endowments, or liturgies, or learning that will keep a church alive ... let us never forget the brightest days of a church are those when Christ crucified is most exalted ... Preach salvation by the sacraments, exalt the church above Christ and keep back the doctrine of the atonement and the devil cares little - his goods are at peace. But preach a full Christ and a free pardon and then Satan will have great wrath, for he knows he has but a short time.⁵¹⁰

Ryle warned people to beware of a religion in which there was not much of the Cross.⁵¹¹ It was the 'grand peculiarity of the Christian religion'.⁵¹² A minister might know Latin, Greek and Hebrew perfectly, but if he did not know something of the Cross he would do no good.⁵¹³ A Church ceased to be useful the moment Christ crucified did not occupy the foremost place.⁵¹⁴ It was the Cross of Christ which most clearly displayed God the Father's love. It was the Cross of Christ which most clearly displayed God the Father's love. It was the Cross of Christ which most revealed the abomination of sin. It was the Cross of Christ which displayed the fulness of salvation. It was the Cross of Christ which revealed strong reasons for being holy. It was the Cross of Christ which most comforted man.⁵¹⁵ It was the centre truth in the whole Bible.⁵¹⁶ It was the heart of Ryle's Evangelical theology:

the longer I dwell on the Cross in my thoughts, the more I am satisfied that there is more to be learned at the foot of the Cross than anywhere else in the world.⁵¹⁷

Ryle therefore urged people to cling to Christ and make much of the old foundation truths concerning salvation by His blood.⁵¹⁸

CHAPTER THREE

BISHOP RYLE: THEOLOGY AT WORK -

MISSION IN LIVERPOOL

The one great church question of our time before which all others fade into insignificance is this: Round about Church and Chapel impartially indifferent or impartially hostile to both, lie the masses of our great towns' populations, the scattered units of our country parishes, for whom life has no better meaning than that of a daily struggle for the means of a joyless existence, uncheered by the hope of a happier existence, undignified by the consciousness of Divine descent and heirship to immortality. What can the Church of England do for these? Here, believe me, lies the one supremely urgent question for which we have to find an answer and that speedily.¹

Bishop Magee

Souls in Liverpool are to be won in the same way as souls in Stradbroke.²

Bishop Ryle

If you want to warm a church, put a stove in the pulpit.³

Bishop Ryle

Throughout the period 1840-1880 Ryle expounded an Evangelical theology in the pulpits of his churches and on the platforms of various conferences which had at its heart a personal response to the Lord Jesus Christ. This response was provoked largely by ordained men preaching right Biblical doctrine. Two key elements of it were thankfulness and a concern for mission. In 1880 Ryle became Bishop of Liverpool and for the last twenty years of the nineteenth century sought to see his theology worked out in practice in the streets of the Merseyside city. He was not the first Victorian Evangelical Bishop but he was undoubtedly the most prominent.

(1) RYLE'S APPOINTMENT

Ryle's appointment remains something of a mystery. Although Gladstone had a detailed list of seventeen requirements for prospective bishops, other Victorian Prime Ministers were less than thorough in their approach to Church patronage.⁴ Palmerston simply followed the advice of Lord Shaftesbury while Melbourne, Disraeli and Rosebery all complained of the difficulties of filling vacant sees.⁵ Disraeli was preoccupied with the effect of appointments on elections and even Gladstone was concerned about the influence of the Bishops in the House of Lords.⁶ Ryle's opposition to Gladstone's plans for disestablishment in Ireland was sufficiently prominent in Suffolk to obstruct any promotion while there was a Liberal government.⁷ However, Disraeli was ignorant of the names of prominent churchmen who might be elevated to episcopal rank and Ryle did not appear on a list of potential candidates supplied by his secretary.⁸ Disraeli had hoped that in making Hugh McNeile Dean of Ripon in 1868 he would win political support there. But this stratagem produced no discernible result and Disraeli's own conclusion was that 'bishoprics, once so much prized, are really graceless patronage now; they bring no power.'⁹ The first three ecclesiastical appointments of his second ministry went to friends or relatives.¹⁰

If Ryle's appointment was not the result of political considerations, neither was it the result of ecclesiastical planning. The new nineteenth-century dioceses were not the result of a coherent theory of administration. They were largely the empirical result of local pressure groups.¹¹ Archbishop Tait was not involved at all in the creation of the diocese of Liverpool or the selection of Ryle as Bishop.¹² Bishop Jacobson of Chester was a detached observer. The diocese was brought into being by the work of a small group of city clergy and prominent laymen. The most notable activists were Rev. Abraham Hume and John Torr, M.P.¹³

It would seem, therefore, that Ryle's promotion was simply a matter of personal likes. Jacobson was a moderate High Churchman. He

was the only Bishop appointed by Palmerston because of the influence of Gladstone.¹⁴ The promoters of the new diocese, however, were low-church in their sympathies. They undoubtedly met Ryle at the Church Congresses and the Evangelical Societies' annual meetings. It was the personal wish of Lord Sandon to have Ryle as Bishop which persuaded Disraeli to appoint him.¹⁵ Disraeli had already lost an election and was about to leave office and probably simply saw an opportunity to put a pronounced Evangelical in Gladstone's home town. The Queen, who took an active interest in church patronage and insisted, for example, on Tait's promotion to Archbishop, against Disraeli's own choice of Ellicott, held strong anti-Ritualist views and would therefore make no objection to Ryle.¹⁶ The appointment was rushed through only three days before Gladstone took office.¹⁷ It was a surprise to most people, not least Ryle himself.

There was no surprise, however, about what Ryle was supposed to do in Liverpool; his primary function was to evangelise the city. But as a committed Evangelical he took an active interest in overseas mission as well.

(2) MISSION OVERSEAS

(a) Church Missionary Society

There were three societies involved in overseas mission which Ryle supported for the whole of his life. The main one was the Church Missionary Society. In May 1881 he attended, for the first time, the annual meeting of the Liverpool branch of the C.M.S.¹⁸ He was strongly critical of the poor level of giving. He observed that Norfolk, which was a depressed agricultural county with only a third of the population of Liverpool, collected more money for the C.M.S. than his new diocese.¹⁹ To promote renewed interest in mission work Ryle advocated special services on Ascension Day and a week of prayer and intercession for missions.²⁰ In sharp contrast to most of his other appeals, directed to merchant princes, Ryle thought that the success of the C.M.S. depended on the regular subscriptions of middle class people who were conscious of their duty.²¹ This 'duty' was the recognition that

commercial prosperity depended on the Colonies and that Queen Victoria ruled more Mohammedan subjects than any other ruler. Therefore British Christians should be concerned to take the Gospel to them.²²

Apart from the year 1893, when there were virtually no bequests left to the Diocesan branch, the giving of the diocese to the C.M.S. increased throughout Ryle's episcopate.²³ By the close of the century the amount given was more than half as much again as that of 1881.²⁴ Although Ryle observed that the total amount of money given nationally was still less than the cost of a warship, his general attitude was one of genuine amazement.²⁵ When he attended the C.M.S. centenary in London, in 1899, he contrasted the amount given when he was born, £19,000, with the amount given in 1899, £330,000. He could only conclude that the Society's motto for the twentieth century ought to be 'There hath not failed one word of all His good promise'.²⁶ Ryle attributed the continued success of the C.M.S., both locally and nationally, to a variety of reasons. He believed his initiation of special prayer in the diocese was contributory.²⁷ He believed the official publications of the society were a much better media presentation than the 'stupid thing they were' in his youth.²⁸ He carried on a personal advertising campaign through drawing-room meetings at the palace.²⁹ The calibre of the men who volunteered for missionary work was now of the highest quality.³⁰ He initiated the public sending off of missionaries in 1888 with three men going to India, one to South China and a lady to Japan. He hoped this would become a regular feature of diocesan life.³¹ Another cause of interest was the vast new scope that exploration had uncovered for missionary work. When Ryle started supporting the C.M.S. it was known as 'the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East'. But the explorations of Livingstone and Stanley had entirely altered their understanding of central Africa.³² Above all the society was successful, according to Ryle, because it stuck to 'the grand Protestant principles of the Church of England'.³³ The right response to all this growth was thanksgiving and praise.³⁴ Ryle himself spoke every year at St. Silas' Church on behalf of the C.M.S. In a nutshell he believed that as soon as the Church ceased to be evangelistic, it

would cease to be Evangelical.³⁵ He thought that no successive Bishop in Liverpool would do more than he had done to promote the cause of evangelism.³⁶ It was fitting that this annual address was the last public preaching he performed in Liverpool.³⁷

(b) Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was in a far less healthy state than the C.M.S. Canon Alexander Stewart summed the position up: 'The venerable Society was still sadly straightened for want of funds, consequently appeals for help had to be disregarded, no new ground could be opened up and the work in many places was languishing for lack of more generous support'.³⁸ The local committee blamed the commercial depression for the decline in the amount collected in Liverpool.³⁹ This decline continued through to the mid 1890s.⁴⁰ Even in the more generous later years the total from Liverpool was only just over a quarter of that collected by the C.M.S.⁴¹ The number of churches contributing to both societies was roughly the same.⁴² Although Ryle made it clear where his preferences lay, he supported the S.P.G. as much as the C.M.S. He declared that:

He came here as the Bishop of the diocese to support every society that was loyally doing the work of the Church of England at home and abroad. He felt he should not be doing justice to the church if he did not hold out the right hand of fellowship and assist every Church of England society which was walking loyally in the lines of the Church of England and doing the Church of England's work.⁴³

He was more concerned that people gave to any missionary society than that they should give to a particular one.⁴⁴ Consequently as he preached annually for the C.M.S. at St. Silas', so he also preached annually for the S.P.G. at St. Peter's.⁴⁵ This earned him the criticism of thorough-going Protestant Evangelicals.⁴⁶ Ryle ignored this, and when the S.P.G. picked up towards the end of his episcopate, he expressed his pleasure.⁴⁷

(c) Colonial and Continental Church Society

While wanting to encourage any missionary activity, Ryle, nevertheless, held particular favourites. There were two especially, the Colonial and Continental Church Society and the Society for the Promotion of Christianity amongst the Jews. Neither of these attained to much success. Ryle claimed that at one time the Colonial and Continental was in such low water that there were only two supporters of it, he being one and the secretary being the other.⁴⁸ They had been advised to dissolve the Society. Ryle preferred to keep it going because it was a 'good thing'.⁴⁹ By this he meant that the Society promoted 'the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, the gospel, the pure gospel and nothing but the gospel. It would only propagate the good old Protestant and Evangelical doctrines of the Church of England'.⁵⁰ Ryle recognised that the Society was still struggling in the 1880s. Speaking to a small number of attenders at the 1886 annual meeting of the Liverpool branch, he observed that 'had he seen Hope Hall crowded that night he would have been agreeably surprised'.⁵¹ The total contribution of the diocese to the Society's General Fund was only £158 in 1888.⁵² The same story of small numbers and small giving continued to the end of the century.⁵³ In 1895 the figure raised jumped to £578 but £500 of this was a legacy.⁵⁴ Nationally the Society was in debt in 1889, and adopted a policy decision not to be involved in any building projects on the continent.⁵⁵ This was coupled with an appeal for supporters to double their contributions.⁵⁶ Neither Liverpool, nor Ryle himself, responded to this appeal.⁵⁷ Ryle was already a life member because at Stradbroke the congregation had donated ten pounds.⁵⁸ As Bishop he was a Vice-Patron and therefore ex-officio on all committees.⁵⁹ Some Liverpool clergy acted as chaplains for the Society. Dr Porter of Southport spent his summers in France and Germany for the Society, Lefroy was regularly in Switzerland.⁶⁰ Ryle never left the shores of Britain throughout his life, but he praised the chaplains of the 1880s for being of a much better calibre than those of the 1830s, who were sometimes men who had good reasons for not being in England.⁶¹

(d) Jews

Ryle did not need to go to the Middle East to come into contact with some Jews. A first synagogue had been established in Liverpool as early as 1750, but this settlement had not lasted.⁶² A second synagogue emerged in the 1790s. Although the total number of Jews was small, about one hundred, some were influential in the town. The first members' list of the Athenaeum Library contained four Jews.⁶³ This community steadily grew, mainly as a result of immigration from other coastal ports.⁶⁴ By the 1830s a Liverpool born generation existed which collected 2,000 signatures to press for the emancipation of Jews.⁶⁵ By the 1850s the community was large enough to set up its own press and to divide the synagogue over questions of ritual. By 1865 Liverpool had elected its first Jewish mayor.⁶⁶ This settled local Jewish community was then invaded by a cosmopolitan immigration of Jews from Hamburg, Frankfurt, Vienna, Bavaria, France, Holland and the United States.⁶⁷ The two communities were radically different, the older one being largely composed of tradesmen and shopkeepers and the new one being largely made up of commercial entrepreneurs.⁶⁸ The cause of this immigration was the 1848 Revolutions.⁶⁹ These two groups were further augmented by waves of immigrants from Russia, starting in the aftermath of the Crimean War and bolstered by the 1880s persecutions.⁷⁰ These outnumbered the established Jewish community and tended to form their own ghettos, maintaining themselves as skilled artisans in, for example, cabinet making.⁷¹ They also brought with them a religious tradition of a stricter orthodoxy.⁷²

Ryle's involvement with the conversion of Jews was ridiculed. At the first meeting he attended in Liverpool of the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity amongst the Jews he attributed the better conditions of society in 1881, compared to the first century, to the conversion of Jews to Christianity.⁷³ He was taken to task for talking such 'nonsense', and it was pointed out that the Jews were virtuous and useful citizens as Jews anyway without the need to be converted. The S.P.C.J. only made half a dozen converts a year.⁷⁴ Ryle was told to get on with converting the heathen of Liverpool and leave the Jews alone.⁷⁵ In his first meeting of the Southport branch of the S.P.C.J.,

Ryle was faced with a public protest against the Society, denouncing it as a 'sham' and 'fraud' and an 'insult' to the Jews.⁷⁶ By the time of his second annual meeting in Liverpool the persecutions in Russia had been brought to the public's notice and Ryle was already under criticism for failing to speak out against the Russian authorities.⁷⁷ When he subsequently praised the Jews and stressed a debt to them at the annual meeting, his previous non-action on their behalf raised the question of what exactly this 'debt' was.⁷⁸ There was a quick answer from the Liverpool Press:

Probably this debt, which fills the Bishop with gratitude, arises in this way: We were indebted to the Jewish nation for the late Benjamin Disraeli, and we were indebted to Ben for Bishop Ryle.⁷⁹

Ryle's 'debt' was more related to the revival of interest in prophecy and the Second Coming, together with an appreciation that the Jews wrote the Bible.⁸⁰

Despite this criticism, Ryle remained an enthusiast for the Society and saw a steady growth over his twenty years in Liverpool. The collections rose from £276 in 1881 to just short of £1,000 in 1899.⁸¹ The support grew from a small number of elderly ladies to 'large' attendances.⁸² The local society was active enough to send a lady worker to Jerusalem and to set up a mission home in Liverpool for the benefit of emigrants en route to America and for Jewish residents in the city.⁸³ The committee recognised that this expansion was due to the personal interest of the Bishop in the Society.⁸⁴ Ryle himself was pleased with the growth of interest in the Society and thought the twentieth century would show its best time was yet to come.⁸⁵

It was not possible to be actively involved in too many missionary activities. The C.M.S., S.P.C.J., Colonial and Continental, and the Zenana Missionary Society were the overseas ones that Ryle regularly supported. However, wherever possible he showed an interest in other

organisations. He joined in the laying of the foundation stone of the church of Gustavus Adolphus in 1883 which was built to cater for the 10,000 Scandinavian sailors who turned up annually in Liverpool, along with 40,000 Scandinavian emigrants.⁸⁶ Ryle became a patron of the Scandinavian Mission which held four or five services a week. The numbers attending grew from 21,000 to 27,500.⁸⁷ Ryle also became involved with the Irish Church Missions to the Roman Catholics. He thought that this society was more likely to produce peace in Ireland than any political remedy.⁸⁸ He lamented government by force and urged the need to pray 'God save Ireland'.⁸⁹ He was pleased when open-air evangelism could take place in Cork without hindrance and believed that the success of the Irish Church Missions would lead to an improvement in the condition of life in Ireland.⁹⁰ His visits to Dublin appear to have been the only occasions of leaving the shores of England.⁹¹

(3) MISSION IN LIVERPOOL

(a) The Challenge

While Ryle maintained an active interest in overseas missionary societies and encouraged others to become involved in them, his central concern was evangelism in Liverpool. Indeed, the diocese had been set up primarily as a result of awareness of the church's failure to reach the vastly increased population.⁹² The possibility of a Liverpool bishopric had been voiced publicly as early as 1831 and again in 1836.⁹³ But the real stimulus to active pressure for a bishop was the growth of population. John Torr wrote in his diary in January 1864 under the heading 'Desirable Objects':

To attempt, in conjunction with others to get Liverpool raised to a see with an independent Bishop; as the only means of uniting and stimulating the clergy and laity in the great work of church building - to keep pace with the rapid increase of population now 576,000 and will be 1,000,000 in twenty years.⁹⁴

Before the creation of the diocese of Manchester in 1847, Chester

diocese was larger in size than nine other dioceses combined. Once the logic of separating Manchester was accepted there was an inevitable comparison with Liverpool. Their populations were almost the same, but between 1847-1876 180 new churches were consecrated in Manchester and 109 rooms were licensed for services. In contrast, church accommodation in Liverpool declined. On the other hand the population of the West Derby hundred of the diocese of Cheshire was fast outstripping that of the Wirral portion. West Derby contained sixty-one percent of the population in a density of 2,200 people per square mile whereas the density in the Wirral was less than a quarter of that figure. It was argued that at the very least the episcopal residence should be moved from Chester to Liverpool.⁹⁵

In the event John Torr and his colleagues secured a new diocese. Although small in area it comprised a wide variety of types of parishes. Nearly one-sixth of the one hundred and eighty-two parishes were rural villages smaller than the one Ryle came from.⁹⁶ These were largely concentrated to the north of Liverpool in a coastal arable hinterland and to the east of the city en route to Manchester. The majority of these rural village parishes were in two deaneries: North Meols and Winwick. But there was also another type of parish outside of the city, namely large industrial towns and collieries such as Wigan, St. Helen's, Widnes, Warrington, Pemberton and Ince-in-Makerfield. The population of these parishes was often greater than 10,000.⁹⁷

Nevertheless, more than half the total population of the diocese resided in Liverpool. Here Ryle was faced with three distinctly different church situations. Wealthy merchants moved out from the city centre to the suburbs as the city grew. Apart from Walton-on-the-hill to the north of the city centre, the fashionable residences were all located in the south-east: Fairfield, Childwall, Gateacre, Mossley Hill, Allerton, Aigburth.⁹⁸ These were sparsely populated, had tree-lined roads and were almost semi-rural. The churches were rich and considered as prestigious livings. In sharp contrast there were the 'townships' of Toxteth Park, Everton-Kirkdale and Bootle forming a ring between the city centre and the fashionable suburbs. These areas were

simply vast terraced housing areas with huge populations. When the Toxteth Rural Deanery was set up there were five parishes of 8-10,000, three of 10-12,000 and two over 18,000. In Everton there were five parishes of 8-10,000 and five over 10,000. In Kirkdale there were two parishes exceeding 20,000 and in Bootle there were only three churches altogether when Ryle arrived.⁹⁹

In the city centre the problem for Ryle was more that there were too many churches and not enough people. The population of the parish of Liverpool declined each decade from 1851 such that by 1881 it had dwindled by seventy-five percent. It was estimated that fourteen ecclesiastical districts in the city centre, comprising 93,000 people would have declined to 22,000 by 1891.¹⁰⁰ Yet ten churches alone had an average capacity of 1,900.¹⁰¹ On the other hand some city centre parishes, with crowded tenement and cellar dwellings, were as populous as the townships. The glaring statistical fact was that in both the city centre and the three 'townships' there was a dense population of half a million people in 1881, most of whom never went to church. The census of 1851 estimated that twenty-one percent of the population were Roman Catholics.¹⁰² These were concentrated in ten parishes immediately north of the city centre on the border of Kirkdale. Only twenty-six percent of the population were described as Church of England and forty percent were 'irreligious'.¹⁰³

This was diocese Ryle inherited. Despite the diversity of parishes attention was centred on the tenement dwellings and terraced sprawl of the city centre and 'townships' of Toxteth, Everton-Kirkdale and Bootle. These were unchurched areas. The statistics created a picture of vast unevangelised masses.

But the interpretation of such church statistics is not an easy field of study. The pioneering works of E.R.Wickham and K.S.Inglis have been criticised for the general nature of their conclusions.¹⁰⁴ Nigel Yates has argued that all statistical calculations must be regarded as approximate and maintains that the margin of error is quite

wide.¹⁰⁵ He concludes that there has not been enough work done to justify generalised conclusions about church attendance in Victorian cities.¹⁰⁶ Hugh McLeod has argued that there is no longer a consensus of opinion as to the extent of working class involvement in religious activity.¹⁰⁷ He too appeals for more detailed local research.¹⁰⁸ Recent studies have concentrated on church attendances in localised areas such as Portsmouth, Reading and Lambeth.¹⁰⁹ At a diocesan level there has been a survey of statistics in Newcastle.¹¹⁰ The conclusion remains, however, that 'it is difficult to tell which churches successfully involved the working classes'.¹¹¹

R.B.Walker has carried out a detailed analysis of the available figures of church attendance in Liverpool in the nineteenth century.¹¹² His conclusion is that 'although by the end of [Ryle's] episcopate the diocese was stronger than ever before in its array of churches, clergy and dedicated lay workers, yet the number of Anglican church attendances in Liverpool in 1902 was less than it had been in 1851'.¹¹³ He argues that this decline took place before 1881 and that Ryle in fact made some recovery of lost ground.¹¹⁴ Walker's handling of the statistics has been challenged as inaccurate.¹¹⁵ There are four main sources of church attendances in Liverpool in the second half of the nineteenth century, apart from the 1851 census. There are the returns in 1858 to the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Means of Divine Worship in Populous Districts and the surveys carried out by the Daily Post in 1881, 1891 and 1898.¹¹⁶ Whatever the precise analysis of slight gain or loss in relation to population growth, the overwhelming fact was that the majority did not attend church. In 1858 less than 10% of the city population attended the parish churches.¹¹⁷ In 1881 the Daily Post counted just over 51,000 attenders at Church of England services; in 1891, about 58,000 and in 1898 56,800.¹¹⁸ In 1881 slightly less than 10% of the population were Anglican churchgoers and in 1898 about 8%.

It is clear that none of these figures are precise. The borough and city boundaries changed; the nature of the city as a port inevitably created a large 'floating' population; there were large

numbers of Irish Roman Catholics, as well as immigrant communities of Welsh, Jews, Scandinavians and Germans. There was the issue of the weather on the census days (it rained heavily on 15 November 1891).¹¹⁹ There was the problem of working out 'twicers'. All the local newspapers carried numerous articles and letters arguing over the correct analysis of the figures. At the end of the day even a localised area of one city is too large for conclusions on church attendance, especially when the prevailing ethos of ecclesiology stressed so much the role of the minister. Often a church's growth or decline reflected a change of incumbent rather than other factors.¹²⁰ The local press concluded that if all the churches' attendances in Liverpool were put together, still more than 80% of the population did not go to church: 'No, look at the problem which way you will, the Man in the street will not, and never will, go to church'.¹²¹ Ryle was well aware that most of the city of Liverpool did not go to church, the statistical evidence for that was overwhelming, but he believed that this situation could be changed. Indeed his appointment was viewed as a guinea-pig case as to whether or not the Church of England was to have any effective impact on a modern urbanised, industrial and commercial city. If Ryle had any doubts as to his role it was clearly defined for him at his consecration in York. The preacher was Edward Garbett, Canon of Winchester. He drew attention to the 'masses of souls still unchristianised' in Liverpool and to the glaring juxtaposition of wealth and poverty.¹²² He threw out the challenge:

Here, if anywhere, must be tried the great experiment of our day. Can the innate powers of the Kingdom of Christ grapple with such a state of things and recover to the Cross the alienated affections of mankind? ... the life of the Church of England, the welfare of the nation, and the prospects of the Kingdom of Christ in our land ... hang in the balance.¹²³

The same message was issued by John Howson, Dean of Chester, who, preaching on Acts 5:20, observed that the Temple in Jerusalem was the customary place of mission work and urged such mission as Ryle's first priority. The Bishop, he said,

is bound by personal influence, by careful organisation, to use his best endeavours to bring the ministrations of his clergy within the reach of the powers of the poor ... more especially we cannot take our eyes from those large sections of the population which are destitute of any adequate supply of churches and clergy.¹²⁴

At the banquet subsequent to Ryle's enthronement, the Mayor, Bernard Hall, reiterated the expectations of what Ryle was supposed to do:

My strongest hope and desire is that your lordship will be able by some simple organisation to reach the seething masses of vice and wretchedness, and darkness, and misery, with the torch of the Gospel of Truth.¹²⁵

(b) Ryle's Response: General Strategy

Ryle did not respond to this challenge until 19 October 1881 when he delivered half of his first charge to the clergy of the diocese.¹²⁶ He recognised the peculiar importance of his appointment and outlined his own summary of the diocese.¹²⁷ This concentrated on the fact that 900,000 of the 1.1 million population lived in large towns, and two-thirds of them lived in the city of Liverpool.¹²⁸ He drew attention to the juxtaposition of wealth and poverty and affirmed the responsibility of the Established Church to be the 'Church of the people'.¹²⁹ He identified his goal as that the Church of England

should never rest till there is neither a street, nor a lane, nor a house, nor a garret, nor a cellar, nor a family which is not regularly looked after, and provided with the offer of means of grace by her officials ... her aim should be to produce such a state of things, that no-one shall be able to say, 'I am no man's parishioner, I am never visited or spoken to: no-one cares for my soul'.¹³⁰

In the light of the statistics revealed by the Ecclesiastical Census, outlined above, this was a very ambitious goal. Ryle recognised immediately that the new-formed diocese simply did not have the resources to achieve this objective. The diocese had double the

population of Norwich but fewer than one third of the clergy. Above all many of the clergy worked on very small incomes.¹³¹

In order to achieve effectively the object of personal evangelisation of every family in the diocese, Ryle advocated four strategies. First and foremost there was the need to multiply largely the number of living agents. At this stage Ryle's definition of 'living agents' was 'ordained ministers of the word'. A lay worker was no substitute for the special feeling that was engendered by a visit from the parish minister, nor could a lay worker effectively teach the Christian Faith.¹³² Ryle therefore regarded 5,000 as the maximum population for a one-man parish. In 1881, only 74 of 182 parishes were under this maximum limit.¹³³ In essence, therefore, the Church of England was 'frightfully undermanned'.¹³⁴ Ryle likened it to sailing a Cunard steamer across the Atlantic with a crew of only twenty.¹³⁵ He concluded: 'Our first, foremost, and principal want, I unhesitatingly assert, is a large increase of working clergy'.¹³⁶

The second strategy was to build more places of worship. The Bishop of Chester had identified this need in a special report in 1879. Even to keep pace with population growth it was necessary to build one new church every month.¹³⁷ Ryle identified Mission Rooms as more helpful than churches because they allowed a greater flexibility in the type of services that could be used.¹³⁸ Nevertheless he contemplated setting up a special 'Twelve Churches' fund and urged the city to raise another £100,000 for the purpose of church building. He thought this money would be easily provided if 'all the churchmen of the diocese ... made it a duty to give'.¹³⁹ He spoke out against money wasted on luxuries and recreations and hinted that no-one who gave money for such a cause as church building would suffer financial hardships.¹⁴⁰

The third strategy was to look to ways of reforming and controlling the type of person appointed to incumbencies. Ryle only dealt with this briefly, drawing attention to the fact that it was the patron rather than the Bishop who was responsible for appointments. He was also concerned to make some provision for the pensioning off of invalided or superannuated clergymen.¹⁴¹ Lastly, Ryle touched on the need for a

Cathedral to enliven and activate the spiritual life of the diocese. In theory he approved of such a scheme, but he was anxious about the amount of money involved in building a Cathedral 'worthy' of Liverpool.¹⁴² His conclusion, therefore, was that he would gratefully build a Cathedral if someone gave him the money, but he would not divert money, or energy, from the need to provide clergy and churches first.¹⁴³

(c) Ryle's Response: More Men

(i) The Laity For the rest of his episcopate, but especially throughout the 1880s, Ryle concentrated on these two strategies: more men and more churches. However, he did not simply repeat the sentiments he expressed in his first charge. He elaborated his concept of 'more men' in two particular ways. First, he constantly stressed the need to involve the laity in the work of evangelism. Even if the generous proportion of two-thirds of a parish were either Roman Catholic or Nonconformist, that still left more than 1,500 people to be visited monthly by the incumbent, an impossible total even on Ryle's ideal parish limits. Consequently he at once stressed 'stir up every Christian man and woman in your congregation ... to give you some voluntary aid'.¹⁴⁴ The incumbent should divide his parish into smaller districts which could be allocated to this volunteer who would gather people together in a shed or cottage, talk kindly about Christ, give simple extempore prayer and lead some hearty singing.¹⁴⁵ This involvement of the laity was of paramount importance if the visible church was to 'stand and prosper'.¹⁴⁶ The lay members of the church were to be 'helpers in every good work, to teach, to visit, to check evil, to be home missionaries to all around them'.¹⁴⁷ This was the change 'above all' which Ryle wanted to see.¹⁴⁸ The bulk of Ryle's address to the fourteenth Diocesan Conference was concerned with this topic of lay involvement. He drew attention to the involvement of the laity in the New Testament Church. They chose deacons, were included in councils, and were the recipients of the inspired Epistles.¹⁴⁹ In contrast the laity of the Church of England in the late nineteenth century were almost excluded from the running of the Church.¹⁵⁰ Ryle blamed this state of affairs on an ineffective Reformation in England and in particular on the obstruction of further reforms by Queen

Elizabeth.¹⁵¹ This was a 'grand cause' of the Church's present weakness, and he wanted the principle affirmed that 'nothing ought to be done in the church without the laity'.¹⁵² The only exceptions to this were ordination and 'ministering in the congregation'.¹⁵³ (The involvement of the laity in church services was very slow; even in 1888 out of 102 benefices in the Archdeaconry of Warrington only sixteen used lay people to read the lessons).¹⁵⁴ The reason for this change was that without it the laity would not be interested in the affairs of the church and, therefore, it's evangelism. Ryle concluded:

Above all, let every parochial Incumbent make a point of teaching every communicant that he is an integral part of the Church of England, and is bound to do all that he can for its welfare. On this point, I grieve to say, the Methodists and Dissenters beat Churchmen hollow. With them every new member is a new home missionary in their cause. Never will things go well with the Church of England until every individual member realises that he is a 'part of the concern ...'.¹⁵⁵

This plea was repeated in Ryle's last three Diocesan Conference addresses.¹⁵⁶ At the heart of his campaign of evangelism lay the concept of every member a missionary.

Some of the laity were, of course, more officially organised. There were two such groups which Ryle encouraged. First, the Scripture Readers, with the equivalent Biblewomen's Society (Liverpool Ladies' Parochial Bible and Domestic Mission). When Ryle came to the diocese the financial position of the S.R. Association was so disturbing that it had obtained permission from the Bishop of Chester to canvas for support in the Wirral.¹⁵⁷ Ryle himself went round some of the wealthier citizens, with the President, Christopher Bushall, to encourage support and managed to secure additional annual subscriptions of £1,000.¹⁵⁸ By 1886 there were 43 Scripture Readers in the diocese who carried out a total of 124,000 visits annually.¹⁵⁹ There was also a specialist branch working amongst soldiers.¹⁶⁰ Although the following year the income had dropped so much that the number of staff had to be reduced, the society showed gradual growth for the rest of

Ryle's episcopate.¹⁶¹ This was partly due to some generous legacies.¹⁶² Ryle continued to regard it as one of the most important societies in Liverpool and made donations to its library.¹⁶³ By the early 1890s the staff had increased to 52.¹⁶⁴ The Scripture Readers began to hold services at places of work as well as in homes.¹⁶⁵ These proved quite successful.¹⁶⁶ In short Ryle regarded it as one of his few successful promotions in the diocese.¹⁶⁷

The second 'official' organisation of lay help was that of Lay Readers. At the 1882 Diocesan Conference Ryle had urged Rural Deans to actively encourage the concept of Lay Readers.¹⁶⁸ But not all were in favour of this, as an animated discussion at the Childwall Rural Deanery meeting revealed.¹⁶⁹ When the scheme was set up in 1884 every candidate had to be approved by Ryle and examined by the Archdeacon and two other clergy in the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. Ryle was in favour of going beyond the original London scheme which limited the Lay Reader to helping only in his own parish. But as well as giving them a wider role, Ryle was also concerned that there should be no confusion as to their lay status and declined to license them in a church service.¹⁷⁰ Licensing took place in the vestry after a church service. In 1884 fourteen men became Lay Readers, sixteen in 1885 (half from one church, St. Saviour's), and twelve in 1886.¹⁷¹ By 1888 there was a total of sixty-eight Lay Readers in the diocese.¹⁷² Most of the impetus for this 'official' lay involvement came from William Forshaw Wilson, but Ryle took a personal interest in the Lay Readers, holding receptions for them at his home, and continued to request that the scheme be taken up energetically.¹⁷³

(ii) The Clergy: Brothers and Deacons The increase of lay involvement towards every member ministry was the first way that Ryle developed his strategy of 'more men'. But there remained the question of getting more ordained men into the structure of the Church of England. Two widely canvassed methods of achieving this were the creation of Brotherhoods and the enlargement of the diaconate. Neither of these appealed to Ryle. The issue of Brotherhoods was discussed at length at the last Church Congress Ryle attended in Hull in 1890.¹⁷⁴

The main proponent of them was Frederick Farrar, Canon of Westminster. He argued that these were not innovations, observing that Wycliffe had established an order of simple priests.¹⁷⁵ The concept was supported by eminent Bishops (Blomfield, Fraser, Lightfoot, Westcott).¹⁷⁶ The expansion of Roman Catholicism and Nonconformity necessitated a swift adoption of a new method of evangelism, although 'great regenerative movements, at the most decisive crises of church history, were the work of Brotherhoods'.¹⁷⁷ Farrar pointed to the Hermits of the third century, Benedictines of the sixth, and Franciscans of the thirteenth.¹⁷⁸ He thought it was essential to distinguish between the errors of the Church of Rome and her truths.¹⁷⁹ He believed that many would volunteer, at their own expense, to serve in this way, citing as a comparative example the thousands in Italy who followed Garibaldi when he proclaimed 'Soldiers, I have nothing but rags, wounds, hardships, and beggary, to offer you; let him who loves his country follow me'.¹⁸⁰

There were already Brotherhoods within the Anglican Communion in South Africa and America, and in England they existed at Tamworth and Oxford.¹⁸¹ The key thing was that the taking of vows showed a distinct break from the past and the start of a new level of life, while living in a community made Christ 'visible' to the 'masses'.¹⁸² But the vows did not have to be permanent; adopting this lifestyle for a few years, or even for just one year, was an option.¹⁸³ The Bishop of Newcastle, Ernest Wilberforce, urged that the Church get on and do it for the need was great and the number of clergy few.¹⁸⁴ To neglect this was to 'miss a great opportunity of winning for Almighty God the masses of the people of England, far more perfectly than they have ever yet been won'.¹⁸⁵ The Bishop of Durham, Brooke Foss Westcott, concluded 'we look for, and we shall have, something of visible Brotherhood'.¹⁸⁶

Ryle agreed on one point, that the need for doing something was great. After ten years in Liverpool, he thought its spiritual state cried out 'to heaven against England, and is enough to make an angel weep'.¹⁸⁷ However, he could not see Brotherhoods as an answer to the crisis because they were impracticable, problematic in structure and

obstructions to other remedies. They were impractical because the brothers were unpaid.¹⁸⁸ Ryle's view was, no doubt, coloured by his experience in Liverpool of persuading the wealthy to part with their money and of enticing capable men to work for little income. He argued that there were simply not enough men of independent means who would adopt this lifestyle. Even if there were some volunteers, there was the intricate problem of how they were to relate to the existing structure of the Church of England.¹⁸⁹ Were such men 'clergy'? If so, how were they to relate to the Incumbent of the parish in which they were to reside? If, on the other hand, all the members of the Brotherhood were lay, what authority could an Incumbent or Bishop exercise over them? It was likely that Brotherhoods would simply be a separate focus of attention dividing energies rather than working in harmony with existing agents.¹⁹⁰ But above all, Brotherhoods were obstructions to the most effective means of evangelism, namely the mobilisation of all communicants in the work of evangelism. In opting out of a 'normal' lifestyle and existing on an independent income, they would not stimulate the ordinary man in the pew to work actively for the Church. They were more likely to become a substitutionary organisation and therefore positively hinder the real direction in which the Church of England needed to move.¹⁹¹

Ryle was equally dismissive of attempts to gain 'more men' by enlarging the diaconate, mainly because he was against any lowering of the standard of ministerial qualification.¹⁹² This proposal was debated at the York Convocation of 1883 where a motion was introduced to set up a permanent diaconate.¹⁹³ Ryle stressed that the spiritual needs of Liverpool were a cause of anxiety 'morning, noon and night', but nevertheless he did not see this proposal as a means of alleviating that anxiety.¹⁹⁴ First, deacons were unnecessary if Mission Halls were built rather than churches, and it took too long and too much money to build churches. Second, men designated to be in the permanent diaconate, when they saw other contemporary deacons being priested, would not be content to stay a deacon. They would leave and become Dissenting ministers. Third, there was no proposal to pay permanent deacons. They would therefore be caught between their church work and

their normal job. Fourth, it would be better to encourage more university men to become deacons, en route to priesting, and create a separate organisation of Evangelists.¹⁹⁵ The motion was carried over to the Convocation of 1884 where Ryle spoke against it again although the Bishop of Manchester, Fraser, supported it.¹⁹⁶ The proposal was not adopted.

(iii) The Pulpit: Right Doctrine In principle Ryle's concept of 'more men' meant the sub-division of parishes into smaller areas into which one clergyman would be placed. The clergyman's role was to lead the laity into action. As such extensions of the number of clergy either by Brotherhoods or an enlarged diaconate were not helpful. Rather, the key thing was that the clergyman should be the 'right' man doing the 'right' job. Ryle was wary of the way in which the clergy were increasingly becoming administrators: organising a multitude of services, raising the public conscience on contemporary issues and stimulating a plethora of church social events.¹⁹⁷ The 'right' job of the clergy was two-fold, to preach and to visit.¹⁹⁸ At the heart of successful outreach to the working class was the use of the pulpit by the minister. Most of the second part of Ryle's First Charge was concerned with this issue. Evangelism depended for its success on saying the right things:

I affirm, unhesitatingly, that there never has been any spread of the Gospel, any conversion of nations or countries, any successful evangelistic work, excepting by the 'enunciation of distinct doctrine'.¹⁹⁹

The decay of distinct doctrine was one of the greatest dangers of the day.²⁰⁰ To preach Christ as simply a great moral teacher was of no effect.²⁰¹ Broad theology was a miserable comforter.²⁰² Both clergy and laity must speak of the Cross:

Everything, however, I hope I need not remind you, - everything depends on the message which your living agents proclaim. They must know what they have got to do. If they

only go about telling men not to get drunk, not to fight, not to gamble, not to swear, not to break the Sabbath, they may just as well stay at home. If they want to do good they must tell men to believe as well as repent. They must tell the story of the Cross of Christ. They must magnify that grand article of the Apostles' creed, 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins'. They must make much of that doctrine which fits the empty heart of man just as the right key fits the lock, I mean the doctrine of free and full pardon of sin through faith in the vicarious death of Christ.²⁰³

The object of the pulpit, therefore, was to preach Christ.²⁰⁴ This inevitably meant starting with an understanding that the cause of Man's problems was sin.²⁰⁵ In this light 'musical services, and church decoration, and concerts, and penny readings, and bazaars, and improved cookery, and the like, will not save souls'.²⁰⁶ The answer to the question 'Can the Church (of England) reach the masses?', was yes - provided this Gospel was preached.

In his Fourth Charge of 1890 Ryle deliberately rejected discussion of diocesan affairs and concentrated on outlining what he thought were the essential component parts of the Gospel. He believed the nation was 'on the edge of a volcano, and at any time may be blown to pieces, and become a wreck and ruin'.²⁰⁷ The prevention of this was to preach with certainty the cardinal points of Christian truth.²⁰⁸ He asserted first that Christianity was the only revealed religion.²⁰⁹ Then he stressed the divine inspiration of the whole Bible.²¹⁰ Then 'the sinfulness of sin and the corruption of human nature', a subject which he thought 'greatly neglected'.²¹¹ Man was redeemed from this situation by faith in the atoning death of Christ on the Cross and not merely by Christ's Incarnation.²¹² A minister must, further, teach sound views on the work of the Holy Spirit and on the nature of the two sacraments.²¹³ He must also stress the sanctity of the Sabbath and the reality of the state of men after death, even though the latter was 'a difficult subject to handle lovingly'.²¹⁴ Lastly, he must resist all attempts to promote reunion with the Church of Rome, unless it reformed.²¹⁵

It was not enough simply to repeat these truths. The preaching must be 'direct' and 'lively'.²¹⁶ Workingmen would not be reached by the message if 'they only had read to them, in a kind of monotone voice, dry, heavy, stiff, dull, cold, tame, orthodox theological essays, couched in the first person plural number, full of "we" and "we" and "we", and destitute of warmth, vivacity, direct appeal, or fire'.²¹⁷ If the people were to be awakened then the preacher himself must be awake.²¹⁸ In Ryle's opinion myriads of sermons would be better burned than preached.²¹⁹ Preaching had to be well presented as well as correct.

It was the failure to centralise her message on the death of Christ on the Cross, for the forgiveness of sins, which rendered the Church of England's evangelism ineffective. Without this the doctrine of the Church became loose and vague and clergy concentrated on other activities rather than preaching. The result was no conversions.²²⁰ Ryle was not particularly interested in adjudicating between those who advocated preaching against brighter services and those who advocated brighter services against preaching. He was aware of the saying that when Christianity thrived in the first centuries 'the Church had wooden communion vessels, but golden ministers' and that when Christianity decayed it was because the ministers were wooden and the communion plate golden.²²¹ It was not, however, a matter of choosing between these two. Ryle observed,

But I want everything in the English Church in the nineteenth century to be golden. I long to have everywhere golden ministers, golden worship, golden preaching, golden praying and golden praise.²²²

Ryle was not content with slovenly worship such as in the past was characterised by a duet between parson and clerk.²²³ His first charity appeal was to buy a flute to improve the worship at Exbury.²²⁴ By the time he arrived in Liverpool the concept of special services, particularly harvest festivals and Lenten sermons, was beginning to

grow. In 1881 eight churches in the city held 'three hour' services on Good Friday and at least seven held daily Lenten sermons. This spread across both High Church ministers and pronounced Low Church ones.²²⁵ Ryle was in favour of changing worship patterns; just because he stood for old doctrine did not mean he wanted 'old machinery'.²²⁶ He was keen on congregational singing and produced several hymn books, as well as often closing his tracts by quoting a hymn.²²⁷ He preferred hymns to long liturgical citation, and believed that the majority of people wanted hymn books with 'warmth, plainness and fire'.²²⁸ Dull, drawling hymn tunes were a mistake: 'The hymn tunes that are really popular draw out a burst of singing and contain a distinct clearly marked air and have an indescribable swing, life and decision about them from beginning to end'.²²⁹ Harvest festivals were the most novel and crowded services. They were novel enough for David Brindley to mention them in his diary and crowded enough to attract thieves.²³⁰ They were spread over two months and Ryle accepted invitations to preach on such occasions.²³¹ But he warned against the tendency to turn churches into greengrocers' shops because at the end of the day it was not the ritual, however good, which converted people, but sound doctrine conveyed in 'sermons full of life, and fire, and power - sermons which set hearers thinking, and make them go home and pray'²³²: 'Then and then only' would the Church of England enjoy revival.²³³

Such effective evangelistic preaching was only possible where ministers stood fast 'in the old belief that the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation was given by inspiration of God'.²³⁴ Churchmen should pay scant attention to the so called disproving facts of science and nature. In practice the 'new' knowledge in both areas was very limited and further discoveries may solve some of the supposed difficulties of reconciling these to the Bible.²³⁵ Ryle spoke at length against 'Higher Criticism'.²³⁶ Although he saw Moses' death as a later addition, he believed all the five books of the Pentateuch were written by Moses.²³⁷ He believed all the events in Scripture were historical acts that took place at some defined point in time. He believed that all the people were real and that they did and said the things attributed to them in Genesis.²³⁸ He denounced the concept that

the Pentateuch was not completed until the time of Ezra and that the events of the first eleven chapters of Genesis, in particular, were invented fables.²³⁹ He gave five reasons for his belief. First, he argued that the material for these new ideas was always available to Biblical scholars of all ages. Yet for seventeen centuries no scholar, including 'intellectual giants' far surpassing the modern generation, doubted that Moses wrote the Pentateuch.²⁴⁰ Second, there was no evidence that these previous scholars were not just as well versed in minute examination of the texts, especially Hebrew, as the modern German scholars.²⁴¹ Third, and most important, Jesus appeared to believe that the Old Testament was as the perfect word of God. He named Moses as an author of the Pentateuch and referred to its events and people as historical. The Higher Critics evaded this by referring to the humanity, and therefore ignorance, of Jesus. Ryle saw this as an admission of fallibility in Christ and a denial of His divinity.²⁴² Fourth, to accept the premises of the Higher Critics would be to render it impossible to use the Bible as a rule of faith because its statements could not be accepted as certainly true. It would be impossible to decide where the line was to be drawn between the infallible words of God and the fallible writings of men.²⁴³ Last, an imperfect Bible could not possibly have achieved all that it had achieved in changing the world over the last nineteen centuries.²⁴⁴

Ryle readily admitted there were difficulties with his own position that he could not answer. But the 'argument from probability' was decidedly on his side.²⁴⁵ He did not expect to understand everything about the Bible, nor did he expect everyone to agree with him.²⁴⁶ However, to adopt the new views was to weaken belief in the inspiration of Scripture and therefore the reliability of the story of the Cross, upon which evangelism depended. But other prominent clergy had rejected this view. W.B.Carpenter, for example, had concluded that the Bible was inspired only in a 'moral' sense.²⁴⁷ He saw the Genesis story as 'poetry' and believed in a moral growth in mankind to account for the 'horrors' of the Old Testament.²⁴⁸ Verbal inspiration was a 'tyrannous yoke' and ought to be overthrown.²⁴⁹ It was this view, not

Ryle's, which came to dominate the theological understanding of ministers in the Church of England.

(iv) Visiting In contrast, Ryle's second main job for the clergy to do, pastoral visiting, remained virtually unchallenged throughout the nineteenth century. Originating from a variety of sources (Thomas Chalmers in Glasgow, Joseph Tuckerman in Boston, Massachusetts, David Nasmith's Town and City Missions, Henry Venn in Huddersfield and Daniel Wilson in Islington), visiting remained a prominent concern of Bishops in the late nineteenth century.²⁵⁰ Fraser, Carpenter, How, Moorhouse, Stubbs and Chavasse all made a priority of visiting.²⁵¹ Brian Heeney has rightly concluded that parish visiting was universally recognised as an important element in the ministry of every Incumbent.²⁵² Ryle was a prominent, but typical, exponent of visiting. When he outlined a list of different kinds of 'aggressive evangelisation', he put at the top of the list 'double and redouble regular, patient, house-to-house visitation'.²⁵³ This was to be preferred to multiplied services because it allowed direct personal dealing with individual souls.²⁵⁴ The prosperity of the church depended on her ministers being pastors as well as preachers.²⁵⁵ It was attention to the home needs of a man's wife or children, or parents, or relatives which would draw the working men to the church.²⁵⁶ When Ryle heard all the activities of a young clergyman in the 1880s and remembered his own time in the 1840s, he 'wondered how any one man, with only one body, can keep so many irons hot, and get through such an amount of work, and do every part of it well'.²⁵⁷ Ryle was not against the proliferation of meetings per se, but he argued that there were only twelve hours in the day and that it was impossible to do all the new meetings and 'keep up the old fashioned habit of efficient house-to-house, family and personal pastoral visitation'.²⁵⁸ The modern day clergyman needed to make a review of his time and prioritise activity.²⁵⁹ Ryle made it clear what the priority should be:

I must plainly say that I want to see a return to the old paths.²⁶⁰ We have gone far enough in the direction of public work.

In Ryle's eyes the clergyman who was only seen in the pulpit, the lecture room and the platform but never in the home would not be effective in the cause of Christ.²⁶¹ He preferred a clergyman to give 'a large quantity of his time' to visiting.²⁶² Ryle thought that every working man should be visited monthly. In his ideal parish of 5,000, assuming only a third were churchmen and averaging households of four, he was expecting his clergy to visit 105 households every week.²⁶³ The reason for this emphasis on visiting was that Ryle believed that the 'masses' would be 'ready and glad' to hear the clergyman in the pulpit who had been to their home and exhibited 'a brotherly interest in their sorrows and their joys, their crosses and their cares, their difficulties and their troubles, and the births, marriages and deaths of their families'.²⁶⁴ Such visiting would help create a social body consisting of cubes compacted together rather than spheres which only touched at one point.²⁶⁵ It was not a matter of flattery, or patronising, or a cold formality, but of being a friendly, kind and sympathetic brother.²⁶⁶ Ryle quoted Lord Macaulay with favour:

It was before Deity taking a human form, walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger, bleeding on the cross, that the prejudices of the synagogue, and the doubts of the academy, and the fasces of the lictor, and the swords of thirty legions were humbled in the dust.²⁶⁷

There were parishes in Liverpool where this strategy of emphasis on preaching the Cross and visiting homes filled the churches: James H. Honeyburne at St. Philemon (Windsor Street), Herbert Woodward at St. Silas, Toxteth, John Burbidge at Emmanuel, Everton, William F. Taylor at St. Chrysostom's, John Bardsley and James H.D. Cochrane at St. Saviour's, George L.B. Wildig and Thomas J. Madden at St. Luke's, and William Lefroy at St. Andrew's.²⁶⁸ The example par excellence was that of Richard Hobson at St. Nathaniel's, Windsor. This was the church where Ryle worshipped when not on official duties and he preached more often there than in any other church.²⁶⁹ Ryle gave public prominence

to Hobson's work at the Derby Church Congress in 1882 and repeated it in major speeches on the strategy for evangelism in 1883 and 1884.²⁷⁰ When Hobson began he started with a meeting for four people in a cellar. At his first communion in church he had eight communicants. After fourteen years there were 800 communicants.²⁷¹ They were all working class and nearly half were men. Ryle was particularly pleased at the church's extensive lay activity with 82 Sunday School teachers, 120 Church workers, 18 Bible classes with 600 adults attending, and two prayer meetings every month.²⁷² In 1889 Hobson presented a paper on evangelising the 'masses' to the Diocesan Conference. This was entirely in line with Ryle's strategy. He stressed the problem of dull sermons caused by scholarly clergy who had no acquaintance with the 'masses'. Evangelism depended on a revival of godliness amongst the clergy, a deep concern for the sins of the people, a timetable geared to visiting and a sympathetic attitude and manner towards the working man. The clergymen must also be an apt teacher and organise suitable services.²⁷³

The content of Ryle's strategy for evangelism was not new. It was present in his sermons and addresses before 1880. The difference was that instead of preaching in the rural backwater of Stradbroke he was now speaking as the first Bishop of Liverpool to the clergy of the diocese. However, this did not mean that the clergy were prepared to adopt their superior's strategy. In many parishes he was simply ignored. It was this situation that spurred Ryle to outline the last aspect of 'more men', although he had touched on the idea in his Church Reform Papers of 1870.²⁷⁴ This was the concept of missionary curates.

(v) Missionary Curates On the whole Ryle was reluctant to interfere with the rights of Incumbents. This is most clearly seen in his unwillingness to give the laity any legal rights in the form of a P.C.C. and in his refusal to interfere with the wealth of an incumbent. Ryle's practice of non-interference was based on the assumption that the minister was getting on with his job properly, especially in doing evangelism. But a clergyman might be old, ill, poor, in personal family difficulties, unsuited to a town parish, unsound, or worldly.²⁷⁵ The

result was a neglected parish, the spread of immorality and the growth of Dissent:

People in such parishes live and die with an abiding impression that the Church of England is a rotten, useless institution, and bequeath to their families a legacy of prejudice against the Church, which lasts for ever.²⁷⁶

Technically, provided the clergyman was not immoral and fulfilled the 'bare letter' of legal requirement, no-one in the Church of England could interfere with him. In the meantime Infidels, Mormons, Papists and Dissenters could move in and be aggressively evangelistic.²⁷⁷ Ryle could not imagine a more ruinous system than where the Incumbent was doing nothing and

the Bishop can only sit still, and wait, and hope, and pray! And while this goes on for twenty or thirty years, the Church suffers, Churchmen are driven into dissent, the world mocks, the infidel sneers, the devil triumphs, and souls are ruined ... it is an abuse that cries out to heaven against the Church of England, and it ought to be redressed.²⁷⁸

Ryle wanted to create a 'new class of ministers, to be named "Evangelists"'.²⁷⁹ The Bishop, advised by a Council of lay and clerical members, should separate a district from such an abandoned parish and license an Evangelist to work in it. In essence the Evangelist was to plant a church in this separated district. The Incumbent was to be relieved of all responsibility for it and the Evangelist was to be directly responsible to the Bishop and his Council.²⁸⁰ Ryle claimed the plan was scriptural (Ephesians 4:11) and had been tried in the early church and in the dioceses of Rochester and London in modern times.²⁸¹ The main objection to it was that it was a direct challenge to the rights of an Incumbent and an attack on the parochial system. Ryle believed that such missionary Evangelists would

rally the laity around the Church of England and argued strongly that the parochial system was not sacrosanct:

The Church of England has made an idol of her parochial system and has forgotten that it has weak points as well as strong ones, defects as well as advantages. To hear some men talk, you might fancy the parochial system came down from heaven, like the pattern of the Mosaic tabernacle, and that to attempt any other sort of ministry but a parochial one was a heresy and a sin. It is high time that we should change our tune and humbly acknowledge our mistake.²⁸²

Ryle argued that if the Church of England was to regain her influence over the 'masses' in the great cities, she had to be prepared to abandon the concept that parishes were 'ecclesiastical preserves'.²⁸³ The Church was lacking in 'elasticity' and the ability to adapt to circumstances.²⁸⁴ The parochial system may have been appropriate two and a half centuries ago, but in the late nineteenth century reform was needed.²⁸⁵ Otherwise, as the Times reported in February 1883, the Church of England would 'find itself one day the shadow of a great name'.²⁸⁶

This was a controversial suggestion of quite a radical nature. But the Church was in a crisis. Ryle carried out his own survey of fifteen churches in Liverpool where there was only an Incumbent, no curate, and where the income was only £300 or less per annum.

1881

Church Atten., June 4, 1882

Gross Pop.Ch.of Eng.

		Pop.	Morn.	Even.	Average
1.	5,225	1,748	271	442	356
2.	5,672	2,154	97	124	111
3.	11,309	3,267	60	60	60*
4.	10,491	3,062	29	52	41
5.	9,111	3,344	25	31	28
6.	8,774	1,769	280	186	233
7.	8,161	2,724	156	205	180
8.	4,996	2,127	161	353	257
9.	8,732	4,206	260	310	285
10.	6,214	3,037	228	313	270
11.	9,762	6,747	205	327	266
12.	6,430	3,424	156	151	153
13.	13,284	8,481	443	465	454
14.	9,737	5,960	302	314	308
15.	8,286	5,414	460	544	502
	126,184	57,464	3,133	3,877	3,504 287

* In this case alone the enumeration of attendance was conjectural.

Ryle conceded that many in the first column were Roman Catholics or Dissenters by profession and that, being poor parishes, many were kept away from worship 'by want of good clothes'.²⁸⁸ Nevertheless 'not seven percent of the professed Church of England inhabitants in fifteen Liverpool parochial districts went at any one service to the house of God!'²⁸⁹ He therefore proposed the innovative measure of abandoning parochial autonomy and establishing missionary curates. He concluded:

If those measures could be vigorously applied, I should have no fears for the future of my beloved country, or my Church. If they are not applied, I see nothing before us but ruin.²⁹⁰

Ryle elaborated on this proposal in his Second Charge.²⁹¹ The Evangelist's district should contain a population of 3,500. He should be given a team of one Scripture Reader and one Biblewoman. The object would be to visit not only every house, but every room in the district with the story of the Cross.²⁹² The cost of the complete team of three would be £400 per annum and Ryle expected them to work in the district

for five years. He thought that would be long enough to create a self-supporting church community. The total expense, therefore, was £2,000 over five years.²⁹³ This Charge also watered down the concept in two ways. First, Ryle broadened his appeal for support by stressing that human nature could not be 'let alone'.²⁹⁴ People who did not attend church were a potential source of disorder and mischief, 'a prey to every mob orator and sedition-monger, and a trouble to magistrates, municipal bodies, and Governments'.²⁹⁵ So Ryle appealed not on grounds of salvation to Christians for help in adopting his new scheme, but on grounds of public morality and social order to 'all philanthropists, and all patriots'.²⁹⁶ Second, Ryle claimed that it had never been his intention to interfere with the rights of an Incumbent. The Council would be an impartial body fairly chosen and if an Incumbent objected to the scheme it would not be imposed upon him.²⁹⁷

These two watering-down clauses were a vain attempt by Ryle to win more clerical support and more widespread support for the concept of roving Evangelists. In practice, they were an admission of defeat. At his first Diocesan Conference Ryle had stressed that the purpose of that body was to be a forum for discussion and not a body with authority to command action.²⁹⁸ Nevertheless, it was the only place for an expression of opinion on diocesan affairs. In particular it was a place for the Bishop to listen to his clergy.²⁹⁹ They could promote organised corporate action after counsel.³⁰⁰ If the Conference was 'mere talk' then it would soon dwindle to nothing.³⁰¹ At this first Conference the only practical proposals that Ryle suggested for evangelism were an Act of Parliament to remove some city churches in areas of declining population, and missionary Evangelists.³⁰² Ryle introduced this latter proposal at length in the second Diocesan Conference and a motion was debated on the setting up of Evangelists.³⁰³ Canon John Stewart and Dr. Fitzpatrick spoke strongly against it and the motion was defeated.³⁰⁴ This lack of support killed the scheme and left parochial autonomy and Incumbent impregnability intact. It was left to the Scripture Readers Association to take up the scheme in a limited way in the suggestion that the Scripture Reader should work in a parish other than the one paying him, although Ryle

was able to establish three missionary Evangelists, two in Walton and one in Bootle.³⁰⁵

(d) Ryle's Response: More Buildings

Ryle's principal strategy for evangelism, therefore, was to obtain 'more men' of the 'right sort', which meant, in summary, preachers of the Cross and sympathetic visiting pastors. His secondary strategy was to increase the visible presence of the Church in the form of buildings. He had advocated the need for new churches in his first Charge, and within four years he had consecrated nine new churches, two re-built churches and three new chancels. He had licensed three other churches for service. Four other churches had been nearly completed and five were just beginning, a total of twenty-six buildings.³⁰⁶ In addition to this, twenty iron rooms, school-rooms or mission rooms had been licensed for worship.³⁰⁷ However, he was not satisfied with this progress, and was particularly concerned about the district of Bootle.³⁰⁸ He thought there were many families who could easily afford to build churches and who would 'never miss the money'.³⁰⁹ By 1886 the total of buildings had increased to thirty-four (not including mission rooms).³¹⁰ But Ryle continued to identify specific areas of need and urged that there was yet more to be done.³¹¹ This remained his constant theme: appreciation of what was done but awareness of what was yet lacking.³¹² In total he consecrated forty-four new churches at a total cost of £397,000.³¹³

This building was not marked by continuous and steady growth. Apart from the year 1893, when five churches were consecrated, after 1891 only one church was built each year.³¹⁴ The same slowing down was also true of mission rooms. Sixty-one were licensed up to 1890, only twenty-four thereafter.³¹⁵ In practice, Ryle depended not on a general level of giving from churchmen throughout the diocese following his scheme of evangelism, but on the spontaneous generosity of individual wealthy residents for a church in their locality. Mrs. Reade had restored the church of St. James, West Derby, provided the property for a parsonage and Sunday School and built and endowed St. John the Baptist, Tuebrook.³¹⁶ The Misses Macrae provided all the endowment for

St. Philip's, Southport.³¹⁷ Mr. T.W. Cookson was largely responsible for St. Polycarp's and St. Leonard's, Bootle.³¹⁸ Colonel Brown built St. Benedict's, Everton.³¹⁹ Miss Thompson paid for a new chancel at Knotty Ash.³²⁰ Mrs. Hesketh and Mr. Heald built Emmanuel, North Meols.³²¹ The Ashton family were largely responsible for a new church at Huyton and St. Cleopas' Mission Room.³²² At all levels buildings were erected because of the giving of particular individuals. At the 'cheaper' end, for example, St. Saviour's Mission Room was made possible by Mrs. Groom who paid half the cost, i.e. £150.³²³ By contrast the Horsfall family, Mrs. Turner and Charles Groves gave thousands of pounds to church building. The Horsfalls built Christ Church, Great Homer Street, Christ Church, Linnet Lane, St. Margaret's, Princes Road, St. Agnes', Ullet Road and Emmanuel Church, West Derby Road (by their brother-in-law).³²⁴ Charles Groves built St. Philemon's, St. Cuthbert's, St. Titus', St. Cyprian's, St. Timothy's, St. Gabriel's and St. Athanasius'.³²⁵ He and Mrs. Turner between them built no fewer than fourteen new churches and rebuilt three old ones by 1886. They had four others built but not ready for consecration and five others in the process of building.³²⁶ Mrs. Turner continued this work after Charles Groves' death in 1886. St. John the Evangelist, Breck Road, was built in memory of Groves at a cost of £20,000, paid for entirely by Mrs. Turner.³²⁷

The spate of building in the 1880s did not continue and Ryle was reduced to re-echoing his cry for men to come forward and build:

I have no great Church-building Fund in my hands, as some suppose, in order to meet our wants. I can only look on with anxiety, and long for the return of days when Liverpool merchant-princes used to come forward and build churches themselves.³²⁸

Ryle's predecessor, Bishop Sumner, had consecrated a new church every month for nineteen and a half years, admittedly over a much larger diocesan area.³²⁹ In the town of Liverpool, 1821-1841, fifteen new churches were opened.³³⁰ But Sumner was so eager to build churches that he was prepared to consecrate them even when no endowment was

provided.³³¹ Ryle was not prepared to do this, and it was his awareness of the additional expenses of endowment and maintenance which led him to promote Mission Rooms. It was not that he preferred Mission Rooms but that pragmatically he saw they cost much less: 'We want more Mission Rooms in many of our large parishes, if we cannot get churches ... Let us not despair. If we cannot build churches, let us build rooms'.³³² A church cost at least £8,000.³³³ He, therefore, urged prospective donors to beware of extravagant designs. Handsome churches that gave the new Incumbent no income were 'like a millstone round his neck' and seriously crippled his usefulness.³³⁴ A Mission Room could be built at a quarter of the cost.³³⁵ Mission Rooms were also advantageous in that non-liturgical services could be held. This had the double appeal of enabling the clergyman to make use of lay help, and of not overwhelming a non-churchgoing workingman with the intricacies of the Prayer Book.³³⁶ Nevertheless, such rooms were only 'temporary stop-gap arrangements'. The real object was to establish a church, a resident vicar and a parsonage.³³⁷ Ryle never wavered from expressing his real desire for a church:

I am thoroughly satisfied that he who wants to do real and lasting good to a large growing city like Liverpool cannot possibly do better than build and endow a church.³³⁸

Even allowing for the prodigious building under Sumner, Ryle thought there remained much to do.³³⁹ His goal was to have a church 'within easy reach of every family'.³⁴⁰ Like most of his goals, it was not realised.

(e) Ryle's Response: Supporting Mission Work

In practice Ryle's attempts to instigate a strategy of evangelism, by promoting 'more men' and 'more buildings' were at best only partially implemented. He simply did not have the authority to command such a programme. At the end of the day what evangelism there was, was a voluntary response. These tended to fall into one of three categories: individuals working on their own, evangelistic

organisations and prominent Evangelists.

(i) Individuals working on their own Liverpool attracted a rag-bag of people who simply came and set up their own missions. Ryle had nothing to do with such people. Rev. Herbert John Wood left his parish in London and came to work in Liverpool as a result of reading the Squalid Liverpool reports.³⁴¹ His London friends gave him £66 with which he converted an old warehouse into a mission room which he ran with the help of two paid workers and 'several ladies'. His method of attracting people was to stand on the doorstep singing Moody and Sankey hymns. He mainly attracted 'hatless and shoeless' children, 'who required much keeping in order'. After nine months he was in debt and appealing for money.³⁴² The Rev. John Gamble also came from London to set up a mission with the help of his niece.³⁴³ He rented an old pub, 'The Old House at Home', which had lost its licence. In contrast to Wood, he set up a mothers' society and a Band of Hope, and established Saturday evening concerts. The basis of his appeal was house-to-house visiting. He also provided free breakfasts for destitute children on Sunday mornings.³⁴⁴ Within a year he was receiving donations of nearly £250, as well as raising money by lectures and bazaars.³⁴⁵ However, Gamble became engaged in warfare with the Council when he housed 61 men in a room supposed to take only eleven, charging them one penny to sleep overnight in a deck chair. The M.O.H. wanted to condemn the pub, but a higher court ruled that since it was not a profit-making business it was not subject to the Health Committee.³⁴⁶

Individual clergy in Liverpool also got on with the work of mission by themselves in their own parishes. Taylor held monthly mission services for the working class.³⁴⁷ Lefroy took homeless young men home to dinner every Sunday and ran Saturday evening Greek and Latin classes for those thinking of entering the ministry.³⁴⁸ Madden held monthly mission services for men only. These were 'filled'.³⁴⁹ Madden was regarded as a prime example of 'muscular Christianity'. His hobbies were astronomy, sculling, yachting and fishing. He was described as 'a man's man'.³⁵⁰ The tendency was to appeal to a

particular group of people. Ryle enthusiastically supported this concept. He regularly spoke to the Carters' Christian Association, encouraging them to be kind to their animals, temperate, truthful and to invite other carters and their 'young women' to their meetings.³⁵¹ He also spoke at meetings specially arranged for policemen and those involved in the coal trade.³⁵² But he most frequently spoke to railwaymen. He appealed for money on behalf of the Railway Servants' Orphanage in the knowledge that 500 railway workers were killed each year.³⁵³ He preached several times in Manchester to railwaymen.³⁵⁴ He urged them to work hard, to get on by their own efforts and to take 'real good exercise' to avoid ill-health. The Railway Mission was an admirable society and vital in view of the fact that railwaymen worked on Sundays.³⁵⁵

(ii) Official Evangelistic Organisations Ryle's attitude to more official organisations was ambivalent. He was caught between his concern to preserve the Church of England and his desire to see men saved. An organisation that promoted the latter but threatened the former consequently elicited mixed responses from him. A prime example of this was the newly emerging Church Army. He recognised that the Church Army reached to the lowest strata of society, untouched by the usual parish mission. He also personally liked Mr. Carlile, the founder. However, the Army's agents were expensive for poor parishes, existing organisations did a similar work, and they might threaten the position of an Incumbent.³⁵⁶ Similarly, Ryle was not enthusiastic at the threat General Booth posed to existing agents working for the gospel amongst the poor. Nevertheless, if the Salvation Army was 'drawing people to God', then the right response was thankfulness.³⁵⁷ Another problem area was that of women's organisations such as the Clewer sisters. Ryle was criticised for supposedly keeping them out of the diocese. The problem was that their own regulations required the 'official' sanction of the Bishop of the diocese where they wanted to work. Ryle declined to give this. He was not victimising the Clewer Sisters. He would not officially recognise even the evangelical Mildmay Sisters or anyone apart from his own Presbyters and deacons.³⁵⁸

But he was certainly not against such groups working in Liverpool: 'Let them come and work and do all the good they could'.³⁵⁹

(iii) Prominent Evangelists Ryle had a tremendous respect for successful Evangelists. The most prominent of these in Liverpool was Edward Sunners.³⁶⁰ Uneducated and illiterate, he was a blacksmith's striker who spent his Sundays challenging 'any man in Liverpool' to pugilistic combat.³⁶¹ He was also a drunkard.³⁶² He was converted through the influence of a Christian at his workplace who invited him to the Wesleyan Chapel in Upper Stanhope Street.³⁶³ He immediately engaged in cottage services and open-air meetings. Being unable to read the Bible, he relied to begin with on Wesley's hymns.³⁶⁴ He learnt to read by spelling out word for word St. John's Gospel at the age of twenty-seven.³⁶⁵ After four years he supplemented the Bible with Wesley's sermons.³⁶⁶ He was nicknamed 'Happy Ned' because he was always joyful.³⁶⁷ It was this feature which most struck Ryle.³⁶⁸ He would rise at 5 am to spend hours in communion with God.³⁶⁹ He became a Town Missionary in 1838.³⁷⁰ He worked amongst 'sweeps, tinkers, carters, cabdrivers, fish-women, clip-lads, shoeblacks, policemen, soldiers, sailors, scavengers, prostitutes, thieves and drunkards'.³⁷¹ His main outdoor service spot was 'the Big Lamp in Lime Street'.³⁷² These services attracted hundreds of people.³⁷³ But his main work was individual tract distribution.³⁷⁴ Ryle regularly supplied him with tracts and leaflets.³⁷⁵ The particular group which Sunners was most associated with were cabmen.³⁷⁶ When Ryle arrived in Liverpool he confessed 'he was not aware of the number of bishops Liverpool possessed. There was a Roman Catholic bishop, a Protestant bishop and, he believed, a cabmen's bishop'.³⁷⁷ Sunners was responsible for initiating shelters for cabmen and travelled to London, Manchester and elsewhere to explain the benefits of his scheme.³⁷⁸ He died in 1886. His funeral procession was a mile long and 30,000 people turned out.³⁷⁹ No man was so widely known in Liverpool among the poor.³⁸⁰ Ryle was well acquainted with him, thought highly of him and urged that imitation of him would promote the cause of the Gospel.³⁸¹

The other prominent Evangelist in Liverpool was a visitor, Dwight L. Moody. He first came to Liverpool in February 1875. It is not clear when Anglican clergy began to show enthusiasm for Moody. The Church of Ireland supported his mission to Dublin, and this may have encouraged limited Anglican support when he returned to Manchester and Liverpool.³⁸² The four most prominent Liverpool Anglican clergy to support the mission were Herbert Woodward, Henry Baugh, Thomas Whalley and Hay Aitken.³⁸³ The latter gave up his church in Everton to set up the Church of England Parochial Mission.³⁸⁴ Moody's visit led to a new building for the Y.M.C.A., the growth of the Carters' Christian Union, the free breakfast movement for the poor, the strangers' rest room for Seamen, the Cocoa Room movement and the Evangelisation Society for Liverpool.³⁸⁵ This last was still holding daily noon prayer meetings when Moody returned in 1883. It was also computed that church attendance was up as a result of the 1875 Mission.³⁸⁶ The Albert Mission Hall, established during the first visit, was still attracting a congregation of 450 twelve years later, the local clergy, both Anglican and Nonconformist, taking turns to preach.³⁸⁷ The Evangelisation Society held tent meetings nightly, twice on Sunday and special services three times a week for children throughout the summer.³⁸⁸

Whatever the response of the Anglican clergy in 1874, Ryle was wholeheartedly behind the Mission of 1883. The Mission began on 1 April with four meetings and ran through until 27 April.³⁸⁹ More than a thousand attended the noon prayer meetings and the hall for main meetings was full an hour beforehand.³⁹⁰ It does not appear that Ryle attended during the campaign, although his daughter did.³⁹¹ But at other public meetings he spoke in favour of Moody because there was 'no sensationalism, no drums and trumpets, but the story of the Cross from the Word of God'.³⁹² Ryle was present at the last 'Christian' convention meeting and spoke. He described Moody, who gave an address, as 'a good servant of Jesus Christ ... he [Ryle] wished to thank God with all his heart for him [Moody]'.³⁹³ Ryle thought Moody was so successful because 'he had made much of the Cross, therefore ... God had made much of him'.³⁹⁴ Ryle was in London when Moody closed his

stay in England in June 1884, and he took the trouble to go to the Mission and open it in prayer.³⁹⁵

(c) Ryle's Response: Personal Mission Work

Ryle always spoke favourably of Moody.³⁹⁶ Anyone who 'saved souls' was to be encouraged. Ryle promoted organised missions within the Church of England wherever he could.³⁹⁷ One of the last new tracts he wrote was Thoughts about a Mission, in 1890. He affirmed 'all well-conducted Missions have my entire approval'.³⁹⁸ The purpose of a Mission was to promote repentance, faith and practical holiness.³⁹⁹ A successful Mission would result in more private Bible reading, private prayer, a better keeping of Sunday and a better attendance on the Lord's Table.⁴⁰⁰ Ryle advocated four steps for a successful Mission. First, there should be much prayer before it began. Second, the local church people should attend all the services. Third, the churchmen should invite people who derided the Mission to attend. Fourth, 'After the Mission is over, pray daily and continually for God's blessing upon it'. He also encouraged Christians to 'take up some useful work for Christ, and do not leave it off. Exercise is one secret of good health'.⁴⁰¹ The choice of a committee to plan a city-wide Mission was left in Ryle's hands after an initial meeting in January 1893.⁴⁰² Ryle appointed James Honeyburne, Dr. John Harrison and John Sheepshanks. When the latter was appointed Bishop of Norwich, Ryle chose Richard Montagu Ainslie as his replacement.⁴⁰³ This Mission was eventually held in January - February 1894. A total of 73 churches participated in it. There were daily addresses to businessmen at St. Nicholas' by Hay Aitken and at St. George's by Francis Webster. There were special services for men, women and children, special choirs led the worship and some churches adopted street processions. Attendances on the Sunday were 'unusually large'. The missionaries came from as far away as Exeter and Plymouth. The whole campaign stressed 'the utter undesirableness of excitement. This is the true note of the Church of England'.⁴⁰⁴

Ryle preached the opening and closing addresses of this Mission and had 'a firm conviction much good had been accomplished'.⁴⁰⁵ Thirty

years after Ryle's death this mission was still identified as a significant spiritual event.⁴⁰⁶ Nevertheless Ryle's episcopate was not marked by large-scale evangelistic campaigns. After ten years in the diocese he could only count four occasions when he talked to large numbers of workingmen. There was a meeting to support the Sunday closing of pubs, a meeting in support of early shop closing, the Moody mission and the Armada celebrations.⁴⁰⁷ But while any sort of mass evangelistic address was a rarity in the diocese, what was constant was Ryle's own preaching of the Gospel. Within eighteen months Ryle had preached in 90 different churches in the diocese.⁴⁰⁸ By the time of his second charge in 1884 he had preached in 150 out of 187 churches.⁴⁰⁹ He was prepared to preach anywhere and denied a rumour that he would not preach at St. Margaret's, Anfield, for theological reasons. The only ground of ever refusing was that he was otherwise engaged.⁴¹⁰ He preached at St. Margaret's, Anfield, on 6 January 1885 at the start of the parish's dedication festival.⁴¹¹

Ryle was well aware that he was not a young man when he became Bishop of Liverpool.⁴¹² He had pointed this fact out to Disraeli and privately in letters to his son.⁴¹³ Nevertheless, he indeed had 'a good constitution'. He much preferred the prospect of a short energetic life in Liverpool to years of quiet slumbering in Salisbury.⁴¹⁴ Although Ryle suffered from occasional short bouts of illness of a few days duration, he remained healthy and energetic until the last year of his episcopate.⁴¹⁵ It is true that he collapsed from exhaustion in May 1891 and appointed Bishop Royston of Mauritius to officiate at confirmations in his place.⁴¹⁶ Ryle did no work in June or July and then took his normal two months holiday in Lowestoft.⁴¹⁷ He returned to Liverpool for a few days early in October, but spent the rest of the month in Scotland.⁴¹⁸ At the Diocesan Conference, he revealed that he had seriously considered resigning but declined to do so because the diocese would have the expense of paying for two Bishops.⁴¹⁹ He pointed out that he would not do as much public work as he had done before (i.e. confirmations, consecrations, opening buildings). This work would be done by Bishop Peter Royston.⁴²⁰ Ryle had warned that he might resign two years earlier, when his wife

died.⁴²¹ He was still advised to do no work in January 1892, although by then he was able to walk.⁴²² There was a steady increase in the amount of work Ryle did through to his summer holidays, though Royston did most of the confirmations in May and June.⁴²³ When Ryle returned from his holiday he took on his old usual workload and consequently had a relapse in December 1892 and January 1893.⁴²⁴ From this point on, however, Ryle made a full recovery. Royston's role became so minimal that from March 1896 he became vicar at Childwall, being bound only 'in an emergency' to come to Ryle's aid.⁴²⁵ Ryle remained active until May 1899.⁴²⁶ He preached at St. Silas on 14 May but was unable to attend the annual C.M.S. meeting the following day.⁴²⁷ He took a three month holiday in Lowestoft, planning to return to Liverpool in September.⁴²⁸ However, he was advised not to return.⁴²⁹ He stayed briefly in Liverpool before going on to the Lake District. He attended St. Luke's on 15 October, the Diocesan Offices on 16 October, and held a special ordination service on 18 October for Professor David Morgoliouth of New College, Oxford.⁴³⁰ There was only a sparse congregation at this latter event, which was Ryle's last public act as Bishop.⁴³¹ He was described as being 'in good voice but very feeble'.⁴³² The cancellation of the Diocesan Conference and his enforced absence from a special meeting of Bishops at Lambeth confirmed Ryle's decision to resign with effect from 1 March 1900.⁴³³ He spent most of the last three months confined to his room and was too ill to leave the diocese until 23 March 1900.⁴³⁴ He died within three months of leaving Liverpool.⁴³⁵

In practice, therefore, Ryle's episcopate finished in May 1899. But apart from the period May 1891 to January 1892 and December 1892 to January 1893, Ryle was an active prelate throughout his time in Liverpool. The heart of this activity was his own regular preaching. So long as he had the health to do this, he would remain as Bishop. On his seventieth birthday he remarked;

although he could not run as fast, jump over a five bar gate, pull a boat, or play cricket, he could still do something. As long as a man could preach twice on Sunday ... his labours were a joy to him and the greatest pleasure he had for the few remaining years of his life was to preach the Everlasting Gospel throughout the diocese.⁴³⁶

On his eightieth birthday, Archdeacon Taylor together with a small group of clergy, including James Bell Cox, presented an address to Ryle. This included a reference to Ryle's continued good health and strength.⁴³⁷ The clergy commended their bishop for 'his unceasing activity day and night'.⁴³⁸ A Post editorial positively eulogised Ryle: 'His powers show no abatement. He does not stoop beneath the weight of his years. He does not falter beneath the load of his duties. Erect, stalwart, hearty and cordial, he is a model of what a venerable prelate should be'.⁴³⁹ On his eighty-third birthday in May 1899, Ryle was praised for continuing to preach regularly.⁴⁴⁰ On his retirement he received an address from the members of the Islington Clerical meeting who put at the top of their list thanksgiving for Ryle's preaching.⁴⁴¹ Ryle replied that he only wanted to be 'regarded by you as a debtor to mercy and grace'.⁴⁴²

The content of Ryle's preaching in the 1880s and 1890s in Liverpool was exactly that of the 1840s and 1850s in Suffolk. He thought the city was the place 'where Satan's seat is'.⁴⁴³ It was the place of 'idolatry'.⁴⁴⁴ 'Walk through the north end of Liverpool on Saturday evening, or Sunday, or on a Bank holiday, and see how Sabbath-breaking, intemperance and general ungodliness appear to rule and reign uncontrolled'.⁴⁴⁵ The proper response was not to marvel at the achievement of man but to weep for the evident sin of the people.⁴⁴⁶ If a man was sensitive to this panorama of sin then he would immediately engage in aggressive evangelism, irrespective of whether or not anyone would help.⁴⁴⁷ Effective evangelism meant preaching 'Jesus and the resurrection'.⁴⁴⁸

The grand subject of our teaching in every place ought to be Jesus Christ. However learned or however unlearned, however high-born or however humble our audience, Christ crucified - Christ - Christ - Christ - crucified, rising, interceding, redeeming, pardoning, receiving, saving - Christ must be the grand theme of our teaching. We shall never mend this Gospel.⁴⁴⁹

This preaching was bound to do good.⁴⁵⁰ It was the only adequate remedy for the disease of dying sinners.⁴⁵¹ Man's life was marked by sin, suffering and death.⁴⁵² Ryle affirmed 'It is a true saying that we came into life crying, and pass through it complaining, and leave it disappointed'.⁴⁵³ To tell the story of Christ therefore was not just bound to do good, it was 'the only way to do good'.⁴⁵⁴ This was the heart of Ryle's theology expounded in Helmingham and Stradbroke; it was also the core of his evangelism in Liverpool in the 1880s and 1890s. He was prepared to support anyone who would preach this Gospel and his strategy of 'more buildings' and 'more men' was designed to further the preaching of Christ. This was the way to evangelise the unchurched masses of Liverpool. Although the strategy of evangelism came to little, Ryle personally engaged in evangelism throughout his episcopate. But the preaching of Christ, although Ryle's central concern, was not his exclusive concern; he was also deeply involved in contemporary social questions. Such involvement, however, was always secondary to preaching Christ.

CHAPTER FOUR

BISHOP RYLE: THEOLOGY AT WORK -

SOCIAL ISSUES IN LIVERPOOL

[Liverpool was] the moral Waterloo of the nation, where good and evil were engaged in a hand to hand struggle. In no place was evil stronger, more active and more determined.¹

The most common misconception about J.C.Ryle is that he was an ultra-conservative unconcerned with everyday affairs in the late nineteenth century. John Kent describes him as 'the most rugged and conservative of all Anglican Evangelical personalities'.² The two recent biographies of Ryle make no mention at all of his involvement in social questions in Liverpool. This judgement is wide of the mark. Liverpool, 'the moral Waterloo of the nation', provided Ryle with a sweeping canvas of social issues to tackle. This chapter deals with six areas of social concern: unemployment, the role of women, education, temperance, Sunday observance and war. To describe Ryle as 'conservative' is a simplistic assessment of his attitude. In some ways he was quite advanced in his approach, whilst in others he was very much bound by the thinking of his time. At the very least, it would be more accurate to say that much of his time and energy was taken up with social issues, and that whilst on Sunday he might preach almost exclusively on the need for personal conversion, during the week his own life revealed that personal faith must be worked out in a concern for the structures of society.

(1) UNEMPLOYMENT

Ryle was one of the main promoters of the Commission of Inquiry into Unemployment in Liverpool set up in 1894 under the chairmanship of the mayor (William Bowring)³. Some of the witnesses ridiculed the

Commission for limiting its investigations to purely local issues, arguing that effective remedies could only be achieved through Parliament, such as the nationalisation of land or an equalisation of wages.⁴ Most of the witnesses, when asked for suggested local remedies for unemployment, were simply lost for words.⁵ Naturally, the focus of attention was on the docks, where it soon became evident that there was a basic conflict of interest between the shipowners, who wanted to keep a large surplus of labour always available though not always employed, and the Dockers Union, who wanted to reduce the supply of labour and regularise employment.⁶

The main problem in the docks was the variation in demand for labour. The cotton season ran from October to March and was the main source of employment.⁷ But only a small percentage of dockers were permanent hands. One witness estimated less than 30%, while a director of Cunard estimated that out of 2,800 men only 500 were permanent.⁸ The Inman Company employed 400 men, but only fifty were permanent.⁹ The Warehouse Department of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board employed 2,782 men at busy times, but only 337 were working all year round.¹⁰ The secretary of the Warehouse Porters Union reckoned that 3,000 porters lost their jobs in the summer months.¹¹ Of those who remained working in the summer 2,000 were out of work in the spring, and 2,000 had very little work.¹² James Sexton, secretary of the Dockers Union, computed that on any day there were 16,000 men looking for work at the docks.¹³ The existence of full unemployment was denied.¹⁴ The problem was not between employment and unemployment but between a small percentage of full employment and a majority on a three or two day week.¹⁵

The wages in Liverpool were regarded as high.¹⁶ Generally, before 1890, ship labour was 4/6 per day and quay and warehouse men earned 4/3 per day.¹⁷ As a result of the Dock Strike these basic levels were raised to 5/- and 4/6 respectively.¹⁸ But it was possible to earn considerably more than these basic rates. Men who stood over the hatch earned 5/6 per day; those who 'broke out' cargo earned 6/-, while those who stocked the ships (stevedores) earned 7/- per day.¹⁹ If coal was

handled the wages went up to 8/-.²⁰ Night work was very rewarding: labourers 8/-, hatchmen 10/-, breakers out 12/-, stevedores 13/-.²¹

It was not possible, therefore, to speak of the 'dock labourer'. In addition to all of these there were engineers and maintenance men, painters, carpenters, firemen and sailors.²² With the increasing passenger traffic there were also stewards, cooks, bakers, butchers. And on top of that there were all the river tugboats and flats, and several thousand carters.²³ Since shipowners tended to keep the same gangs on a ship, overtime work went to those already employed and not to those wanting work.²⁴ The Amalgamated Society of Engineers successfully campaigned against overtime in favour of a regulated eight hour shift work thus creating more jobs.²⁵ But it was one of James Sexton's main complaints that the Dockers Union had failed to regulate overtime.²⁶ It was this failure which enabled some dockers to be very well off.

Stevedores were highest paid because the speed of turn-around depended on them, because the stability of the ship depended on the storage of goods, and because they had to account for the availability of different cargo at different ports of call on one trip.²⁷ But others could earn a comfortable wage. Porters divided into those simply carrying and those who dealt exclusively with marking, weighing and checking.²⁸ They were not bound by the ship's timetable and therefore enjoyed steadier work.²⁹ One example of a comfortable checker was David Brindley.

David Brindley, a migrant farmworker, held a steady job in Liverpool from January 1882 to at least February 1891.³⁰ He was first a milkman for just over seven months and for the rest of the time he worked in the docks as a railway porter for the London and North Western Railway.³¹ He progressed from carting to checking.³² Although the hours were long, often to eight o'clock in the evening, the wages were twenty-four shillings per week in 1883 and probably thirty shillings by 1887.³³ This enabled him to move from bachelor lodgings

with relatives, to lodgings with a landlord, to rented apartments (on marriage), and finally to rented houses.³⁴ He moved twelve times in eight years, all the accommodation being in Everton-Kirkdale.³⁵ The rent of the houses was always 5/6 per week and they were all within one and half miles of his work.³⁶

He was also a regular churchgoer: 'In this he is far from typical of the working class as a whole'.³⁷ He had texts and comments on biblical passages in his Bible and bought a Bible for his cousin on her twenty-first birthday.³⁸ He made trips to special functions such as harvest festivals and to hear well-known preachers.³⁹ His regular attendance was at St. Chad's Mission Church.⁴⁰ Although 'comfortable' and 'respectable', he was not well off; he saved money by drinking rarely and walking everywhere.⁴¹ Some of his clothes were second hand and his wife made most of them.⁴² Furniture was bought second hand at auctions.⁴³ His wife's miscarriages resulted in doctor's bills which could only be met by borrowing from friends and pawning.⁴⁴

The possibilities for making money which a steady job provided was compounded by a sharp drop in the cost of living during the years 1873-1894. The price of bread halved, as did that of tea and butter.⁴⁵ Bacon, ham and lard declined in price by 20% and cheese by 10%.⁴⁶ Coal fell from a price ranging from 16/9 to 22/- per ton, to 8/9 per ton.⁴⁷ Refrigeration brought 30/- off the price of a hundredweight of beef and mutton.⁴⁸ Potatoes more than halved in price.⁴⁹ The one area where prices did not fall was rent.⁵⁰ Houses rented at 5/- in 1870 had increased to 5/9 by 1894.⁵¹ But this was for the smallest type of cottage. Better accommodation cost 6/6 to 7/- per week.⁵² This was partly the consequence of improved sanitation.⁵³ Even cellar accommodation in the mid 1890s cost 5/- a week.⁵⁴ Lighting was an extra 1/- per week and heating 1/6.⁵⁵ At an estimated cost of 3/- per person for food, a family of four children would need 18/- per week.⁵⁶ An average weekly living cost was therefore 25/6.⁵⁷ A stevedore working a six day week could earn 42/- per week plus overtime. But on a three day working week the bills could not be met and the average weekly wage amongst dockers was less than £1.⁵⁸ The net result was

widespread poverty. David Brindley was not typical; the majority faced the problem of how to survive in conditions of severe poverty.⁵⁹ 'Gombeen-men' offered small loans at exorbitant interest.⁶⁰ Itinerant milk vendors did the same at 25% interest. Publicans and shopkeepers gave credit but at their own rates of interest too.⁶¹ Therefore, 'for the majority the overwhelming characteristic of working at the docks was the perennial struggle against poverty which derived from irregular employment ... the Liverpool dock labourer and his family was, therefore, condemned to a lifestyle that encouraged fecklessness, corruption, and brutality both at work and at home.'⁶²

The Commission of Inquiry recognised that something had to be done about providing suitable housing at a reasonable rate but were unable to make any specific proposals.⁶³ They did, however, make a number of specific proposals to achieve a regulation of labour, most notably the reduction of stands at the docks; better communications with the Unions over the supply of labour; and a weekly as opposed to a daily wage.⁶⁴ The way to achieve this was to prevent the existence of surplus labour by promoting internal migration and emigration.⁶⁵ Significantly, both the Protestant (Liverpool City Mission), and Catholic (Society of St Vincent de Paul), organisations consulted by the Commission specifically rejected any involvement with 'the labour question'.⁶⁶ Ryle himself also avoided any association with labour regulation, but he did concern himself with both housing and emigration. He was well aware of the magnitude of the problem. Where he most diverged from the Commission was in its distinction between 'moral' unemployment and 'economic' unemployment. The Commission concentrated on the latter but for most of his episcopate Ryle concentrated on the former.

The dock labourer's answer to this poverty was diverse. First and foremost everybody in the family had to earn money. Hence there was a burgeoning growth of women's and girl's work in Liverpool. Wives acted as charwomen or button-hole tailoresses.⁶⁷ Young children sold newspapers or matches, or begged.⁶⁸ Cheap food was bought, especially rotten meat purchased on Sunday morning.⁶⁹ Everyone was out when the rent was due.⁷⁰ But usually in the end the wife and children either

went back to live with parents or were migrated to a manufacturing district, principally Manchester, by the Central Relief Society.⁷¹ The men went into lodging houses. As many as 5,303 lived in 103 such houses.⁷² All of this inevitably happened with age as younger and stronger men took the available jobs.⁷³ The result was that many men simply deserted their wives and went elsewhere to look for work.⁷⁴ Or as James Sexton described it, they 'simply slide out of existence'.⁷⁵ Poverty was an economic question to which moral answers, such as evangelism, were not adequate. During one unemployment demonstration a speaker referred to a visitor who gave him a tract as an answer to his problem. With this he was supposed to get breakfast, tea and supper and pay the landlord. The bells of the Liverpool churches tolled everywhere to go to church on an empty stomach.⁷⁶

Ryle was aware even at Stradbroke of the problem of unemployment. Young people migrated to London because there were no jobs in rural Suffolk and once in the metropolis they simply sank out of sight.⁷⁷ Ryle was already a believer in the value of emigration to countries 'where there was plenty of wages, and plenty to do, and plenty to eat'.⁷⁸ When he moved to Liverpool one of the first societies he patronised was that of Mrs. Birt's Sheltering Home and in twenty years he rarely missed its annual meetings.⁷⁹ The object of the society was to take children from the poor streets of Liverpool, put them in a home and then emigrate them to Canada. The majority of the children involved were orphans (although Ryle believed in emigration for children in large families).⁸⁰ About 130-160 were sent out to Canada each year.⁸¹ In the first 17 years of the Homes a total of 2,000 children were emigrated.⁸² The annual meetings were usually attended by ladies, and often struggled for money.⁸³ Nevertheless the Society was able to build larger Homes to accommodate more children and to cope with the increased costs of the advent of steamships.⁸⁴ One of Ryle's main tasks was to appeal for money from the rich shipping merchants.⁸⁵ While not condemning General Booth's scheme of a labour farm for emigrants, which the General promoted nationally in 1890, Ryle anxiously reminded Liverpudlians that Mrs. Birt had already been doing

such work for years and he hoped monies would not be diverted away from her.⁸⁶

One of the main reasons which Ryle adduced in support of emigration was that it was far more cost effective than any other scheme for looking after such children. Mrs. Birt was 'the best possible friend of the ratepayers'.⁸⁷ If these children were left on the streets, one of two courses would be followed. First, they might simply fall into destitution. Ryle was appalled at the visibility of poverty in Liverpool. Whether walking on the docks or driving through the city streets to preach in distant churches he saw 'ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-clad little boys and girls', without shoes and stockings and in rags.⁸⁸ Under the Poor Law the cost of looking after such children was £100 per annum for each child.⁸⁹ If they were permanently in an orphanage it would cost £150 per annum.⁹⁰ If they were boarded out it would be to a poor peasant at a cost of 4/1 per week,⁹¹ whereas Mrs. Birt would put them temporarily in her home and emigrate them for a total of £15.⁹² Thereafter the child would be boarded out to an 'orderly and churchgoing' thrifty Canadian yeoman farmer with his own property at no cost at all.⁹³

Second, and worse, such children might remain on the streets and become violent criminals.⁹⁴ They would form a class below the pauperised, which Ryle termed 'the Dangerous Class'.⁹⁵ It was this possibility which caused Mr. Raffles, the Stipendiary Magistrate, to promote emigration for the boys of the Liverpool Juvenile Reformatory.⁹⁶ Samuel Smith thought that the main benefit of emigration was to keep children away from the corrupting influence of those around them.⁹⁷ Ryle warned that not to emigrate such children would mean that they, the residents of Liverpool, 'would reap the harvest of crime and poverty of every description'.⁹⁸ And police, courts and prisons all cost money, whereas emigration would lessen taxation.⁹⁹

Ryle was criticised for supporting emigration, generally on the grounds that the colonies did not want Britain's unwanted children. He

was also criticised for supporting Mrs. Birt who was not known to be a member of the Church of England.¹⁰⁰ He dismissed this last accusation quickly: 'He honestly confessed that he did not know to what denomination [she belonged], but he did know that she belonged to the Holy Catholic Church of Christ and was endeavouring to do a Christian work in a Christian way ... he believed her great desire was to do them good in body and soul'.¹⁰¹ But Ryle was also careful to support the specific Church of England emigration scheme run by Rev. John Bridger under the auspices of the S.P.C.K.¹⁰² He conducted a brief service on the ship for such groups and reminded them that their Heavenly Father would be as near to them in Canada as England.¹⁰³ He would give out Bibles and Prayer Books to any children.¹⁰⁴

Ryle was also conscious of the general criticism. But his enthusiasm for emigration was supported by Samuel Smith, the Liverpool Liberal MP, Mr. Raffles, the Stipendiary Magistrate, and on a wider level by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Tait.¹⁰⁵ He was careful to stress that the children emigrated had to be well-prepared for their new lands.¹⁰⁶ His contact with colonial Bishops enabled him to report that they looked with favour on Mrs. Birt's work.¹⁰⁷ The children who went seemed to be successful too. Letters were sent back to Liverpool reporting marriages to landowners, entry into college, and even preparation for the ministry.¹⁰⁸ The offices on the Canadian side reported that they were only meeting one third of the demand, especially for young teenage girls.¹⁰⁹ When an extensive survey over 2,000 miles of children in Canada from Mrs. Birt's Homes was carried out, it was reported that many remained with the same family for nine to sixteen years, some had farms of over 100 acres and many had their own smaller farms. Some had received legacies from their adopting parents.¹¹⁰

With the encouragement of this evident success, Ryle continued to assert his great faith in emigration and wish that it were more loudly proclaimed.¹¹¹ He thought it one of the most useful yet neglected schemes in England.¹¹² Other clergy and churchmen also sought to promote it. At the Diocesan Conference of 1885 Rev. John Bridger urged

that every diocese should have its own emigration society and Mr. Christopher Bushell pressed for a Government scheme as an 'absolute necessity'.¹¹³ Bridger proposed that each diocese should have its own separate location to which all its people could be sent. The houses should be built for the emigrants before they arrived and food should be supplied for one year.¹¹⁴ Both speakers were thinking here of the emigration of adults as a means of reducing surplus population. In other words, emigration was the solution to the problem of unemployment.¹¹⁵ Ryle believed this too. Emigration would reduce overcrowding, prevent strikes and relieve unemployment.¹¹⁶ He cited the example of the Scottish Crofters as one of successful emigration dealing with an industrial crisis.¹¹⁷ This hope for adult emigration was not realised. Even Mrs. Birt's success was limited in its effect. She ran a scheme with a 95% success rate, yet in ten years only 2,620 children had been emigrated out of the poor rate in the whole of England.¹¹⁸ Even within Liverpool Samuel Smith concluded that the schemes of emigration were like 'trying to empty the Atlantic with a tea-cup'.¹¹⁹

(2) WOMEN

Ryle only produced one work specifically on the role of women in society.¹²⁰ In commenting on the list of twenty-eight names that Paul chronicles in Romans 16, he observed that eleven or twelve were women and that the apostle 'openly declares his obligation to a few weak women'.¹²¹ Ryle limited this obligation to the work of women in the home.¹²² Their prime role was to remove any stumbling blocks to religion in the home 'by kind tempers, by gentle words, by meekness, by patience, by unselfishness, by attention in little things'.¹²³ A woman was to make the evenings of the day pleasant when her husband returned from a wearying day at work.¹²⁴ It was imperative to make sure that everything in the home was in its place, everything ready and comfortable for his return.¹²⁵ Women were certainly not to be involved in public work either as visitors or teachers.¹²⁶ Ryle never retracted his emphasis of the role of women at home in supporting their husband's work, in giving Christian education to their children and especially in

preventing the spread of intemperance. But it is quite clear that his views on the role of women greatly broadened during his episcopate, breaking away from the narrowness of early Victorian evangelical attitudes.¹²⁷

A major reason for this change was the impact of his own wife. Henrietta was clearly a very competent woman. She was gifted musically and played the organ at the services in Stradbroke.¹²⁸ She was a keen amateur photographer, whose enthusiasm was enough to cause the parishioners to present albums to her and her husband on their departure from Suffolk.¹²⁹ She was good enough to win third prize at the Liverpool exhibition and her work was displayed as far afield as Glasgow.¹³⁰ She was indispensable to her husband as his secretary, a fact he publicly acknowledged on several occasions.¹³¹ She always accompanied the Bishop to his many functions whenever she could (an unusual thing for Bishops' wives to do), and she provided the impetus for his involvement in the Zenana Missionary Society, the Ladies' Parochial Bible and Domestic Mission and the Girls Friendly Society.¹³² Loane is wrong to pinpoint her death as a watershed of activity in Ryle's episcopate, from which he never recovered.¹³³ But it was a great loss to him. He visited her grave in Childwall every week for ten years and always sat in her seat at St. Nathaniel's.¹³⁴ His remarks that a man without a wife was less than half a man and that his wife was by far the better half in their relationship were more genuine than simply humorous.¹³⁵

Ryle was also aware and abreast of the changing attitudes towards women in the 1880s and 1890s, especially in educational terms. He drew a favourable comparison between the opportunities available for women then with the memories of his own sisters, who were ineffectively taught to be merely decorative by a string of governesses.¹³⁶ Ryle was happy to promote education for girls and was more frequently at their prize days than at the equivalent schools for boys. He spoke scathingly of the Indian educational system which provided scant facilities for women, and he was advanced enough to promote women's places at university and physical education for them in schools.¹³⁷

Ryle was in tune with his fellow clergy here. Daughters of clergymen composed twenty-five percent of the women at Oxford and Cambridge; hockey and cycling had become widespread by the 1890s.¹³⁸ All of this was a far cry from his Stradbroke days. Nevertheless, while welcoming these advances he was certainly not prepared to be radical. Book-keeping, handwriting and cookery were to be preferred to Sanskrit and the binomial theorem.¹³⁹ Education had moved beyond the three 'Rs', but its purpose was still 'to fit boys and girls for the place they had to fill in life'.¹⁴⁰ Good cooks, for example, were scarce and skills taught in cookery would ensure a good job for girls.¹⁴¹ He approved of women on school boards.¹⁴² This was an advanced position; at most there was only one woman to every ten School Boards.¹⁴³ Although he thought that votes for women would eventually be conceded, he did not personally approve the measure.¹⁴⁴ He did not disapprove in principle but simply on the pragmatic ground that women had enough to do without the burden of electioneering.¹⁴⁵ In fact the majority of women campaigning for Emancipation in the 1890s only pressed for the enfranchisement of rate-paying widows and unmarried women, a position Ryle would have supported.¹⁴⁶

Occasionally Ryle's old conservatism became exposed. He professed not to know what 'the new woman' was and hoped girls would not desire to be one.¹⁴⁷ The 'new woman' was a short-lived phenomenon^{ca} of the mid 1890s, more prevalent in fiction than reality and chiefly marked by cycling and smoking in public.¹⁴⁸ Ryle was always conscious of the vulnerability of women in a modern metropolis like Liverpool, and took refuge himself in a more ordered and protective society in which men were men and women were women.¹⁴⁹ Every day streams of girls passed through Abercromby Square to work in the city or the well-to-do residences.¹⁵⁰ As such Ryle was keen to promote social purity, 'rescue' societies and faithfulness in marriage. At a national level he was concerned at the steady rise of divorce and in particular the prominence which the press gave to cases involving leading public figures. In the first thirty years of the new legislation 10,561 petitions had been filed and 7,321 were granted.¹⁵¹ Ryle held what was his widest ever cross-denominational meeting on this subject, by

personal invitation, at Abercomby Square. The meeting produced a petition appealing for legislation to curtail, if not prohibit, such reports. It was signed by the Roman Catholic Bishop and 116 of his clergy, fifty-nine Methodist ministers, fourteen Presbyterian ministers, thirty-two Congregationalists, fourteen Baptists, four from the Jewish synagogue, five from the Unitarian church and the Archimandrite of the Greek church, on top of 164 clergy of the Church of England.¹⁵² They recorded their very deep sense of the grave injury done to the cause of public morality.¹⁵³

At a diocesan level, Ryle urged his clergy to be more outspoken on the prevalent breaking of the seventh commandment, and the Diocesan Conference of November 1883, apart from encouraging better morals amongst parents and the establishment of Girls and Boys Friendly Societies, wanted to ban all soliciting in the street, raise the legal age of entry into brothels from 16 to 21, and form a diocesan branch of the Church of England purity society.¹⁵⁴ Ryle had instructed rural deans to promote rescue work among fallen women and had invited Henry Scott-Holland and Miss Ellie Hopkins to visit the diocese.¹⁵⁵ As a result the Midnight Mission to Lime Street prostitutes was set up and reclaimed 50-60 women in four months.¹⁵⁶ On a typical evening 100 women came into the hall and were given free tea, bread and butter and a bun loaf, plus an hour of addresses from the ladies who ran the show.¹⁵⁷ This mission only survived because the hall was given free by a Mr. Roberts who also paid the heating and lighting costs.¹⁵⁸ It was five years before a men's committee was set up to work with the ladies and ten years later the Bishop lamented that they were 'hardly touching the fringes of the crowd' of women who came to Liverpool for work.¹⁵⁹ Similarly, the growth of the Girls Friendly Society, run by Lady Latham, owed much to Ryle's support when other clergy declined to support it.¹⁶⁰ Voicing approval of the independence that new employment offered to women, Ryle nevertheless remarked that it was dangerous to be a stranger in a strange city and heartily supported the Girls Friendly Society for providing a safe home.¹⁶¹ Far and away the majority of the women were domestic servants and often only left when they married.¹⁶² As the chief source of fallen women was 'corrupted

domestic servants' the Friendly Societies hoped to prevent what the Midnight Mission hoped to redeem.¹⁶³

Neither of these societies made a great deal of impact and prostitution remained strong in Liverpool. Another society, the Rescue Society, set up in 1890, had 386 women pass through its home in its first year, the majority being in their twenties.¹⁶⁴ But within three years the home was on the verge of closing due to insufficient funds.¹⁶⁵ Ryle accounted for the decreasing attraction of women to the home being too severe and advised greater sympathy for those caught up in prostitution.¹⁶⁶ There were, nevertheless, thousands of prostitutes in Liverpool, often being visiting women looking for work who were lured into the business.¹⁶⁷ It was asserted that the brewing magnates sustained the trade, which was regarded as vital in increasing the sale of drink as pubs were the place of contact.¹⁶⁸ The lax policing of brothels, particularly the ignoring of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 by the Liverpool police, attracted prostitutes from other cities.¹⁶⁹ Alderman John Hughes was especially under fire as he was both a member of the Licensing Bench and Chairman of the Watch Committee, while also the confidential legal adviser of the two largest public house owners in Liverpool.¹⁷⁰ But it was generally argued that there was an inextricable link between the official Conservatism of Liverpool and the brewing interest.¹⁷¹ Ryle, as usual, showed no interest in the political aspects of drink and prostitution.

A third cause of Ryle's broadening views of women was the realisation that there were certain spheres in which women were more effective in evangelism than men. In overseas mission work Ryle was drawn to India on account of his strong imperialist tendencies. Just as he was an agent of the Crown, so he felt involved in India because Victoria had been created Empress.¹⁷² Consequently he subscribed to the Zenana Mission whose purpose was to send lady missionaries to India, China and Japan.¹⁷³ Support for this society declined dramatically in 1884, but for Ryle its importance was 'second to none'.¹⁷⁴ Half the population of India were women and almost entirely secluded from men, especially foreigners.¹⁷⁵ It was imperative,

therefore, to send women, the more so as male doctors were not allowed to examine Indian women.¹⁷⁶ Further, there were 79,000 widows under the age of nine, 300,000 under the age of fifteen, twenty-one million in total.¹⁷⁷ Such secluded and abandoned women needed the gospel which had 'raised women' to a new status.¹⁷⁸ Ryle sought to promote women's missionary work. He supported the first moves to invite women to the civic receptions of visiting colonial Bishops and he instigated drawing room meetings at the Palace to encourage ladies' missionary organisations.¹⁷⁹

Domestically, Ryle enthusiastically supported the Liverpool Ladies Parochial Bible and Domestic Mission. He encouraged the holding of annual meetings and was largely responsible for turning a deficit of £328 into a profit of £46, and he gave them a large parcel of tracts.¹⁸⁰ In 1883 only six of 32 women received salaries and in two years three were reduced to half salaries.¹⁸¹ Consequently Ryle paid for a new mission at St. Jude's and preached on behalf of the society at Mossley Hill.¹⁸² The following year the society was able to maintain all its existing stations, open three new ones and had £175 in hand.¹⁸³ Although Ryle gave a further donation of £200 in memory of his wife, regular church support remained minimal and the society depended on the precarious source of sales of work and donations to survive.¹⁸⁴ Ryle regarded such support as 'shameful' and 'abominable'.¹⁸⁵ In 1898 there were still only 31 Biblewomen, whereas he thought there ought to be at least double that number and an increase in the salary paid.¹⁸⁶ His enthusiasm was engendered by the fact that the majority of working-class women in slum accommodation had no contact with the church and were poorly educated.¹⁸⁷ The Biblewomen, however, could go into the slums and 'mix' with such women.¹⁸⁸ They were the most useful evangelistic method available.¹⁸⁹ This work 'could not be done by men'.¹⁹⁰ Not only could they talk the gospel but they could also teach home economy.¹⁹¹ This was a vital preparatory step as most of the working class lived in such insanitary property that it was almost impossible to be moral or decent.¹⁹²

As far as women's place in Society was concerned Ryle both asserted traditional roles of Motherhood and home care and accepted more advanced views. He was particularly keen on women's education. It is interesting to observe that this mellowing of his views was more due to the personal influence of his third wife and the memory of his sisters' lives at home, than to any theological insight. Ryle's home life rarely surfaces in the available records, but here there is an indication that it influenced his administration of the diocese.

(3) EDUCATION

Ryle thought that education had entered 'golden times' compared with the days when he was a boy.¹⁹³ While he hoped that Latin and Greek would never be put in the background, he approved of new subjects such as mathematics and languages.¹⁹⁴ He promoted technical education, by which he meant learning to use the hands and 'materials'.¹⁹⁵ His own sons were taught carpentry, which they had to practice in silence in their father's study.¹⁹⁶ In the 1890s Ryle became increasingly concerned at the lack of attention given to middle-class education in contrast to the vast expansion of elementary education for the poor, although he had mentioned this topic briefly in one of his first public speeches as Bishop.¹⁹⁷ When he was at Stradbroke he had been careful to build two separate schools, one for labourers and one for the middle-class children.¹⁹⁸ He raised £1,400 to build them and they replaced the work of one old man of 77 who taught 15 boys in an attic.¹⁹⁹ One of his last letters to the Vicar of Islington was to advise him, and Anglican Evangelicals, to keep a watchful eye on middle-class education.²⁰⁰

The two subjects which Ryle thought essential in education were games and English history. The former was a natural element of his belief in competition. He approved of prizes as a stimulant to encourage the pursuit of knowledge, and depreciated those who tried to belittle prizes.²⁰¹ He approved of competition between schools.²⁰² He referred to the commercial competition that the city of Liverpool was engaged in as a justification for the competitive ethos in schools.²⁰³

Ryle obviously enjoyed sport. He was disappointed that his son Herbert suffered an injury that curtailed any sporting achievement and he was keen to advise his grandson on the finer techniques of cricket.²⁰⁴ One of the few things that was known about Ryle when his appointment was made public was his enthusiasm for, and ability in, sport. The satirical press made use of this:

Before the carriage had stopped, the Bishop-Elect, to show his athletic prowess, climbed through the window, drew himself up to the roof, and turned a back somersault on to the platform. Then, without further ceremony, he swarmed up the spout by the side of the booking office and went hand over hand along the girder to the centre of the station-roof, where he went through some of the most marvellous feats of strength and agility ... I am authorised to state that the new bishop challenges the world to a boxing or running contest ...²⁰⁵

Ryle certainly thought that he could beat Gladstone at the latter's favourite occupation of cutting down trees.²⁰⁶ The Bishop soon joined the Liverpool cricket club, and when duties took him to London he took the opportunity of retiring to watch the cricket at Lord's.²⁰⁷ He was pleased that schools cared for the body as well as the mind and hoped that athletics would never be neglected.²⁰⁸ Though he was not a sportsman, Disraeli was held up as an example of a man who competed against all the odds and persistently tried and tried again to obtain his goals despite many failures and setbacks. He was, to Ryle, the epitome of the competitive ethos.²⁰⁹ Ryle went further in his promotion of athleticism in approving of sports clubs attached to churches. At Mossley Hill he approved of plans for a church extension incorporating a bowling green, football pitch and cricket pitch.²¹⁰ One of his children's sermons was specifically directed against people who suggested children should spend all their time with books. This was a 'great mistake'.²¹¹ Ryle argued from the text, 'The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing' (Zechariah 8:5), that God allows play, that it was not sinful in moderation, and that it should happen 'daily'.²¹² He clearly meant competitive games by his reference to Eton's playing fields and from references to energetic

exercise and disappointments that arise from not winning.²¹³ Such games, far from distracting educationally, were an aid to better learning.²¹⁴

If athletics provided the 'muscular' part of Ryle's muscular Christianity, English history provided the 'Christian' part.²¹⁵ His own faith was rooted in his understanding of the past and he believed that anyone could reach the same understanding through study. He, therefore, praised the Liverpool Board Schools for their retention of English history in the curriculum and urged the teaching of Church history in the Church Schools.²¹⁶ He sought further to open up Sunday School halls in the week for open lectures, especially on Reformation history.²¹⁷ One way of providing this was to present copies of his own books to Headmasters of Church schools.²¹⁸ In this sense Ryle's concern for education was evangelistic in motivation. Schools were a source of supply to the church, to lose children was to lose the church. This was why he regarded the Diocesan Board of Education as the most important organisation he was connected with.²¹⁹

Ryle was, therefore, perpetually fighting to preserve the independence of Church Schools against the increasing secularisation of education. The main problem, of course, was money.²²⁰ The poor finances of Church Education were not entirely Ryle's fault. When he became Bishop he inherited a debt of £1,150 in connection with the Diocesan Board of Education (D.B.E.).²²¹ There were 214 schools in the diocese, with 76,220 pupils on the registers.²²² The D.B.E. could only give twenty-three grants ranging from £25 to £75.²²³ Initial financial deficits were overcome by the generosity of the Rev Henry Postance and by cutting the small grants made.²²⁴ Although Ryle claimed not to be faint-hearted about the future of church schools, after ten years some had already closed.²²⁵ By 1892, when the D.B.E. made only two grants totalling £50, the Bishop was admitting that they were in a real crisis.²²⁶ The particular problem was the abolition by the Government of grants to schools in basements. Ryle, a little pathetically, claimed to have taken a lady around three Church Basement Schools and had not found any foul air, and one of them had never had any epidemics

since it was opened.²²⁷ The pressing Government demands for larger classrooms, better sanitation and play areas (a quarter of an acre for 250 children), caused Ryle to appeal for an immediate raising of £10,000.²²⁸ This was to be raised by desperate means if necessary and he referred to the example of a Liverpool clergyman who had insured his own life for £1,000, borrowed money on this and paid it back in instalments to prevent the closure of the church school.²²⁹ This appeal failed, and within a year three schools had closed and the D.B.E. was £498 in debt.²³⁰ Ryle complained of 'dry rot' in the Church of England, and somewhat jealously observed that in contrast the Church of Rome would look after her children.²³¹ As E.R. Norman has concluded, the Church of England just did not have the resources to cover the cost of national popular education.²³²

Ryle tried to preserve the Church Schools in one other way - by pressurising the government to give more money to schools. (Education remained the dominant religious question in Parliament up to 1920).²³³ This tactic did not achieve any more success than his central appeal for money, largely because of divisions among churchmen as to what to press for.

Despite these failures, at the close of his episcopate Ryle pronounced that he was quite pleased with the state of Church Education in the diocese.²³⁴ There were two reasons for this optimism. First, although the D.B.E. was totally ineffective in raising money at a diocesan level, individual clergy were very successful at a parochial level in preserving their schools. The various church schools in St. Helens, for example, were denounced as inadequate for the growing population and a total of £11,636 was needed to prevent the establishing of Board Schools.²³⁵ They had to find accommodation for no fewer than 1,275 new pupils.²³⁶ Yet, within two years, all but £2,000 had been raised through local appeals, the gifts of prominent individuals and support of local dignitaries, the generosity of local industries (Pilkington Brothers, Messrs. Greenhall, Whitley & Co.), and sensible management by the vicar of St. Helens, Rev. John Willink, who sold prime town centre sites and repurchased cheaper land further

out.²³⁷ The same story was retold at Walton Breck, Parr and Tuebrook in the crisis years of 1894-98.²³⁸ When Ryle opened a new school at Grassendale in February 1898, he observed that in the last three years no less than £110,000 had been raised for education in the diocese.²³⁹ But in practice he had been opening schools throughout his episcopate, especially where a rich local patron was prepared to do most if not all of the funding.

In the conflict between Board Schools and Church Schools, the latter won. In Bootle there was no Board School at all until fifteen years after the 1870 Education Act, despite endemic overcrowding and the need for more schools.²⁴⁰ The Church Schools were preferred to the Board Schools, and there was parental opposition to compulsory attendance anyway. No fewer than 3,000 parents were brought to the magistrates over non-attendance between 1879-1891.²⁴¹ The School Board members saw their main role not as providing facilities but as keeping down the rates.²⁴² This policy was promoted further by a change in the composition of the Board from men of commerce to the professions (i.e. clergy).²⁴³ In other parts of the diocese the School Boards were shunned in favour of small private schools. This was the case in Birkdale and Southport.²⁴⁴ There were still more than 10,000 small private boarding schools for girls in 1895 catering for 70% of girls secondary education.²⁴⁵ In short, the School Board was regarded as an 'alien, proletarian and anti-religious imposition'.²⁴⁶ While Ryle was Bishop, the national trend was of almost parity between Church Schools and Board Schools, which meant a doubling of the members at the former.²⁴⁷ In practice, therefore, Ryle was right to give time and energy to education for this was the 'Golden Age' of Church Schools.²⁴⁸

The second cause for Ryle's optimism was that he could sidestep the secularisation of day schools by an energetic promotion of Sunday Schools. The corollary of emphasising English history was to teach the creed, the Articles, the catechism and the Prayer Book.²⁴⁹ When opening the new St. Helen's Church Schools, Ryle held that the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Ghost should be

taught in all day schools.²⁵⁰ It was important that, in the danger of worrying about satisfying Government Inspectors, time given to R.E., which was not examined, should not be reduced.²⁵¹ Facing the threat of closure and replacement by Board Schools, where the distinctive principles of the Church of England were not taught, Ryle saw the answer in a revival of Sunday Schools to plug the gap in the secularist day schools. There were 2,625 teachers and just over 36,000 pupils in Sunday Schools in 1881, and the Bishop wanted an increase of 5-6,000 per annum.²⁵² There was an initial increase to nearly 50,000 pupils but this impetus was not sustained.²⁵³ The major problem was the provision of well-trained teachers to engage the enthusiasm of the children.²⁵⁴

Ryle tried to encourage teachers by affirming both the importance and the enjoyment of the work: 'There never was a time when Sunday School teaching was more important than it was at the present time'.²⁵⁵ Sunday Schools were to him 'one of the grandest things in the Church of England in these latter days'.²⁵⁶ He even went as far as to claim 'of all the work he had been able to do for the cause of Christ there was none to which he looked back with so much satisfaction as the work he had done from time to time as the teacher of a class in the Sunday School'.²⁵⁷ He approved of the system of pupil teachers, but was concerned to improve their ability through centrally run classes.²⁵⁸ Meanwhile, adult teachers must be patient and punctual, regular, apt teachers with prepared lessons, and personally converted.²⁵⁹ This last feature was essential and Ryle was eager to promote annual days of intercession for Sunday Schools, praying for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Sunday Schools without which 'all religious labour is in vain'.²⁶⁰ However, Ryle was also well aware that more down-to-earth advice was needed. He recognised that children were 'a peculiar kind of animal' and not easy to teach.²⁶¹ Teachers must, therefore, have 'juice' to get hold of the hearts of the children and must be able to discriminate and recognise the needs of less intelligent pupils.²⁶² He was well aware that the standard of teaching was poor and that many children only came for the annual treat.²⁶³ Sir William and Lady Forwood, for example, often treated the pupils of the Sunday School in

Blundellsands and in 1887 put on a special tea to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee and presented every child with a medal.²⁶⁴ There was a storm of correspondence in the local press when it was revealed that teachers allowed, and deliberately used, 'kissing games' as a means of attracting children to Sunday Schools. These games were played for several hours and each kiss went on for two minutes!²⁶⁵

Ryle recognised in particular that upper-class children did not attend and that children left at fairly young ages, in sharp contrast to the Sunday School system in America.²⁶⁶ Although he was forward looking in improving the quality of teaching, the content of the teaching and behaviour of children were areas where he remained staunchly conservative. It was an 'excellent thing' to learn the shorter catechism and the Prayer Book.²⁶⁷ He was impervious to the arguments of fellow churchmen who reasoned that such material was not the stuff for the minds of under-13s.²⁶⁸ Children must simply 'bear the yoke' of schools, parents and God.²⁶⁹ Their main response was to be regular and punctual.²⁷⁰ Ryle supported the introduction of Boys Brigades, and wanted a branch in every parish, because of the discipline of the drill involved.²⁷¹ Some Nonconformist ministers tried to stop the introduction of this organisation because of its militaristic tendencies and in a stormy inaugural meeting there were threats to call the police.²⁷² But Ryle showed his support by making a practice of preaching annually to the Boys Brigades.²⁷³

Although Ryle agreed with the Duke of Wellington that secular education only produced 'clever devils' and publicly stated that all education not based on revelation would do more harm than good, he was not prepared simply to condemn Board Schools.²⁷⁴ The twin motives here were his fears of democracy and his pronounced patriotism. Ryle did not believe it was right to give the working class the vote unless they were also educated so that they would vote rightly.²⁷⁵ An uneducated people were liable to subversion.²⁷⁶ He was persuaded that the good order in Liverpool during the depression was due to the education of the working classes.²⁷⁷ He thought it essential that, where a Church School did not exist, a Board School must be established.²⁷⁸ When he

was absent from a Diocesan Finance Association which criticised Board Schools, he repudiated the remarks of his fellow Churchmen.²⁷⁹ He believed that no city in England was more advanced in education than Liverpool.²⁸⁰ Although disappointed that the Board Schools did not teach the Creed through an opting-out system, he praised the Liverpool Council of Education for its handling of the Bible in the secular schools.²⁸¹ At the start of his episcopate the Church Schools won most of the Scripture prizes in the Council of Education's annual distribution, but by the late 1890s the majority of the prizes were won by Board Schools.²⁸² So, far from speaking against Board Schools, he was keen to get Churchmen involved with them.²⁸³

The second motive for promoting such involvement was Ryle's firm persuasion that national prosperity depended on a high standard of education.²⁸⁴ To keep England's lead against other nations it was imperative that children should stay at school to a later age and that the curriculum at University should be broad enough to train young men to be competent 'in every walk of life'.²⁸⁵ He thought it would be useful if every school introduced a 'catechism of thrift' to encourage right handling of personal wealth.²⁸⁶ In essence he believed 'ignorant people were always left behind in the race of life'.²⁸⁷ The same principle held true at a national level: 'The highest nation would be the best educated one'.²⁸⁸ He was concerned that the Americans, Germans and French were ahead of Britain in their educational systems and, therefore, challenged Britain economically. These other nations 'were beating us all to pieces and we ought to turn over a new leaf'.²⁸⁹

Ryle's attitude to children can be discerned from his eight extant children's sermons.²⁹⁰ He believed that a child of any age could become a Christian. It was never too early to think of Christ. The moment a child knew that he was doing wrong, he could also realise there was a right way to live.²⁹¹ It was, therefore, wholly appropriate to teach all the leading doctrines of Christianity to children, especially the Devil, hell and heaven.²⁹² This was to be

done in a parental atmosphere of love and not of fear, for 'nothing will compensate for the absence of this tenderness and love ... love is the secret of successful training'.²⁹³ They were to be told that every word in the Bible was true.²⁹⁴ Ryle's own texts for children ranged across the visions of Revelation, Proverbs and the horrific stories of Elisha.²⁹⁵ He frequently appealed for children to commit themselves to God, and was directly personal in his approach.²⁹⁶ As with adults he encouraged habits of prayer, daily Bible readings and diligent attendance on the means of grace.²⁹⁷ But such doctrine was communicated through concrete illustrations. He used texts which conveyed easy pictures (ants, rabbits, bears), or common children's habits (crying, home life).²⁹⁸ He was prepared to forego exact Biblical criticism for the sake of easier communication.²⁹⁹ And he peppered his sermons with little stories about children, such as a boy skating, a blind girl travelling in a coach, a son disobeying his father.³⁰⁰ Ryle himself was a living example of apt teaching method encased around old religious content.

(4) TEMPERANCE

A major discussion on the subject of intemperance took place at the Sheffield Church Congress in which Ryle participated.³⁰¹ There was a unanimity of opinion as to the seriousness of the topic. The Mayor of Sheffield observed 'there is no subject of greater importance to the welfare and happiness of this country than the one before us'.³⁰² Canon Wilberforce commented 'it would be an easy matter to fill this paper with statistics of our national shame'.³⁰³ Clarke Aspinall, the Coroner for Liverpool, described drink as 'the monster evil which we have to conquer'.³⁰⁴ Ryle, though apologising for coming from a small rural parish, claimed to have studied the issue as closely as like taking a watch to pieces.³⁰⁵ His conclusion was that 'of all the gigantic evils we have to face in the Church of England there is none to be compared with the enormous evil of intemperance'.³⁰⁶ There was no doubt that the scale of the drinking problem was almost beyond comprehension. In the first six months of 1878 the Inland Revenue took

duty on more than 19 million gallons of spirits alone.³⁰⁷ Nationally more than £140 million was spent per annum on drink.³⁰⁸

Agreement on the seriousness of the issue did not, however, lead to unity on the remedies proposed for dealing with intemperance. This was mainly because of a sharp division between those who saw drunkenness as an individual sin and those who saw it as the consequence of a degraded environment. Canon Wilberforce was firmly in the first group. Drunkenness was a sin. 'We are here tonight to speak of sin'.³⁰⁹ He criticised the prevailing habit of glossing over this understanding of the problem: 'It is one of the characteristics of an age of luxury to deprecate plain speaking about plain sins, to gloss over with the meretricious tinsel of euphemisms, notorious vices'.³¹⁰ He went on to assert that 'drunkenness locks up the kingdom of heaven'.³¹¹ As such, a gradual educational policy was of no avail, and a policy of aggressive opposition to publicans should be adopted involving temperance missionaries in every parish and seeking to change the laws on drink.³¹² In contrast, there were others who saw the problem more charitably. It was not to be wondered that 'a brutalised man, surrounded by filth, cruelty, ugliness, vice and wretchedness' should resort to drink.³¹³ It was more to do with the Northern temperament compared, for example, to that of the Mediterranean.³¹⁴ Where, it was asked, could a young man in lodgings go in the evening to get out of a wretched abode, other than to the pub?³¹⁵ The solution from this point of view lay not so much in pronouncing against sin as that 'life should be made more socially enjoyable. A clean, pleasant home, civil speech, well-cooked food, manly amusements such as dancing, cricket, football, music, holiday excursions, began at the right end of a man's heart'.³¹⁶

Ryle in typical independent fashion did not place himself firmly in either of these camps, but rather bridged between them. He urged plain speaking on the subject from the pulpit, 'not mincing matters but plainly calling a spade a spade'.³¹⁷ He saw drunkenness as a 'devil' which needed to be cast out by Jesus Christ.³¹⁸ He urged preachers: 'boldly denounce the great sin of the day'.³¹⁹ Nevertheless, the bulk

of his contribution to the discussion centred on social amelioratives. He sought to rouse public feeling into being more aware of the consequences of drunkenness.³²⁰ He wanted to counteract social drinking customs, such as reciprocating gifts brought to a home with a glass of beer, or the habit of drinking before meals, or concluding bargaining with a drink.³²¹ Indeed, it was his firm belief that five-sixths of the problem of drunkenness lay in the social habit of drinking between meals.³²² Ryle's main positive proposal was his support for counter attractions such as reading rooms and athletics, both of which he had promoted in his own parish.³²³

This amalgam of preaching and social aid formed the basis of his attack on drink in the diocese of Liverpool. In 1884 it was estimated that there were 2,402 drinking houses in the city, or one to every 229 inhabitants.³²⁴ Alternatively, if Liverpool drinking houses were placed side by side they would stretch the whole of the twenty miles from the Town Hall to Southport and one and a half miles beyond.³²⁵ The Liverpool Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, in its first report in 1884, illustrated the extent of drink in another way. It gave a detailed breakdown of the causes of cruelty discovered in its first six months of activity.

Father dead	34
Mother dead	27
Both parents dead	4
Deserted by parents	24
Parents in prison	8
Father blind	3
Father grasping	1
Mother neglectful	1
Hasty Temper	7
Unkind step-parents	16
Illegitimate	7
Drink	<u>202</u>
Poverty	22

Wilfulness of children	11
Immorality	11 ³²⁶

The inevitable conclusion was, 'of course it is the old story - the love of drink is at the bottom of most of these special crimes. Are we not reminded today of the words of the Young Prince whose death we are now deploring, "that drink was the only terrible enemy which England had to fear"'.³²⁷ The Rev. Charles Garret of the Liverpool British Workmen's Public House Company (Cocoa-rooms), asserted that Liverpool was 'the moral Waterloo of the nation, where good and evil were engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle. In no place was evil stronger, more active and more determined'.³²⁸ It was estimated that £10,000 was spent on drink in Liverpool every day.³²⁹

Ryle was certainly appalled at the visible evidence of drunkenness in Liverpool. Throughout his twenty years in the city he spoke out strongly against it. Within a few months he asserted 'the sin of drunkenness was the most dreadful of any of the sins by which England was disgraced'.³³⁰ A year later he described it as 'an abominable evil'.³³¹ It was the 'great curse of the country'.³³² It was 'that cancer of society in Great Britain at this moment'.³³³ It lay at the bottom of all the evils in society, and he was ashamed that there was more drunkenness in England proportionately than anywhere else in the world.³³⁴ At the end of the day the attraction of drink was so powerful that the Holy Spirit was the only certain lasting remedy against it.³³⁵ Even in his last few months as an active Bishop, he was forced to declare 'drink, drink, drink was a pestilence with which we were plagued... they had come to fight with the greatest enemy of our country'.³³⁶ He was dismayed that a general had told him the best army was one comprised of English officers and Turkish soldiers, because the Turks did not drink. Ryle affirmed that England had yet to become a sober nation.³³⁷

The persistent warnings against the evil of drink did not in fact simply indicate a failure to achieve anything in the diocese. The establishment of Temperance Sunday sermons in January was probably

Ryle's most successful diocesan-wide appeal. Initially set up as a once off, 97 churches responded to the Bishop's directive, while twenty had already made arrangements, and some country clergy had promised to preach in the summer when their congregations would be larger.³³⁸ Within three years Ryle had decreed 'Temperance Sunday' a permanent diocesan feature.³³⁹ By 1890, although one newspaper was critical that not all the churches had a sermon on the topic, Ryle was pleased that two-thirds had had one.³⁴⁰ By the close of the episcopate 191 out of 205 churches held a Temperance Sunday.³⁴¹

Part of the reason for Ryle's success was that he was espousing a popular cause. The Church of England Temperance Society, set up in 1876, was strong in Liverpool.³⁴² It was the third largest in the country behind London and Manchester, both with larger populations.³⁴³ In the first ten years of its existence, it saw committals for drunkenness reduced by 10,000 per annum.³⁴⁴ There was a steady growth in its income with 1898 being the highest ever during Ryle's time.³⁴⁵ It waged a campaign on four fronts, apart from direct preaching: aid societies for victims of drink, alternative entertainments, pressure on the local licensing magistrates, and attempts to influence Parliamentary legislation.

The main relief society was the Prison Gate and Police Court Missions led by Mr. Mercer.³⁴⁶ Annually, 14,000 people went through the Liverpool Police Court and the main gaol, Walton, housed 10,000 men and 7,000 women per annum.³⁴⁷ The mission obtained permission to set up an iron mission room next to the gaol to offer free breakfasts for discharged prisoners, take names and addresses for follow-up visits by Scripture Readers, help to find work, and deliver speeches against drink.³⁴⁸ The missionary was paid for by Christ Church, Waterloo.³⁴⁹ The Bishop became the patron of this mission and promoted money-earning events amongst the wealthy such as visits by Swiss Alpine choirs.³⁵⁰ By 1887, a lending library had been set up and the mission was searching for a more permanent, and larger, room.³⁵¹ It was also seeking to set up a separate room for women.³⁵² It was already working in the Army barracks at Seaforth and hoped to work in the Warrington

barracks.³⁵³ These expansions temporarily put the mission in the red.³⁵⁴ Ryle was particularly supportive of the Women's Shelter, because he thought there was an increase of drunkenness among women, especially servants and school-mistresses.³⁵⁵ By 1895, in 18 of 19 Liverpool Police Courts there was an agent of the society present on every court day.³⁵⁶ Some court judges refused to make any rulings until one of the mission agents had investigated the situation.³⁵⁷ Breakfast was served every day from 6 am to 8.30 am and 8,000 discharged prisoners availed themselves of this.³⁵⁸ The mission had also established its own firewood factory in Bootle, employing twenty men per day on a temporary basis as a stop gap to finding other work.³⁵⁹ In 1898, no fewer than 554 people had either been sent to friends, put in refuge homes or found work.³⁶⁰ No fewer than 589 court cases had been discharged by the court judges directly into the hands of the mission.³⁶¹

The main alternative entertainment to the public house was the cocoa room. Ryle had supported the setting up of one of these in the small town of Diss in Suffolk, about eight or nine miles from Stradbroke and the nearest market for the local farmers.³⁶² Cheap drinks were offered, a separate room provided for ladies and the facilities of left luggage, stables and a coach house were attached.³⁶³ While he supported cocoa houses in Liverpool, Ryle was critical of their somewhat dingy appearance, in contrast to the Diss establishment. If cocoa houses were to win men from the pub they had to be brighter and more attractive.³⁶⁴ The Liverpool cocoa room movement was actually run not as a mission but as a profit-making company with subscribed shares and dividends. The chairman observed that, though philanthropy was their aim, 'their philanthropy had ever been under the guidance of wisdom and prudence'.³⁶⁵ In other words, they made money. In the mid 1880s they employed nearly 400 people, ran 51 coffee houses, eight cafes and two carts, with a subscribed capital of £30,000 and a turnover of £86,000.³⁶⁶

A form of entertainment which Ryle sought to curtail was that of the theatre, because he believed it led to bad company and thence to

drink, though not all theatres were wrong.³⁶⁷ He was immediately criticised since he never went.³⁶⁸ He was accused of being envious of the success of the theatre.³⁶⁹ Archdeacon Bardsley preferred outdoor exercise to the 'indecent performances of the theatre'.³⁷⁰ C. Musgrave Brown claimed that the theatre originated from the Devil. It was a hotbed of vice, and in St. Augustine's time theatre goers had not been allowed to the Lord's Table. By the grace of God he had never witnessed a play.³⁷¹ In contrast, Rev. A.K. Sylvester went twice a year and saw the origins of the theatre in religion (e.g. Passion, Miracle, Mystery, Morality Plays), and included church wall paintings as 'theatre'. Although in the sixteenth century the theatre became totally secular, the right response today was to reclaim it not abandon it. It was often a better teacher than the pulpit, but even being an amusement to the wearied mind was a sufficient justification for its existence. The clergy ought to go there for their own rest. He quoted Luther: 'Christians should not entirely flee from comedies'.³⁷² Some clergy were concerned not about links with drink, but about women's dress on stage. This led to the suggestion that a committee of clergy should vet all productions, their tickets paid for out of rural deanery funds!³⁷³ In the light of this variety of response by the clergy, it was not surprising that Ryle failed to influence theatrical standards. He was in sharp contrast here with the neighbouring diocese of Manchester where one of Bishop Fraser's major contributions was to both purify not Puritanise the theatre, and to engage in special outreach to those working in the entertainment industry.³⁷⁴ His successor, Moorhouse, believed the theatre could be an influence for good, and the right response was to ask God to bless it.³⁷⁵ By the 1920s liberal Evangelicals were pressing for economic wages for chorus girls.³⁷⁶

Possibly the most successful political agitation that Ryle ever got involved with was the C.E.T.S in Liverpool which put pressure on the local licensing magistrates and police. Ryle believed in firm sentences for habitual drunkards, criticising the standard punishment of one month and advocating a year in prison.³⁷⁷ During prison spells such offenders should be given only water to drink.³⁷⁸ In his last years Ryle advocated separate homes for inebriates, influenced by

medical reports suggesting links between drinking and lunacy.³⁷⁹ Mr. Raffles, the Stipendiary Magistrate, did not support imprisonment and dismissed all cases with 'five shillings and costs'.³⁸⁰ Clarke Aspinall, a friend of Ryle, supported the tougher approach, and when he became a magistrate dealt severer punishments.³⁸¹ Ryle was much more successful in the campaign against 'backdoor' selling of drink. Constant resolutions were passed to the City Council to stop this practice.³⁸² Steady progress was made through the 1890s. In 1891, the city police had to conduct a full-scale report on all 'back doors', and 136 public houses had to make alterations to their entrances. In 1892, the Council declared itself 'in principle' against 'backdoors'. In 1894, the Licensing Justices closed 112 doors after 6 pm. In 1898, 377 'backdoors' were closed permanently.³⁸³ Even the local press could assert, 'Liverpool is an acknowledged leader of licensing reform'.³⁸⁴ All of this was the fruit of Ryle's assertion that the grand work of Temperance Reform was achieved 'little by little and bit by bit'.³⁸⁵ It was a matter of each person trying to do their own little bit to leave the world more sober than when they were born which would produce results.³⁸⁶ This was success through moderation and persistence. Although nearly a half of the clergy in Liverpool were total abstainers, Ryle himself never adopted this line, and was content to argue that Christians should be 'sober' rather than total abstainers.³⁸⁷ Indeed, he specifically spoke against insistence on the latter for everybody.³⁸⁸

In 1894, in a circular to his clergy, Ryle drew a contrast between the reawakened vigilance of the city authorities and the slow progress of any legislative reform on drink in Parliament.³⁸⁹ From his first arrival in the diocese Ryle had spoken in favour of Sunday closing and believed that he would live to see it.³⁹⁰ This was because he believed Parliament was 'squeezable'.³⁹¹ He urged the signing of memorials to press for Sunday Closing.³⁹² After 15 years Ryle had to admit that it was better to concentrate on ameliorative measures rather than preventative, for Parliament would not legislate against drink.³⁹³ The main problem here was doubt over the evidence of statistics. In the debate over Sunday Closing for Ireland, in 1878, opponents of the

measure argued that the existing law for Scotland, passed in 1854, was a failure and had simply led to private drinking in illicit houses.³⁹⁴ In 1891, the Courier, in an editorial on Sunday Closing, expressed caution on the grounds that there were fewer arrests for drunkenness in Birmingham, where the pubs were open, than in Glasgow, where they were closed.³⁹⁵ The Liverpool Licensed Victuallers Association similarly argued that the police figures showed few arrests on Sunday and that anyway the drunks were 'repeaters' over whom neither clergy nor legislation had any influence.³⁹⁶

Sunday Closing was not the only Parliamentary legislation which Ryle advocated. The setting up of the Women's Branch of the C.E.T.S. had alerted him to the incidence of drink among women. While he believed that the incidence of drunkenness amongst men had declined, he thought that that of women was on the increase.³⁹⁷ He believed in this increase for the rest of his life.³⁹⁸ He thought that one cause of this increase was the stifling working conditions that women faced, long hours of hard work in very hot rooms.³⁹⁹ He named laundresses and teachers as particularly prone to drink because of such conditions.⁴⁰⁰ The remedy, naturally, was the provision of fresh air at work.⁴⁰¹ A more prevalent cause of the increase of drink among women, however, was the grocer's license. Ryle campaigned against this from 1884 through to 1899.⁴⁰² The C.E.T.S. produced a pamphlet to highlight the growth of this trade:⁴⁰³

	<u>PUBS</u>	<u>BEERHOUSES</u>		<u>GROCERS LICENSE</u>
1876	98,963	38,845	1882	9,765
1893	<u>91,306</u>	<u>31,316</u>	1893	<u>11,505</u>
	-7,657	-7,529		+1,740

The Courier supported the campaign against the grocer's license, arguing that it was not 'disreputable' to go into a grocer's shop and that drink could be hidden with the normal foods. This led to the danger of secret drinking at home.⁴⁰⁴ The editor argued that only 'slighted' wives turned to drink and that if only more men would stay at home and be real companions to their wives the increase of drinking among women would stop.⁴⁰⁵

Despite this support, Ryle was no more successful in the campaign against grocers' licenses than on Sunday Closing. Other towns reported a decrease in convictions of drink amongst women.⁴⁰⁶ A House of Lord's Committee and a local report by the Liverpool Magistrates saw no connection between the grocer's license and increased drinking.⁴⁰⁷ The President of the Liverpool and District Off-License Holders Association pointed out that the sale of spirits at grocers' shops only amounted to 5% of the total sale.⁴⁰⁸ It was thus difficult for Ryle to make his own case convincing enough to necessitate Parliamentary action. On the Temperance question he was altogether far more successful at the local level.

(5.) SUNDAY

Ryle's unsuccessful attempts to obtain new legislation on Sunday Closing went hand in hand with his rearguard action to prevent the introduction of legislation liberalising restrictive Sunday law. The

maintenance of the right observance of Sunday was an essential element of his faith, and one of the most contested issues in Liverpool during his time there. In essence he believed that where there was no public worship there was no profession of Christianity.⁴⁰⁹ And there could be no public worship without set times.⁴¹⁰ The last pamphlet he wrote in February 1880, before being elected Bishop, was on Sunday Observance.⁴¹¹ The first half of this was a word-for-word reprint of an earlier work and the whole lot was reprinted under another title in 1893.⁴¹² He was persuaded that the sanctity of the Lord's Day must be defended to the last:

I can find no words to express my own sense of its importance. I am persuaded that one half of English Christianity is bound up with the maintenance of the 'old English Sunday'.⁴¹³

Ryle argued that Sunday observance was part of the eternal law of God and not simply a temporary Jewish observance.⁴¹⁴ He adduced the creation narratives, the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, the writings of the prophets, the eleven sayings of Christ on the subject and the writings and practice of the apostles to support his contention.⁴¹⁵ He backed this up with quotations from Baxter, Lightfoot, Horsley and Wells, and recommended Bishop Wilson's Seven Sermons as essential reading on the topic.⁴¹⁶ Ryle's main thrust, however, was not the biblical arguments for Sunday Observance, but rather his concern to repudiate the accusation that ministers defended Sunday Observance for personal, selfish reasons.⁴¹⁷ His main contention was that Sunday Observance was 'God's merciful appointment for the common benefit of all mankind'.⁴¹⁸ It was good for man's body and mind irrespective of their faith in God.⁴¹⁹ Ryle directed readers to a tract entitled Physiology in Harmony with the Bible.⁴²⁰ Sunday Observance was also intrinsically linked with economic prosperity.⁴²¹

In practice, therefore, Sunday should be a 'day of rest' and a 'holy day'.⁴²² By day of rest Ryle meant that only works of necessity, mercy or convenience should be done.⁴²³ He primarily had in mind the

preparation of food and the kindling of fire for cooking and heating, although in the former case if this could be done on Saturday it should be done then.⁴²⁴ Horses could be used provided they were one's own (i.e. not public transport), and were used solely for the purpose of hearing the gospel.⁴²⁵ He did not think that anyone 'ought to pray all day, or read his Bible all day, or go to church all day, or meditate all day'.⁴²⁶ But he offered precious little in the way of alternatives. He condemned visiting friends, giving dinner parties, doing home accounts, reading newspapers or novels, or even writing letters.⁴²⁷ He was particularly critical of the Sunday post.⁴²⁸ He also firmly condemned the opening of museums and art galleries and bands performing in public parks:

On all these points I feel not the smallest doubt in my own mind. These ways of spending the Sabbath are all wrong, decidedly wrong. So long as the Bible is the Bible, and the fourth commandment the fourth commandment, I dare not come to any other conclusion. They are all wrong.⁴²⁹

It was not even a matter of private liberty. Every lawful means was to be used to prevent 'others' from having anything to do with these things.⁴³⁰ His argument here was that such amusement would lead in the end, because they needed some staffing, to the principle that Sunday was a working day like any other working day.⁴³¹ He was firmly persuaded that it was his view of Sunday which was best for the working classes, and he personally wanted to press for a Saturday half-holiday.⁴³² The end result was that the only commended activity was walking, with the restriction that one did not walk so far that one could not go to church, and it was preferable to walk alone.⁴³³

In Ryle's eyes Sunday Observance was a universal principle, admitted in conscience, that survived the Fall.⁴³⁴ One common factor amongst the revered men of all types of churchmanship was that they all agreed on the sanctity of the Lord's Day.⁴³⁵ From a pastoral point of view, one great test of the true spiritual condition of worshippers was their reverence for Sunday.⁴³⁶ Carelessness about Sunday was the first

step towards a fall, and Ryle observed that when Hogarth delineated the 'Rake's Downward Progress' he began with a picture of the apprentice playing at marbles on a tombstone during a church service.⁴³⁷ Not all Liverpool clergymen agreed with their Bishop. He affirmed that 'Sunday was the greatest blessing God had given this land' and that Sabbath breaking was a step towards an English experience of the French Revolution.⁴³⁸ While most clergy agreed with Ryle in principle, many thought that in practice he was too extreme. They held that it was possible to be a faithful churchgoer and have museums open and musical recitals on a Sunday. At the Diocesan Conference of November 1885 Eyre, Elcum and Rycroft all argued this way.⁴³⁹ The Bishop declined to enter into the details of the discussion, merely speaking against a 'Continental Sunday' and defending his use of a horse and cab on a Sunday because of his heavy robes and desire to preach at churches further than walking distance.⁴⁴⁰ Liverpool lay churchmen were even more against the Bishop's strict regulations. In a discussion on Sunday opening of museums at a rural-decanal meeting of Liverpool North, there was a hotly contested debate and a clear division between the clergy (against) and the laity (for).⁴⁴¹ Non-churchmen were happy to promote ways of introducing recreational activities, 'without interfering with the religious duties of those who are religious'.⁴⁴² The Post argued strongly in favour of the Sunday opening of museums, pointing out that the majority of the population were indifferent to religious observance, and that there was no difference between walking in the country to see a real flower and walking in an art gallery to see a picture of one.⁴⁴³ Anything was better than idleness and boredom.⁴⁴⁴ The Mercury took a similar line, criticising the Bishop's charge of 1890 against the relaxation of Sunday laws and affirming that 'Sunday is a decidedly dull interval' that needed brightening up.⁴⁴⁵

Opposition from clergy, churchmen, and the Press did not dissuade Ryle from his viewpoint. Many people, of course, agreed with him. The Liverpool Press carried news of crowds stopping the Sunday games of the secularist Leicester Cricket Club, by seizing one set of stumps and throwing the ball into the river. The chief constable declined to intervene.⁴⁴⁶ When the City Council met to discuss the opening of

museums in Liverpool, they were presented with a motion against it, initiated by the Bishop, with 30,000 signatures.⁴⁴⁷ The motion for Sunday opening was subsequently lost by 10 votes to 27.⁴⁴⁸ The most thorough debate took place the following year, 1885, when a petition for opening obtained 12,445 signatures in the aftermath of the debate in the House of Lords on the issue.⁴⁴⁹ Much was made of the fact that only two Bishops voted against Sunday opening.⁴⁵⁰ The Library, Museum and Arts Committee carried out a thorough survey, circulating 143 towns and obtaining 122 replies.⁴⁵¹ Seventeen towns opened such facilities on a Sunday, four who had subsequently closed them, and twenty-two were in the process of trying to open.⁴⁵² None of these towns opened their libraries or museums before two o'clock.⁴⁵³ In only one town was the decision made by petition; elsewhere either the Town Council, or the respective management committees, made the decision to open.⁴⁵⁴ The only reply that gave details of the cost was Birmingham. They had been open since 1872 at a cost of £150 per annum for a staff of one superintendent and six Jewish boys.⁴⁵⁵ In nine of the seventeen towns the numbers attending was diminishing.⁴⁵⁶

Nothing resulted in Liverpool from this survey, but in the following year there was a proposal to open St. George's Hall on a Sunday afternoon for sacred music. Ryle had already found out that two-thirds of Sunday School children attended afternoon Sunday Schools rather than morning ones.⁴⁵⁷ Consequently he sent a letter to the secretaries of the Sunday School Institute urging them to organise a memorial against the proposal.⁴⁵⁸ Individual church groups presented nine petitions against the motion (614 names), the Primitive Methodists 301 names, the Wesleyans 520, Presbyterians 500, a total of 1,935. But to this Ryle's initiative added 4,611 names.⁴⁵⁹ There was only one petition in favour, containing 106 names, mostly of skilled artisans.⁴⁶⁰ Despite this huge majority against the proposal, after a lengthy and contentious debate, including failed amendments to adjourn for lunch and to include a religious service, the Council passed a motion to experiment with Sunday afternoon music recitals by one vote, 21-20.⁴⁶¹ One reason for the success of the motion was the recognition that the Council's own business prevented these recitals from taking

place during the week.⁴⁶² But the key speech was a scathing verbal attack on Ryle by Mr. P.H.Rathbone, exposing the Bishop's self-importance on the issue:

He asked them to recollect that music was the only human institution they dared to think of as forming part of that world beyond to which they were blindly struggling, and he did not think their bishop himself would dare to say, however much he might think so, that it would be a further inducement to the happiness of heaven, that he should be called upon to say a few words to the assembled angels in the intervals of their songs.⁴⁶³

The Press enthused about the recitals. The hall was filled with 2,000 people, mainly artisans and shopkeepers, but with some labourers too. Thousands were left outside.⁴⁶⁴ The recitals did not start until four o'clock, well after Sunday Schools had finished.⁴⁶⁵ They were preceded by a recitation of Psalm 100, and the total expense of employing five men and women, plus a superintendent, plus lighting and programmes, was only £3.⁴⁶⁶

In the wake of this success for those favouring Sunday opening, the Liverpool Sunday Society was set up to promote the opening of the Library, Museum and Walker Art Gallery.⁴⁶⁷ The President was a prominent alderman on the city council and a number of clergy were on the organising committee.⁴⁶⁸ Its main purpose was to run educational Sunday evening lectures.⁴⁶⁹ The issue slumbered for two years, until in 1888 the National Association for the Advancement of Art and its Application to Industry held its annual congress in Liverpool. Ryle opted to preach at the pro-Cathedral on 'the Sabbath was made for man', which attracted a crowded church.⁴⁷⁰ He repeated his 1880 pamphlet though emphasising that the opening of galleries on Sunday was 'decidedly improper' and argued that operas, plays and art provided no spiritual good.⁴⁷¹ But the main storm was caused by the Mayor, E.H.Cookson, a prominent donor to church building, who refused to welcome the Congress because it was going to have an open discussion of the Sunday question.⁴⁷²

In December 1889, the Library, Museum and Arts Committee voted by 9-2 to hold an autumn exhibition of pictures on a Sunday, but were overturned by four votes in the Council.⁴⁷³ The following year the committee proposed to open for three hours every Sunday and this produced a deadlock of 25-25 in the full Council discussion.⁴⁷⁴ The Mayor, J.B.Morgan, used his casting vote against the proposal.⁴⁷⁵ Ryle had initiated yet another memorial against the proposal and there was no memorial in favour of the motion.⁴⁷⁶ In December 1891, however, the galleries were finally opened. On the first Sunday, 6 December, 1,508 people visited them. There were more than 1,000 every Sunday through to March, after which members declined because of fine weather.⁴⁷⁷ The galleries were closed in the summer months and re-opened in October when the numbers attending halved.⁴⁷⁸ Most of these were young boys who could not get into the musical concerts.⁴⁷⁹ Ryle may have lost the battle, but he had consistently drummed up more support for his point of view than his opponents ever had for theirs. The opening was largely the result of the constant pressure of a few Council members, and at the end of the day the numbers attending were small.

Ryle, however, was disappointed in the breach of the principle of Sunday Observance. Music in St. George's Hall and pictures in the Walker Art Gallery were not the only incursions into Sunday. The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company offered cheap excursion tickets on Sunday.⁴⁸⁰ In 1891, for the first time, a large trade demonstration, involving 60,000 people, took place on a Sunday.⁴⁸¹ There was also the problem of Sunday Trade. Embarrassment had been caused when some local traders took the Sailor's Home (a charity) to court, because a sailor had been able to buy a suit in one room of the building at the very time when a Scripture Reader was conducting a service in another.⁴⁸² The Home was found not guilty on the grounds that it was supposedly selling only to sailors who arrived in port too late to shop on Saturday and who wanted clothes for Sunday.⁴⁸³ Many food shops were open in poor areas on Sunday morning anyway. Butchers, especially, who obtained meat from bad unfrozen South American carcasses late on a Saturday, when warehouses wanted to get rid of them, opened for cheap sales on Sunday morning.⁴⁸⁴ This was often the

only meat that poor people could afford. There were 23 such shops open in Great Howard Street in May 1889 and a total of 150 shops open there altogether.⁴⁸⁵ Against the necessities of poverty Ryle's Biblical idealism on Sunday Observance had little impact. Nevertheless, during his episcopate the deviation from the ideal was small, although this was more the result of apathy than conviction.

(6) PATRIOTISM

Although Ryle claimed to stand outside of politics and did not like to travel to London for business either with the Archbishop of Canterbury or the House of Lords, it is nevertheless clear that he disliked the policies of Gladstone. In particular Ryle held two principles dear, that of the Establishment of the Church of England and that of the existence of the British Empire, which he believed Gladstone attacked. The impact of Irish Disestablishment on Ryle has already been examined, but the question re-emerged during his episcopate in the guise of Welsh Disestablishment. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York raised the profile of the Church politically when they issued an address pointing to the seriousness of voting in the light of the possibility of Disestablishment.⁴⁸⁶ But in Liverpool the issue was aired first by Canon Lefroy in a sermon at St. Andrew's, Renshaw Street, on 25 October 1885. He preached that the possibility of Disestablishment was 'extremely perilous to the nation', would amount to 'a casting off of Christianity' and, in defence of his church, argued that 'the Church of England did more for the welfare of the community than all other religious organisations put together'.⁴⁸⁷

This inevitably led to a storm of letters. Gladstone himself denied that he was thinking of introducing Disestablishment, which would require a direct mandate from the country, and anyway there were other more important issues for liberal politicians to face.⁴⁸⁸ He accused Lord Salisbury of stirring up the issue merely to sound an alarm and affirmed it was an issue 'we are morally certain it is impossible it should be disposed of in the new Parliament'.⁴⁸⁹ The

Conservative Press in Liverpool did not accept this and pointed to the range of liberal expression on the matter. Chamberlain had publicly advocated Disestablishment and Disendowment. The two liberal whips, Lord Kensington and Lord Grosvenor, welcomed Disestablishment and hoped the time for its achievement was not distant. Gladstone had made exactly the same denials on the timing of Irish Disestablishment and then introduced it within three years.⁴⁹⁰ Lefroy followed up his sermon with a motion from the rural-decanal meeting of Liverpool South equating Disestablishment with national apostasy. Only one clergyman denied this equation.⁴⁹¹

Ryle's response was to write a prayer to all the clergy for use during the election in church services.⁴⁹² He prayed that the voters would elect 'wise men, who fear God, and believe that the welfare of all nations depends on God's blessings'.⁴⁹³ If there was any vagueness about this, there was none in his prayer for use during Parliament which urged MPs to remember they would one day sit at the judgment seat of God, and which begged that their children's children would enjoy the same religious privileges which 'we have enjoyed so long' and especially 'the priceless blessing... of a Scriptural National Church'.⁴⁹⁴ Ryle made a long and major speech on this subject at the 1885 Diocesan Conference. He believed that the Church of England had arrived at a great crisis, like a ship amongst breakers.⁴⁹⁵ His anxiety was caused first, by the great increase in the number of electors of the House of Commons which was undoubtedly 'le maître' as far as Parliament went.⁴⁹⁶ In short the House of Commons would be 'newly-coined'.⁴⁹⁷ It would be peopled by demagogues who had appealed to the new voters with preposterous schemes such as the abolition of the monarchy, the House of Lords, landlords, the army and the navy, or the equalisation of income or Disestablishment and Disendowment.⁴⁹⁸ The whole scheme of democracy was indeed an amazing 'leap in the dark'.⁴⁹⁹ Only a few prospective MPs were prepared to commit themselves to the Establishment.⁵⁰⁰

Ryle's second cause of anxiety was 'that remarkable statesman, Mr. Gladstone'.⁵⁰¹ Ryle believed that though the liberal leader had only

touched the question of Disestablishment 'vaguely and briefly', nevertheless he had 'come forth from his tent and lifted up his voice'.⁵⁰² It was impossible to predict what Gladstone would do. Ryle described him as an 'impulsive' statesman.⁵⁰³ Gladstone had 'suddenly' turned on the Irish Church and he could do the same in England.⁵⁰⁴ It was quite clear that he was 'the enemy'.⁵⁰⁵ Because the Bishop believed it was a 'paramount duty' to resist Disestablishment 'to the bitter end' he abandoned his political neutrality.⁵⁰⁶ The purpose of his address was to politicise the clergy:

It will never do to rest supinely on our oars, and let the question drift, and proclaim that 'we never meddle with politics'. I tell the clergyman who talks in that way that, if he does not take care, politics will meddle with him, turn him out of his house, and strip him of his income.⁵⁰⁷

Ryle advocated a propaganda war, plus internal Church Reform over divisions and lawlessness, and an activation of the laity as a means of combatting the threat of Disestablishment.⁵⁰⁸ The Conservative Liverpool Press praised this speech, while the liberal Press dryly commented: 'He spoke a great deal of sheer nonsense ... this of course is just Bishop Ryle on stilts and a sorry exhibition he always makes of himself when he begins to talk politics'.⁵⁰⁹

Much of what Ryle said he had already proclaimed in 1868, and whenever Disestablishment reared as a political issue, e.g. in 1893, all the same arguments were rehashed.⁵¹⁰ Other prominent Liverpool clergy also advocated political activity: 'in comparison with this the duty of private benevolence is of minor importance'.⁵¹¹ But Ryle linked public political activity with private Christian duty. The two were intrinsically bound up together, for it was the national failure of private Christian duty which resulted in the threat of Disestablishment. Gladstone, in Ryle's eyes, was simply the instrument of God's punishment on England for her sins.⁵¹² God was chastising the nation by permitting the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the

Church of England.⁵¹³ The sins of Sabbath breaking, intemperance, adultery, the idolatry of recreations, self-indulgence and the bitter conduct of strife in society were more pertinent to ecclesiastical policy than deliberate political programmes.⁵¹⁴ He equated the situation with the onset of the French Revolution of 1789.⁵¹⁵

All of this reflected Ryle's theology of the sovereignty of God in the affairs of nations.⁵¹⁶ The threat of Disestablishment was the negative political expression of this theology. The positive political expression of it was the existence of the British Empire based on economic ascendancy and military success. The ultimate criticism by Ryle was to suggest that other nations were better than England: 'They had cause to be ashamed of the miserable ignorance of the Englishman on the subject of cookery as compared with that of the Frenchman'.⁵¹⁷ The French had paid back their war indemnity to Germany because unlike the English they did not waste money on drink.⁵¹⁸ The Germans and Scandinavians were better sailors than the English because they were more sober.⁵¹⁹ The worse thing about the educational system in England was that it was inferior to those of America and Germany.⁵²⁰ This was because Ryle believed that England ought to be supreme in all areas: 'This little country of ours was the great heart of the habitable globe'.⁵²¹ If it was necessary to maintain that supremacy by force of arms, then fight they should. He had no sympathy with those who were not thankful for the British military success in Egypt in 1882.⁵²² He looked to the navy to be able to defend Britain in a general European war, and expected it and the army to 'maintain the honour of the British flag for years and years to come'.⁵²³ He believed in the insularity of England and spoke against a Channel Tunnel link with France.⁵²⁴ So long as the ships were properly manned England could stand alone against an armed world.⁵²⁵ While sailors and soldiers were fighting, the clergy would pray for success at war:

Although they were by profession men of peace, yet before they were clergymen they were all Englishmen and as Englishmen they felt deeply concerned in the honour of England. In all the marching and fighting of General Roberts and his comrades he thought he might say that none had felt more interest or had

their hearts more deeply stirred than the clergy of the Church of England. He could speak for himself at any rate. Whilst those in the valley had been fighting, those on the hill top had been helping them by offering up their earnest prayers for their success.⁵²⁶ (my emphasis)

Ryle did not believe it was right to interfere internationally for courses of justice. The Russian persecution of the Jews became news in England in Christmas 1881. Despite a public outcry, Ryle's only contribution was to express helplessness: 'I do not know what can be done at this juncture to express our sympathy with the sufferers in Russia', whereas Bishop Fraser chaired the organisation in Manchester for the relief of Jews in Russia.⁵²⁷ Liverpool, naturally, became a transit place for refugee Jews en route to America. The first 350 arrived in May 1882 and thereafter numbers arrived weekly.⁵²⁸ Ryle was absent from a public meeting in Liverpool to discuss a response to the persecution due to the serious illness of a sister in Brighton.⁵²⁹ However, he sent a letter expressing moral disgust at the event, but warning against any attempt to interfere with the affairs of a foreign government.⁵³⁰ At the end of the day he excused the Russians on the grounds that they were uneducated.⁵³¹ But when the persecutions spread into Germany, whose education was superior to England, Ryle could only say this was 'a problem he could not solve'.⁵³²

It was quite legitimate, however, to interfere internationally to preserve or extend the British Empire. Ryle was a Christian Militarist, a position arguably derived from the Crimean War and Indian Mutiny, and propagated by the literature of Catherine Marsh.⁵³³ By 1862 Boyd Carpenter could remark, 'Patriotism was everywhere: it was more than a fashion, it was a deep conviction: it was a call of duty ... it was obeyed as inevitable: its authority was unquestioned.'⁵³⁴ Ryle was disappointed at the poor image of Britain's conquered territories. It was joked that while Spain exported Catholicism to her colonies and France the Opera, Britain exported the pub.⁵³⁵ Alcoholism was rife, especially on the west coast of Africa.⁵³⁶ Ryle urged pressure on the Government to check the import of alcohol.⁵³⁷ Despite this abuse Ryle wanted Colonialism expanded. He approved of the 'Scramble for Africa'

and for islands in the Pacific, and was concerned that because of England's poor education system she might not turn out people 'clever' enough to ensure she got such lands.⁵³⁸ He believed that 'Colonialism well managed was a grand help to the State and the nation'.⁵³⁹ Further, 'he regarded the colonies as the pride and glory of this country and he believed that they were the grand secret of our commercial prosperity'.⁵⁴⁰ As such he promoted the concept of Imperial Federation in which Britain's role was to supply the colonies with well-trained labour.⁵⁴¹ He was astute enough to see that if England did not give more thought to her relationship with the Colonies then in the end they would break away, and he lamented the fact that the House of Commons spent more time discussing canal schemes than colonial issues.⁵⁴² He was strongly critical of the concept of 'three acres and a cow' as a means of dealing with poverty in England, rather than fostering Colonial relations through emigration. The concept was 'amazingly unreasonable, unpractical and useless'.⁵⁴³ Apart from the facts that it would rob present property owners and that there was not enough land to do it, unless each man was given capital as well it would not work.⁵⁴⁴ Three acres was not enough to bring up a family, a man was better off as a farm labourer, paying rent and earning 12/- to 14/- per week plus half an acre of allotment land.⁵⁴⁵ The scheme was a 'complete delusion'.⁵⁴⁶ 'Three acres and a cow..., they might depend upon it, was not the millenium ... the best thing was to promote emigration'.⁵⁴⁷

The Colonies were the mainstay of England's economic supremacy which was the 'gift of God'.⁵⁴⁸ This gift was the consequence of the Reformation.⁵⁴⁹ The denial of the Reformation publicly through such events as the appointment of a Roman Catholic as Viceroy of India and privately through the decay of Bible reading, prayer and Sabbath breaking, would lead to the loss of this gift.⁵⁵⁰ The most visible expression of this was military defeat in defence of the colonies. The news of the fall of Khartoum broke on 28 January 1885. Ryle raged against Gladstone:

We had all along been fumbling and fumbling with the Egyptian question. He made bold to say that the whole policy of this country at home and abroad had been marked for the past three or four years by fumbling, fumbling, fumbling all round. We had not been understanding what our policy was; here we were always too late, too late; wherever we took action we were too late.⁵⁵¹

This was a chastening from God. God was actually making the political leaders do stupid things.⁵⁵² The right response was national humiliation and prayer that God 'would raise up a race of wise, bold, Christian, Protestant statesmen who should be rulers of a happy and prosperous nation'.⁵⁵³ The implication of course was that Gladstone was none of these things. The Liverpool liberal Press described Ryle's theology as 'hideous'.⁵⁵⁴

As British military defeat was exceptional rather than normal, Ryle spent most of his time giving thanks for commercial prosperity. The main point of notice of the last 50 years was 'the wonderful progress in wealth and prosperity'.⁵⁵⁵ This was the central theme of his address on the occasion of the Queen's Jubilee. There were 'so many causes for national thankfulness' that he did not know where to begin.⁵⁵⁶ After mentioning the character of the Queen and her longevity, he came on to the 'enormous' increase of wealth which was 'something astounding'.⁵⁵⁷ In 1837 money in Savings Banks amounted to £14 million, now it was £90 million. Income Tax when first introduced raised £772,000, now it raised £1.9 million. The assessable value of trade in 1843 was £71 million, now it was £282 million. The tonnage of shipping entering Liverpool in 1837 was 1.9 million, now it was 7.5 million. The docks had grown from 9 to 50.⁵⁵⁸ All of this was 'the Finger of God', not to speak of the blessings of steamships, railways and electric telegraphs which 'enabled us to do an amount of work in twenty-four hours, which our grandfathers would have thought Quixotical, romantic, absurd and impossible'.⁵⁵⁹ Ryle concluded that praise and thankfulness ought to be the mark of an Englishman:

Where is the nation on the face of the globe which has had such reason to thank God for the last half-century as Great Britain?⁵⁶⁰

In his promotion of Patriotism as a Christian characteristic Ryle was firmly within the ethos of the times, as was his understanding of unemployment as a moral problem; in advocating Temperance work he espoused a popular cause, whereas his defence of Sunday Observance was regarded by many as out of date; in the realms of education and the place of women in society his views were a mixture of advanced thought and conservative tradition. But the overall impact is of a man whose Evangelicalism was broad enough to encompass more than simply preaching the Gospel from church pulpits. Indeed, to preach the Gospel was to be involved in all aspects of life. Ryle's episcopate stands witness that belief in 'old' theological truths did not mean living an obscurantist existence divorced from contemporary society. Mission work involved more than just sermons.

CHAPTER FIVE

BISHOP RYLE: THE MISSION TASK HINDERED AND DIVERTED

Bishop Ryle, whom are you following? God and his servant Josiah, David, the disciples of Jesus? No; but Satan and the Philistines and Moab and Herod ... ye are on the side of the Devil.²³²

Most of the biographies of late nineteenth-century Bishops were written, if at all, almost immediately after their deaths. They are not exciting reading. In particular, the routine of administrative duties scarcely surfaces into life. In Ryle's case, however, the existence of a powerful and widespread local press, combined with a civic awareness of being the second city of the British Empire, and a strong local pride in that prominence, caused the running of the diocese to take place in the glare of open publicity, provoking strong responses such as that quoted above. The public image of the diocese centred around Ryle's relationship with his junior clergy, the setting up of diocesan machinery, and the church's involvement in charity work. In none of these areas was Ryle a success and the Church of England consequently acquired a poor reputation. It would not be fair, however, to lay the blame entirely on the Bishop. But involvement in these three areas both hindered and diverted Ryle from his primary task of mission.

1. RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE CLERGY

(a) Promotions

Ryle's appointments were generally well received. His first two major promotions were those of John Wareing Bardsley and William Lefroy both raised to be Archdeacons. Ryle was a friend of Bardsley's father and had known the family for some time. Bardsley went on to become Bishop of Sodor and Man and then Carlisle. Although Lefroy was known

as 'a Bishop's man', he was the most popular and well-known preacher in Liverpool and was promoted to be Dean of Norwich. It was argued that Canon Clarke, the most senior clergyman in Southport, should have been preferred to Lefroy, but Clarke was ill at the time and obtained the promotion later.¹ Ryle was keen to reward hardworking clergy, although he had little to offer except honorary posts in the pro-Cathedral. One example that Ryle publicly spoke about was that of Henry Postance of Holy Trinity, Toxteth Park, promoted in August 1884.² Ryle had given Postance a canonry that 'he might publicly testify his admiration of the great work he had carried on in connection with these industrial schools'.³ Another example of hard work among children was that of Thomas Major Lester, who raised nearly three million pounds for work for destitute children.⁴

Ryle made a number of diocesan appointments in July 1889. All the six men were university men, two from Dublin, two from Oxford and two from Cambridge. One was the Headmaster of Merchant Taylor's School, Crosby. The least well known was Canon James Honeyburne. Yet he had been a wrangler at Cambridge and had served on the School Board for eight years. He was also secretary of the Biblewomen's Society and of the Diocesan Lay Helpers Association, and was a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society. The most pronounced low churchman was William Francis Taylor, promoted to Archdeacon of Warrington. Yet he was known not to offend, had a first class degree and had written twenty-three books including The Divine Philosophy of History. He had also been in Liverpool for thirty-eight years.⁵

There were only two clergymen about whom there could have been complaints of being overlooked, Charles William Stubbs and John Sheepshanks. The former was a prominent Christian Socialist of the Broad School and the latter was the best known High Churchman in Liverpool, though not attaining the notoriety of Bell Cox. Yet neither man in any sense represented any group of clergy in Liverpool. Nor were they particularly known for any work outside their own sphere of interest. Stubbs was only in the diocese for six years, Sheepshanks concerned himself exclusively with his parish. Both were promoted out

of the diocese, the former to become Dean of Ely (and Bishop of Oxford) and the latter Bishop of Norwich. It was observed 'the men selected for preferment are in every instance competent, proved and zealous'. There was no serious objection to the omissions.⁶

Ryle was less free from complaints with regard to other clergy relationships. Great indignation was aroused in Parr when the vicar of nearby Ashton-in-Makerfield, Henry Siddall, forbade the vicar of St. Peter's Parr, Abraham Nunn, from giving a lecture in his parish.⁷ Or again, a series of acrimonious letters between Charles Stubbs and John Diggle appeared in the press when the former, needing money for his schools in Wavertree, appealed to the church members of wealthy Mossley Hill (Diggle's church) for help, if they resided in the Wavertree school district. Stubbs criticised the poor giving, seven pounds, from people whose total rateable assessment was £13,000.⁸ The elections for proctors, to represent the clergy in the Lower House of the Convocation of York, were another source of acrimony. In 1880 Benjamin Clarke and John Stewart were elected for the Archdeaconry of Liverpool. When Liverpool was divided into two Archdeaconries, another two proctors had to be elected. Ryle decided that the new Archdeaconry of Warrington should elect both the new proctors, even though John Stewart resided in that area. No reason was given for this decision⁹, which was reversed in 1885 when it was decided that proctors had to be residents of the archdeaconry which they represented. Ryle seemed confused. He had written to John Stewart saying he was eligible as proctor for the Archdeaconry of Liverpool, but the Archbishop of York ruled that this was wrong.¹⁰

In the Warrington Archdeaconry John Diggle had stirred up strife by circulating for support, since the rules did not allow speeches by candidates.¹¹ He argued that it was 'unfortunate and unwholesome' that the proctors were always either rural deans or canons. He had been in Liverpool for fifteen years and never once had a proctor reported back from Convocation. Further, it was necessary to have young men at Convocation, especially if any reform in the Church of England was to be effected.¹² He stood no chance against the sitting candidates, Edward Carr and George Warr.¹³ Carr had been the rector of St. Helen's

for forty years and Warr occupied the prestigious incumbency of Childwall. In the Liverpool Archdeaconry, John Stewart's brother had been substituted for him but failed to get elected, despite being the rector of the pro-Cathedral.¹⁴ In six months a further election was held with no contest in Liverpool, but Carr had died leaving a vacancy in Warrington and John Stewart presented himself for election.¹⁵ This unleashed some bitter letters against him, pointing out that his father had purchased the advowson and put his son in directly on his ordination at the age of twenty-five. He had been there for forty years on £1,300 per annum and had done nothing to build churches in the new populous parts of his parish. He had never written anything, was not known as a preacher and when proctor had done nothing except vote.¹⁶ One writer concluded 'in voting for Canon J. Stewart the clergy of the Archdeaconry of Warrington will be identifying themselves with the abuses of nepotism, officialdom and inequality'.¹⁷ On the day, Lefroy and Stewart polled the same number of votes, twenty-seven each.¹⁸ But in a subsequent ballot Lefroy won by six votes.¹⁹

Not only were there squabbles about men in the diocese but there were also squabbles about men coming into the diocese. It was rumoured that Ryle preferred to appoint men who had been to theological colleges, rather than university men. By 1885 it was commented, 'the diocese of Liverpool is notoriously a place of resort for ill-educated candidates'.²⁰ A correspondent to the Post complained:

It is a fact that the average incumbent of the Church of England could not add up a simple sum in fractions, could not construe an unseen line in Latin or Greek, knows nothing of foreign languages or English literature ... but he is not rusty in any amount of gossip, twaddle, or a thorough knowledge of 'Crockford'...²¹

In contrast a university man could 'converse as an educated gentleman' on topics outside of theology.²² Some accused the Bishop of preferring men from St. Aidan's and St. John's Highbury because they were low church places.²³ It was insinuated that the examinations were rigged

in their favour and against candidates of other schools of thought.²⁴ The Principal of St. John's Highbury, Charles Waller, who was also one of Ryle's examining chaplains, refuted both these accusations. The examinations were conducted wholly in writing, except a short vive voce in Latin. There was no cross examination and every candidate received the same papers. There were only eleven Highbury men in the diocese; one hundred and twenty nine were ordained elsewhere. He asserted it was easier for someone from his college to find three curacies in London than one in Liverpool.²⁵ Ryle himself, who usually avoided letters to the press, thought the accusations so serious as to warrant a direct reply by him. He denied that the Principal of St. Aidan's was involved at all in the examinations and he asserted that he had no influence over curates, as every incumbent chose his own.²⁶ These replies did not satisfy the complainants and one suggested that if theological college men wore tippets instead of hoods, which were illegal wear for them, then at least laymen would know the calibre of the man in the pulpit.²⁷ Bishop Boyd Carpenter was particularly incensed that St Bees' men could so fold their white and crimson hoods so as to appear to have come either from Oxford or Cambridge!²⁸

Dr. Conolly Porter, of All Saints, Southport, rightly observed that there was an absence of statistical information on this point of the origin of ordinands.²⁹ In fact, the year 1885 was the only year when the number of men from Aidan's, Bees' and Highbury outnumbered university men. The unusual aspect was the number from St. Bees (5), when in fifteen years only one or two came from there.³⁰ For half Ryle's episcopate the numbers from Highbury were fewer than three, while the number from St. Aidan's varied enormously from one to fourteen. 1885 was one of only four years when the numbers from St. Aidan's reached double figures. The standard at St. Aidan's was high. Bishop Sumner thought the college 'furnished him with the best candidates for ordination'.³¹ The social composition of the college was also quite elitist, 84% were 'sons of gentlemen'.³² Its Principal, W.S. Smith, had won six university prizes, obtained a double first and could speak nine languages. He became Bishop of Sydney in 1890.³³ Despite all these positive points, Ryle did not favour or support the

SOURCES OF CANDIDATES ORDAINED BY RYLE

UNIVERSITY

THEOLOGY COLLEGE

Year	Oxford	Cambridge	Non-Coll C	London	Dublin	Other	Aidans	Bees	Highbury	Other	Literate
1880	6	(1)	2		1	1	10	1	1	2 (1)	1
1881	6	5	3	3	3		12	2	1	1	2
1882	4 (1)	7			2	2	6	1	2	(1)	1
1883	5 (1)	6	2		1		6	1	2	(1)	
1884	7	4	1			4	9	4	3		2
1885	3 (2)	5 (1)	3	1	5	(1)	12	(2)	3	2 (2)	1
1886	2	6	1	1	2		5	7	3	2	
1887	1	8 (2)	1	3	1	3	4	(1)	2	2 (1)	2
1888	3 (2)	7 (1)		1	1	3	2		5	(3)	
1889	4 (2)	7 (2)	1	1	2	2 (1)	1	(2)	6 (1)	1 (4)	1
1891	7 (3)	8 (5)	1	1	1	3 (2)	14	(2)	6	1 (4)	2
1892	3 (1)	6 (2)	2 (1)			1	2		5 (2)	(2)	1
1893	3 (1)	6 (4)	3	(1)		2	4	2	4	2 (6)	3
1894	7 (3)	6 (4)	1 (3)	(1)	2	2	2		1	1 (11)	1
1896	2	8 (1)	3	1	5 (1)	1	8	(1)	4	2 (1)	2
1897	1 (3)	4		1	3	3	2		2	1 (3)	
1898	1 (3)	3 (7)		1	2	1 (1)	3		2 (1)	3 (10)	
1899	(1)	1 (1)				(1)			5	(3)	

Note: Figures in brackets in a column are candidates who went to both university and theology college.
 Taken from Diocesan Record

college; indeed he pressed for its closure.³⁴ The numbers from Oxford and Cambridge remained fairly steady with slight increases in the nineties. In only two years were there more Oxford men than Cambridge ones. The most interesting development was the increase of university men who also went on to theological college, though rarely to St. Aidan's or Highbury. But the overall conclusion makes nonsense of the accusation that the diocese was an ill-educated one. Ryle, throughout his episcopate, sought to raise the educational standard of ordinands.³⁵

Men coming into the diocese did not find promotion easy and were not particularly helped by Ryle. There were some wealthy livings in the diocese. Indeed, Liverpool had more rich livings proportionately than any other Northern diocese.³⁶ Halsall was worth £3,500 with a population of 1,700 whereas Magh^hall, Melling and Lydiate collectively only raised £770 with a population double that of Halsall. Ormskirk with a population of 8,500 was valued at £350 per annum whereas Se^fpton with less than a quarter of that population was worth £1,800.³⁷ The rector of Walton got £1,850 per annum and the rector of St. Peter's £1,600.³⁸ Winwick, until reformed by Act of Parliament, was worth £3,500 and Canon Hopwood had been there for thirty years in 1885.³⁹ But there were also numerous poor livings. In June 1886 two livings fell vacant simultaneously. One was that of St. Helen's, with an income of £850 per annum. The other was St. Clement's, Toxteth Park, with an income of only £180 per annum.⁴⁰ This problem was principally confined to the city of Liverpool. Where the Incumbent was reasonably well off, he stayed. Robert Princep Crockett was at Eccleston for forty-eight years and Abraham Augustus Nunn, a keen yachtsman, was at Parr for forty-one years.⁴¹ There were, however, some long stayers in the city when money was secure or expenses low. James Hassall, a bachelor, was at St. John the Baptist, Toxteth, for fifty-four years. But he had independent means and left property to his nephews valued at over £46,000.⁴² George Read, secure on a Corporation income, was at St. Paul's for 36 years.⁴³ Canon Hume was at Vauxhall for thirty-seven years and at St. Anne's, Stanley, Gardner had been Incumbent for forty-

nine years. He was replaced by his son, who had already served eighteen years as a curate.⁴⁴

Other clergy were in dire straits. Henry Coulson Lory's income was so low at St. Mark's, in the city, that he had to sell his possessions and move into lodgings to survive.⁴⁵ John William Rhodes of St. Chad's, Everton, had running costs of five hundred pounds per annum and an income of only half that amount.⁴⁶ Charles Hesketh Knowlys resigned after eighteen years as Incumbent of North Meols because his annual income had fallen to only £80.⁴⁷ It was observed that American preachers were paid as much as £5,600. The Courier complained that English churches would remain full of 'wood and women' unless something was done to raise clergy salaries.⁴⁸ While Ryle was prepared to raise the money coming to clergy at the lower end of the pay scale, he was not prepared to do so by equalising the inequalities that were glaringly obvious. Ryle was strongly against any interference with the rights of Incumbents; for example, he encouraged Incumbents to appoint sidesmen in their churches to prevent the necessity of PCCs.⁴⁹ Consequently, curates gained little under Ryle. During his episcopate the length of time it took to move from curate to Incumbent increased from eighteen years to twenty-seven years. Only London and Norwich were worse; but other Bishops believed fervently in long curacies too. Fraser believed in fifteen year curacies and Archbishop Thomson would not institute to a living unless at least ten years had been served.⁵⁰ It was not surprising that some curates advocated disestablishment.⁵¹ Ryle spoke against the formation of a Union to press for better pay for curates. He argued that the Incumbent had to dip into his pocket so often that in practice their incomes were the same.⁵² Occasionally curates were left large gifts by members of the congregation, but this simply hindered constructive reform.⁵³ The lack of money caused one Birkenhead curate to commit suicide.⁵⁴ When some curates in Southport suggested giving Ryle an album of photographs of themselves in recognition of his long service, they were roundly condemned as being the junior and less permanent clergy and making suggestions above their station.⁵⁵

The internal bickering amongst the senior clergy and atmosphere of discontent amongst the junior, marred the image of Ryle's episcopate. This poor public front was further heightened by three causes which Ryle could do little about, although where he did act he often made mistakes. These were the moral misdemeanours of some clergy, the controversies between some incumbents and their parishioners, and the decline of the Corporation Churches.

(b) Moral Misdemeanours

The moral misdemeanours of the clergy stained attempts by Ryle to create the image of a well-administered, hardworking diocese. Naturally, these misdemeanours all comprised sex, money and drink. The most notorious sexual failing was that of Rev. William Edmund Postance. He had become ill and moved into lodgings with William and Harriett Coup, where he was nursed by the latter. She took Postance for walks, and sat on his knees, and kissed him in the presence of her husband. William Coup was a baker and out very early in the morning. During his absence the servant girl found his wife and the vicar in bed together on four occasions. William Coup turned them both out of the house, ending his twelve-year marriage.⁵⁶

Money and drink were more frequent problems for the clergy. Rev. George Spooner was brought to court by John Williams, a poulterer, who had supplied 114 geese at over 91b each for Christmas 1887, which the vicar intended to distribute round the parish. Spooner had complained that three or four were unfit, but when Williams brought replacements Spooner had given the unfit ones away. The vicar later refused to pay for eighteen of the geese. The court found him guilty.⁵⁷ John Wakeford, the vicar of St. Margaret's, Anfield, was taken to court by his housekeeper, Mrs. C. Elbeck, for non-payment of wages. His defence was that she was not a churchwoman (a necessary requirement for the job), because she failed to attend a service on Christmas Day and refused to go to confession! He, too, was ordered to pay.⁵⁸

Rev. George Bond of Farnworth, a clergyman of thirty years standing, was accused by a farmer and a brewer of being drunk while

officiating at a baptism, a wedding and a burial, as well as on three occasions on a public highway.⁵⁹ He was tried by a special commission appointed by the Bishop⁶⁰, suspended for three years from all clerical functions, and refused all monies. The suspension would be lifted on production of a certificate from three clergy vouching for his good behaviour during those three years.⁶¹ Immediately afterwards Bond was summoned to Widnes Police court for non-payment of rates.⁶²

Another clergyman with drinking problems was Ernest Fitzroy of St. Jude's, Hardwick Street. He also had financial difficulties and arguments with his parishioners. The dispute began in 1882 when Fitzroy claimed that Ryle had advised him not to pay his curates, or tradesmen supplying relief to poor in the parish.⁶³ But the churchwardens complained to the Bishop that there was no money in the church because Fitzroy was not accounting for it properly.⁶⁴ Ryle appears to have talked with Fitzroy and, while advising him to alter some of his behaviour, suggested that he should prevent the appointment of sidesmen at the annual vestry meeting to quell rebellious voices.⁶⁵ However, the vestry meeting imposed sidesmen on the vicar and the elected churchwarden campaigned against children's processions on saints' days, an innovation by Fitzroy.⁶⁶ The vicar's poor financial sense came to the fore again in November when a curate from Manchester sued him for non-payment of travelling and service expenses.⁶⁷ At the vestry meeting of 1883 Fitzroy was publicly accused of being drunk.⁶⁸ A private hearing of the Bishop's Commission lasted from 10am to 7pm. Fitzroy's defence was that he took chloroform occasionally because of a severe toothache and this gave the appearance of drunkenness.⁶⁹ In the meantime Fitzroy was arrested in Warwick on a charge of frauding a three pound cheque.⁷⁰ Fitzroy blamed Ryle for his state. He claimed to be constantly looking to the Bishop for fatherly advice which was never given. Despite invitations to come and confirm or preach, the Bishop declined to come. He had been 'masterly inactive and lacking in any sympathy'.⁷¹ Others also accused Ryle of being distant.⁷² While waiting to be tried by Lord Penzance, Fitzroy was not supposed to conduct services.⁷³ But the trial was delayed by the illness of Lord Penzance and the church fell into a state of disorganisation.⁷⁴ A

communion service was abandoned when only the curate-in-charge and organist turned up.⁷⁵

Fitzroy received the same sentence as Bond.⁷⁶ But whereas Bond agreed to abide by the verdict, Fitzroy carried on regardless. Archdeacon Bardsley was forced to attend a service, interrupt the vicar and warn him to desist and then pronounce the church closed when the latter refused.⁷⁷ In his letter of resignation Fitzroy again laid all the blame on the lack of sympathy from Ryle.⁷⁸ Meanwhile the curate-in-charge, T. Wasdale Watson, had become bankrupt due to non reception of any stipend.⁷⁹ When Ryle instituted a new vicar in 1884, he made no reference to the past, exhorted the congregation in personal religion and promised to supply a Biblewoman to the parish at his own expense.⁸⁰ This did not put an end to the troubles. The former sexton sued the churchwardens for his unpaid salary and some of the Sunday School teachers went to other churches while remaining in St. Jude's Sunday School.⁸¹ John Adams was only 'in charge' as curate and Fitzroy returned after three years.⁸² He immediately introduced a surpliced choir, flowers and turned east for the Creed.⁸³ He again objected to sidesmen and appealed to Ryle for help.⁸⁴ He further objected to a candidate for churchwarden on the grounds that he was not a householder.⁸⁵ Fitzroy himself was summoned to court in London for non-payment of grocery debts.⁸⁶ Little had changed.

(c) Controversies Between Incumbents and Parishioners

Most of the conflicts between incumbents and their parishioners centred either on money or on the style of the services. The vicar of St. Mark's, Upper Duke Street, Rev. Samuel Rogers, was accused of deliberately hiding the notification of a vestry meeting in order to avoid questions about finance.⁸⁷ Two parishioners took him to the Consistory Court for making unauthorised alterations to a proposed mission room.⁸⁸ Chancellor Espin ordered Rogers to dismantle the half-built mission room at his own expense.⁸⁹ He also warned the vicar that his conduct of business had been 'loose and irregular' and in future proceedings, including notice of meetings, must be carried out properly.⁹⁰ In the course of this case it was revealed that Rogers was

chaplain to an Orange Lodge and that five old boxes were deposited in the church containing bibles and prayer books, crowns, orange stoles, candlesticks and swords.⁹¹ Each of these had to be removed.⁹² Rogers left the diocese soon afterwards, condemning his opponents to a fire seven times hotter than that which consumed Sodom and Gomorrah. He also claimed to have spent £440 of his own money on the church. He described his enemies as adulterers and debtors, and the leader as 'the Missing Link' shunned by women.⁹³ He moved to Bath, but the Bishop of Bath and Wells revoked his license within a year.⁹⁴

The most notorious conflict between an incumbent and his parishioners was at St. John the Baptist, Toxteth Park. This was partly due to the longevity of James Hassall, 54 years in the parish, who died in 1886.⁹⁵ As a result, the church had become 'a spiritual desert'.⁹⁶ The absence of a vicarage in the parish contributed to the atmosphere of abandonment.⁹⁷ Hassall was an old-fashioned Evangelical, performing two services on Sunday, one service midweek, and communion services once a month in the morning, once a month in the evening and on Christmas Day, Easter Day, Whit Sunday and Trinity Sunday.⁹⁸ His replacement, Richard Francis Herring, was not of the same school. Services on Sunday doubled, midweek services increased sevenfold and there were also additional services on all Saints days. Communion was administered every Sunday and on Holy Days.⁹⁹ Herring obtained the incumbency because H. Douglas Horsfall, a prominent High Churchman, had obtained the advowson. It was the combination of years of apathy followed by an energetic incumbency of a contrasting churchmanship which caused the trouble. This situation also existed elsewhere, what was unusual about John the Baptist, Toxteth, was the prevalence of violence.

As early as October 1886 the vicar locked the vestry door to the church, compelling the churchwardens to go through the churchyard to the church 'without hats and in the rain'.¹⁰⁰ The people faced west whenever the vicar faced east. When he entered the pulpit, fifty - sixty people left the church, each one shutting the door behind him.¹⁰¹ Being afraid of the crowd outside, the vicar left secretly by the back

door.¹⁰² Herring abandoned the use of the three-decker pulpit and set up two prayer desks in the chancel instead. He also introduced a new hymnbook and adopted the Eastward Position.¹⁰³ Herring accused the clerk of taking money from the collection books, so the clerk took him to court on a charge of slander.¹⁰⁴ Herring was found guilty, but the court showed its contempt of the whole case by levying a fine of only $\frac{1}{4}$ d.¹⁰⁵ By February 1887, a meeting of parishioners expressed an 'utter want of confidence in the vicar' and sent a memorial to this effect to Ryle.¹⁰⁶ Herring then took Mr. Daniel Burdon, one of the churchwardens, to court for 'brawling' in church. The churchwarden had twice snuffed out candles which Herring had lit on the altar.¹⁰⁷ He was fined one pound plus costs.¹⁰⁸ There was then a public fight in the church between Mr. Burden and a young man who collected monies in a 'bag'. The bag was torn and the money scattered over the church. Mr. Burden put it in the collection 'box'.¹⁰⁹ In November 1887 the people's warden (Burden) argued against H.J. Richards, the vicar's representative, in the Consistory Court. He accused the vicar of setting up a retable above the communion table, raising the legs of the communion table six inches, hanging a red curtain across the East window and elevating the choir stalls.¹¹⁰ Richards argued that none of these were structural alterations and therefore the vicar did not need permission to carry them out. He argued that under Herring the congregation had increased, while Burden argued that no fewer than 500 people had left the church.¹¹¹ Chancellor Espin did not object to the dossal or the retable, but ordered that the choir stalls be lowered. He observed that the effect of raising the communion table legs was to make only the Eastward Position possible, so ruled that either they be lowered or the elevation extended to the altar rails.¹¹²

Archdeacon Lefroy, sitting in his court over a dispute about the election of churchwardens at John the Baptist, observed that that church caused more trouble than all the rest put together.¹¹³ But perpetual court cases and arguments were not the only features of the dispute. The police were called in attendance to make arrests for brawling, to prevent Orange Lodge marches and to protect Herring from assault.¹¹⁴ On one occasion he needed an escort of 80 constables.¹¹⁵

Ryle attempted to calm the situation by writing to the vicar and the churchwardens in October 1886. To the former he urged 'my earnest hope that you will do all that lies in your power to conciliate your parishioners and will try to avoid anything in the conduct of divine service which gives offence'.¹¹⁶ To the churchwardens he warned that they had no rights within the vestry if the vicar asked them to leave, nor did they have any authority over what objects were on the Communion Table. He hoped they would 'refrain from saying or doing anything calculated to cause irritation upon any subject upon which you differ from Mr. Herring, and, as far as in you lies, not only to prevent, but discourage such behaviour in others'.¹¹⁷ Ryle was clearly more on the side of the Incumbent and apparently later encouraged him to dismiss the clerk.¹¹⁸ But neither of Ryle's appeals succeeded and when he wrote to Herring, reminding him that lighted candles on the altar were illegal except for necessary illumination, the vicar simply ignored him.¹¹⁹ On precisely the same issue John Wakefield only obeyed Ryle because otherwise he would not carry out a confirmation, and Alexander Stewart obeyed only because his church was the pro-Cathedral and in a sense the Bishop's church.¹²⁰ Herring also criticised, in the parish magazine, the nearby Unitarian minister who 'despised and rejected' Christ. The Mayor complained to Ryle, who asked Herring to apologise to the Mayor. Ryle argued that Unitarians erred but did not 'despise and reject' Christ. Herring declined to apologise, so Ryle sent detailed references from Channing, Theodore Parker, Martineau and Thom to make his point. Herring still declined to comply with his Bishop's request and published the correspondence.¹²¹

Other churches became embroiled in similar disputes, usually about money, alterations to the buildings, or the style of the service. At St. Cuthberts, North ^{Meols} ~~Meols~~, the dispute was between the vicar, C.H.Knowlys, and the patron, Mrs. Hesketh. The contention was over internal alterations of the church involving the creation of a porch, the siting of the pulpit and the re-siting of some pews.¹²² All the decisions went in favour of the patron, who was prepared to fund all the alterations if her plans were accepted.¹²³ It was not necessary, of course, for patrons to go to court to get their own way. In

Warrington, Sir Gilbert Greenall simply stopped building the church when he had a disagreement with the vicar, Arthur Jones. Since Greenall was providing £15,000 Jones soon moved to another diocese. When he left the patron continued the building.¹²⁴ At St. Paul's, where there was a joint incumbency, there was a court case between the two incumbents. Frederick Job, the new young vicar, wanted to erect a choir vestry for a robed choir, but Reginald Yonge, resident for nearly fifty years, was against a robed choir.¹²⁵ Disputes about music between incumbents and organists bedevilled St. Peter's, Aintree, Holy Trinity and St. John's, Earlstown, where the organist forced the abandonment of a service on Easter Sunday by continually playing the organ.¹²⁶

The usual combatants, however, were the incumbent and the churchwardens. In Blundellsands there was a dispute over how many sidesmen the People's Warden could nominate.¹²⁷ In St. Helen's the dispute was over the legality of pew rents.¹²⁸ It took a year for the court to reach a decision.¹²⁹ At St. Chad's, in the city, the churchwardens prevented the use of a schoolroom for High Church ritual, including processions, by charging seven shillings for each meeting. The vicar suspended them.¹³⁰ At St. Mary's, Walton-on-the-Hill, the churchwardens objected to the removal of a chimney pot and the erection of a cross in its place.¹³¹ At Golborne, the rector threatened legal action against the churchwardens for laying kerbstones along the path through the churchyard. They argued they were responsible for improving the condition of the churchyard, while he argued that in cutting the turf they were damaging his freehold.¹³² The problem with all these disputes was not simply the way they coloured the public image of the church, but also that the disappointed parties tended to appeal to the Bishop. At St. Peter's, Hindley, a parishioner wanted to erect a stained glass window in memory of a deceased son. The window portrayed Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Chancellor Espin turned down the request because Ryle complained that the nimbus around Jesus was the same as that of Mary and Joseph, and there ought to be a difference.¹³³ The parishioner declined to accept the decision, arguing that the different colour of Jesus made that distinction. He preferred to

withdraw the whole window rather than abide by the Bishop's decision. The case was adjourned to arrange a private meeting between them.¹³⁴ Ryle was roundly condemned for his involvement.¹³⁵

Disputes about money and buildings occurred throughout the diocese, whereas complaints over style of service tended to be centred around a few pronounced High Church vicars. The most prominent of these, James Bell Cox, is dealt with in Chapter Five. There were others as well. St. Margaret's, Anfield, was the first church in the diocese to get permission to have a second Communion Table, despite the fact that Ryle refused to consecrate new churches where a second table was requested.¹³⁶ A second table was illegal according to the canons, but Espin ruled that the canons did not meet the needs of the late nineteenth century and needed to be revised.¹³⁷ When the Table was erected it stood in its own chancel, screened off by iron rails covered with heavy tapestries, and was surrounded by a credence table, sedilium, communicants' kneeling desks and a reredos enclosing a painting of 'Ecce Homo'.¹³⁸ Although St. Margaret's, Anfield, was a well-established High Church, people were still being taken to court for disrupting the services in 1898.¹³⁹

At St. Matthew's, Scotland Road, there was a parallel change to that of John the Baptist, Toxteth, in 1897, when George Gustavus Monck replaced Charles Richard Hyde, who had been there for thirty years.¹⁴⁰ At a vestry meeting lasting nearly four hours, the vicar's warden resigned because of Monck's doctrine and ritual. There were complaints about the introduction of the Eastward Position and the ending of Sunday evening communions.¹⁴¹ Monck was criticised for advocating the free use of time on Sundays after morning communion, although he argued that he only meant to apply the principle to those on holiday on the Isle of Man! The vestry asked him to resign.¹⁴² At Haydock, one vicar resigned over the failure to get his way architecturally when a new church was built. He wanted separate seating for men and women because of his High Church views.¹⁴³ A subsequent vicar, Francis Ireland, was also High Church. A vestry meeting declined, by 31 votes to 16, to pass a vote of thanks to him because of the new ritual he

introduced.¹⁴⁴ The election of churchwardens was blocked because they had not done anything to stop the holding of communion services when there were less than the requisite number of people attending.¹⁴⁵ Ireland had to summon the police when a churchwarden interrupted his sermon and complained he was teaching doctrine contrary to the Articles.¹⁴⁶

At St. Thomas', Toxteth, the vicar, Ernest Underhill, was accused of using incense, an additional book of prayers other than the Prayer Book, and 'holy water'.¹⁴⁷ He gave up the last two after a letter from Ryle. Ryle's position was strong here because the illegality of the action was clear. But in most disputes either of buildings or services the legal position was not clear. Nevertheless Ryle's principle was always to act according to the law, even if it meant supporting a so-called High Church position. The parishioners of St. John the Evangelist, Walton, complained about a full-length sculpture of Christ on a cross with figures of the Virgin Mary and St. John at the foot of it.¹⁴⁸ Ryle not only sent his archdeacon and secretary, but also went to see it himself. He personally disliked it and said so,

But the question is not what I like personally or dislike, but what is legal, or rather what is not forbidden by the law of the Church of England ... but it is a standing principle with me that legal decisions must be obeyed until they are reversed or set aside, whatever we may think about them. By that principle I mean to abide as Bishop of Liverpool, whatever my own private opinions may be.¹⁴⁹

So Ryle, for example, declined to support the petition of Seaforth parishioners against their vicar for adopting the Eastward Position.¹⁵⁰ But, in the dispute at Walton, when a vacancy occurred Ryle declined to appoint a man the congregation wanted and put in a 'low church' vicar. He reduced the choral element, causing the organist to leave, and preached long sermons. Some parishioners preferred this and accused the choir of trying to starve the vicar out by moving from rented pews to free benches and ignoring the collections. Whatever Ryle did, he was bound to lose.¹⁵¹

In practice this meant Ryle had little influence over the contentions that went on in the diocese, because there was no effective mechanism for enforcing the law.¹⁵² As far as incumbents were concerned, his administration depended entirely on their willingness to obey his fatherly advice. More often than not they ignored it. Even parishioners challenged it. The only group subject to him were curates. On one occasion a church took eight months to find a curate. They eventually got one who preached well, worked hard, was courteous in behaviour and of irreproachable morals. But he stammered when reading the liturgy, which caused some to leave the church. The incumbent spoke to Ryle, who sacked the curate after three months.¹⁵³ Ryle suspended Reginald Swayne Bartram for speaking against the Archbishop of York when the latter refused to institute Joseph Charles Cater to Haydock on the grounds that he was ordained in the American Episcopal Church. The Archbishop also thought a priest should serve ten years as a curate before obtaining a living.¹⁵⁴ Ryle sacked James Knight McDowall for using replicas of the Roman Catholic Host, bringing children in from the streets to watch 'the sacrifice of the mass', and for mumbling devotions not in the Prayer Book.¹⁵⁵ Ryle supported Charles Cunningham Elcum, the vicar of St. Agnes' Church, when he eventually gave notice to his curates, John Gordon Love and Frederick Penny Vasey, because of complaints from 'principal' members of the congregation about 'their wearisome advocacy of confession'.¹⁵⁶ Ryle had asked the curates to resign quietly, but they refused to do so since the only difference between them and the vicar was that they had set times for confession, whereas Elcum was only available by appointment.¹⁵⁷ Even here Ryle was circumnavigated, in that John Wakeford immediately offered the curates appointments at his church.¹⁵⁸ Ryle also tended to ignore the protests of the Curates' Union. He received a complaint when the incumbency of St. Michael-in-the-Hamlet, worth £500 per annum, was given to a man who had been priested only one year before. Ryle simply said that the patron was responsible and he had no legal grounds for interference. But the Bishop also added that some men of two or three years standing were better than others who had been ordained for ten years.¹⁵⁹

(d) Decline of the Corporation Churches

At least in all these churches 'something' was happening. In many places, in the city especially, nothing was happening. In September 1881 a visitor from Cambridge University carried out a survey of 42 city churches for the Weekly Post.¹⁶⁰ In half of these churches he found fewer than fifty people meeting for worship. These small numbers were accentuated by the vast size of the churches. St. Bartholomew's could hold 1,400, but only 40 turned up.¹⁶¹ All Soul's, Vauxhall, had seating for 900, but only 46 turned up.¹⁶² Holy Trinity, St. Anne's Street, had accommodation for at least 1,200, but the congregation consisted of 50 or 60.¹⁶³ St. Columbia had seating for 1,100, yet only 23 adults attended.¹⁶⁴ St. Paul's and St. John the Baptist, Toxteth, could hold 1,800 each. There were 50 at the first and 30 at the second.¹⁶⁵ Even congregations of 300 looked small in such huge edifices, and these much smaller numbers made Ryle's administration look ridiculous.

It was particularly unfortunate that the Corporation Churches fell largely into this category. There were ten Corporation Churches. In one of these, Holy Trinity, the Corporation had to pay only fire insurance at £3 per annum and repairs. Although in one year this amounted to over £50, it was usually less than £10.¹⁶⁶ In four other churches the Corporation made contributions to the Incumbents' stipend totalling £320 per annum, plus £5 per annum for the organist at St. Paul's.¹⁶⁷ But in the other five churches the Corporation financed the incumbent, curate, clerk, sexton, organist, heating, wine and repairs. In return the Corporation obtained around £300 from the pew rents at St. Luke's Church.¹⁶⁸ The real irritation was that between the five churches, almost every year, one had a hefty repair bill.¹⁶⁹

The bulk of the bill was of course the stipends of these five churches, totalling £1,350 per annum.¹⁷⁰ It was at this point that the small attendances were significant. The churches were reviewed in 1893 against the background of plans for the Council to pay its way out of its obligation. At Holy Trinity there were 47 worshippers, at St. Anne's about 60, at St. Paul's 25.¹⁷¹ There were 100 at St. Martin's

THE COST OF THE CORPORATION CHURCHES

St. Michael's

Year	Vicar	Curate	Clerk	Sexton	Organist	Organ Blower	Tuning Organ	Fire Insce.	Wine	Water	Coal	Repairs
1880	400	11.19.2	40	20	40	4.4.0	6	4.11.6	4.2.0	1.7.0	-	26.16.5
1881	"	73.18.9	"	"	"	"	"	"	4.3.1	1.7.0	-	216.0.11
1882	"	96.1.11	"	"	"	"	24.10.0	"	4.4.0	"	-	25.4.3
1883	"	100.0.0	"	"	"	"	6	"	9.0.8	1.1.0	-	89.14.6
1884	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	3.12.0	"	-	20.7.10
1885	"	92.16.2	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	-	77.7.10
1886	"	100	"	"	"	"	"	"	1.16.0	"	7.11.0	17.12.9
1887	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	3.12.0	"	11.6.1	103.5.5
1888	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	10.16.7	3.17.6
1889	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	4.4.0	"	6.3.0	0.10.2
1890	400	100	40	20	40	4.4.0	6	4.11.6	1.16.0	1.1.0	13.10.8	1.10.0
1891	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	-	"	12	-
1892	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	7.4.0	"	8.4.0	-
1893	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	6	"	6.12.0	206.17.8
1894	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	3.17.10	3.12.0	"	6.13.0	0.13.11
1895	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	5.8.0	"	6.17.9	7.8.10
1896	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	3.12.0	"	7.13.5	1.9.4
1897	316.8.9	79.2.2	28.4.11	14.2.6	28.4.11	2.19.4	11.5.0	2.8.6	"	1.11.6	7.4.1	4.8.11

St. George's

Year	Vicar	Clerk	Tuning Organ	Fire Insce.	Wine	Water	Coal	Gas	Matting Upholst.	Repairs Cleaning	Sexton
1880	250	40	6	4.4.0	2.1.0	1.7.0	7.10.7	-	12.4.6	24	30
1881	"	"	"	"	4.4.0	"	8.2.8	-	-	28.1.3	"
1882	"	"	"	"	6.6.0	"	3.7.1	-	-	25.19.3	"
1883	"	"	"	"	2.2.0	"	2.4.0	-	-	28.7.6	"
1884	"	"	49	"	3.10.0	"	8.3.6	-	17.1.5	23.5.4	"
1885	"	"	6	"	1.16.0	"	4.14.1	6.17.4	-	32.10.10	"
1886*	"	"	"	"	"	"	4.16.0	10.14.3	-	210.11.11	"
1887	"	"	"	"	3.12.0	"	4.14.0	8.7.0	-	23.9.2	"
1888	"	"	"	"	"	"	5.16.1	8.16.11	-	21.12.5	"
1889	"	"	"	"	"	"	6.15.0	14.7.7	6.7.6	6.19.10	"
1890	250	40	6	4.4.0	1.16.0	1.7.0	8.12.8	17.4.10	3.7.3.	42.19.2	30
1891	291.13.4	"	44.10.0	"	-	"	9.1.0	20.8.8	43	78.15.7	30
1892	208.0.8	"	6	"	3.12.0	"	6.15.0	14.15.6	-	51.14.11	"
1893	250	"	"	"	1.16.0	"	6.13.0	13.9.0	-	21.12.6	"
1894	"	"	"	3.11.5	"	"	2.8.0	14.8.9	-	15.1.9	"
1895	"	"	"	3.11.6	"	"	7.6.0	12.12.1	-	23.19.3	"
1896	"	"	"	"	-	"	3.16.0	11.1.4	-	26.18.8	"
1897	197.15.6	28.4.11	11.5.0	2.4.4	"	1.1.0	3.12.4	10.19.11	-	11.18.2	21.3.9

* Year changed to Jan - Dec.
1891 was for 14 months

St. Martin's

Year	Vicar	Curate	Clerk	Sexton	Organist	Organ Blower	Tuning	Fire Insce.	Wine	Water	Coal	Repairs Painting
1880	300	100	40	20	30	5	6	4.4.6	2.1.0	1.1.0	4.5.2	23.2.5
1881	"	"	"	"	"	"	32.10.0	"	2.2.0	"	10.4.8	63.0.1
1882	"	"	"	"	"	"	6	"	-	"	21.1.7	60.19.11
1883	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	5.12.0	"	12.5.7	73.19.7
1884	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	4.11.6	"	9.8.3	51.12.0
1885	"	56.6.0	23.6.8	25	40	"	37.10.0	"	1.16.0	"	7.3.5	42.1.5
1886	"	100	30	21.5.0	"	"	6	"	"	"	13.3.5	16.15.10
1887	"	"	"	20	"	"	"	"	"	"	11.15.0	31.18.0
1888	"	"	"	23.15.0	"	"	"	"	-	"	23.16.1	59.13.0
1889	"	"	23.14.0	25	"	"	12.15.0	"	-	"	9.18.0	184.17.11
1890	300	84.17.2	30	25	40	5	6	4.11.6	1.16.0	1.1.0	21.8.0	26.7.1
1891	"	86.6.11	"	"	"	"	"	"	-	"	15.3.0	23.15.11
1892	"	91.13.4	18.6.5	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	20.7.2	15.12.5
1893	"	100	28.11.4	"	"	"	"	"	-	"	14.8.6	22.5.6
1894	"	"	30	"	"	"	"	3.17.10	"	"	19.2.3	14.14.3
1895	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	-	"	17.6.2	29.9.7
1896	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	-	"	17.6.4	24.19.3
1897	237.6.7	79.2.2	21.3.9	17.13.1	28.4.11	3.10.8	11.5.0	2.8.6	"	"	12.4.6	364.14.1

St. Luke's

Year	Vicar	Curate	Clerk	Sexton	Organist	Organ Blower	Tuning Organ	Fire Insce.	Wine	Water	Repairs & Cleaning
1880	400	100	30	25	50	4.4.0	20	4.4.0	7.3.0	1.1.0	25.14.7
1881	"	"	"	"	"	"	6	"	7.6.8	"	13.10.10
1882	"	"	"	"	"	"	16.10.0	"	5.8.0	"	79.19.2
1883	"	"	"	"	"	"	373.15.0	"	11.2.0	"	17.1.9
1884	"	"	"	"	"	"	6	"	9.15.8	1.1.0	51.12.5
1885	"	75	"	"	"	"	"	"	4.11.4	"	51.5.4
1886*	"	100	"	"	"	"	"	"	6.7.4	"	75.18.2
1887	"	95.15.1	"	"	"	"	"	"	4.13.4	"	10.1.8
1888	"	100	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	6.10.5
1889	"	"	"	"	"	"	19.10.0	"	7.13.0	"	236.14.9
1890	400	100	30	25	50	4.4.0	6	4.4.0	6.6.8	1.1.0	16.15.2
1891	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	1.1.4	"	73.11.0
1892	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	12.19.0	"	19.13.2
1893	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	7.16.0	"	11.0.3
1894	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	3.11.5	7.4.0	1.1.0	80.10.4
1895	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	3.11.6	5.8.0	"	62.7.5
1896	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	9.15.9
1897	316.8.9	79.2.2	21.3.9	17.13.1	35.6.2	2.19.4	11.5.0	2.4.4	3.12.0	1.11.6	67.13.7

* Year changed to Jan-Dec
1891 was for 14 months

St. Thomas

Year	Vicar	Organist	Tuning Organ	Fire Insurance	Water	Repairs
1880	105	35	6.2.0	3.10.0	1.1.0	47.10.5
1881	"	"	4.10.0	"	"	15.5.9
1882	"	30.11.4	"	"	"	87.0.10
1883	"	35	"	"	"	6.10.6
1884	"	"	"	"	"	4.9.7
1885	"	"	"	"	"	10.0.7
1886	"	"	"	"	"	31.5.0
1887	"	"	"	"	"	125.8.5
1888	"	"	"	"	"	1.0.9
1889	"	29.3.4	"	"	"	33.11.9
1890	105	35	4.10.0	3.10.0	1.1.0	0.2.8
1891	"	"	"	"	"	5.18.3
1892	"	"	"	"	"	28.7.0
1893	"	"	"	"	"	40.8.0
1894	"	"	"	2.19.6	"	0.19.10
1895	"	"	"	"	"	4
1896	"	"	"	"	"	20.10.0
1897	83.1.4	24.14.4	8.8.9	1.18.2	"	75

Income to Corporation

Year	St. Paul Vicar	St. Paul Organist	St. Davids Vicar	St. Arns Vicar	St. Johns Vicar	Trinity Fire Ins	Trinity Repairs	St. Lukes pew rents	St. Michael pew rents
1880	130	5	100	80	20	3	9.1.11	308.4.7	21.2.6
1881	"	-	"	"	"	"	4.4.3	347.4.5	
1882	"	-	"	"	"	3	11.9.4	330.15.6	
1883	"	-	"	"	"	"	6.5.6	357.0.2	
1884	"	-	"	"	"	"	-	319.14.6	
1885	"	-	"	"	"	"	1.15.6	326.8.9	
1886	"	-	"	"	"	"	36.5.8	290.1.2	
1887	"	-	"	"	"	"	54.16.1	240.9.0	
1888	"	-	"	"	"	"	1.5.8	256.6.9	
1889	"	-	"	"	"	3	2.6.6	233.15.8	
1890	130	-	100	80	20	3	6.0.5	284.11.9	
1891	"	-	"	"	"	"	9.7.1	297.11.10	
1892	"	-	"	"	"	"	28.17.6	286.18.6	
1893	"	-	"	"	"	"	9.2.11	302.16.0	
1894	"	-	"	"	"	2.11.0	18.19.5	312.6.0	
1895	"	-	"	"	"	"	9.0.1	310.4.0	
1896	"	-	"	"	"	"	9.6.3	309.11.0	
1897	102.16.10-	-	79.2.2	63.5.9	15.16.5	0.14.0	7.12.6	172.2.6	

From Council Annual Reports

and 200 at St. John's, but the latter could hold 1,200 and the former 2,000.¹⁷² The reasons for these small numbers varied. At St. Anne's, it was the longevity of a nominal incumbent.¹⁷³ At Holy Trinity, Joseph Henry Skewes had been in poor health for some time.¹⁷⁴ At St. George's, a visitor had found the four worshippers outnumbered by the Incumbent, clerk, vergier, organist, organ blower, bell ringer and a single lady chorister.¹⁷⁵ The problem here was the eccentric vicar, James Kelly. When he arrived in 1863 he inherited a popular church and enjoyed a corporation procession every Sunday.¹⁷⁶ The decline began when the latter ceased to attend since Kelly accused them of being apostate from Christ.¹⁷⁷ A visitor in 1886 described a congregation of 12: 'There was no sermon. The old gentleman in the pulpit maundered on in a gentle strain about anything'.¹⁷⁸ He was largely inaudible and always requested that the last verse of the hymn he sung again.¹⁷⁹ He linked the church up to the vicarage gas supply and rigged up one pew as his bedroom, another as a kitchen and a third as his servant's bedroom. Two decks of the three decker pulpit were converted into a wine store and whisky supply.¹⁸⁰ In this light it mattered little that the vicars of St. Thomas' and St. John's were regarded as hardworking, or that St. Luke's was very successful.¹⁸¹ When the Council were faced with a request to paint St. Thomas', the chairman of the Finance Committee, Alderman Bowring, concluded they ought not to pay one sixpence to help such 'insignificant congregations'. The request was rejected.¹⁸²

Nor was Ryle helped by the equally absurd or inefficient behaviour of other clergy. The vicar of St. Mark's had been unable to keep his church school open and it closed in December 1888. However, the vicar became embroiled in a court case with the caretaker who refused to give up his occupancy of the School House.¹⁸³ At St. Mary's, Edge Hill, the vicar, Andrew Wilson, declined to baptise a baby of a couple who married before being confirmed. The complaints of the parents dragged Ryle into yet another publicised controversy.¹⁸⁴ Wilson embroiled his bishop in a further conflict when he fined Mr. G. McMillan ten shillings, later reduced to five, for turning up late for his

wedding.¹⁸⁵ No-one was able to inform McMillan on what authority the vicar had the right to do this.¹⁸⁶

The activities of Ryle's clergy and churchgoers thus greatly hindered his work in Liverpool. The Consistory Court of the diocese, held in Chester before 1880, was a novel institution to Liverpool and received widespread publicity. Overall, the numbers of clergy who misbehaved, and the number of churches involved in internal disputes, was small. But William Postance, George Spooner, George Bond, Ernest Fitzroy and others like them, undid the work of a hundred of their colleagues, whose work never saw the public light of day unless it was exceptional.

2. DIOCESAN MACHINERY

(a) Some Streamlining Proposals

It took some time to get used to the complexities of a somewhat larger administrative organisation than the parish of Stradbroke. Ryle failed to turn up to a YMCA meeting simply because he forgot. This was criticised as a lame excuse in the business world of Liverpool and it was suggested the Bishop should be given an hour-by-hour daily diary.¹⁸⁷ He then got taken to task for sending a letter, promoting the use of rogation days as days of intercession, so late that the proposal could not in fact be implemented.¹⁸⁸ When he came to deliver his first charge it took an hour merely to read the names of the clergy present.¹⁸⁹ When Ryle did introduce administrative changes in order to streamline procedures, he ran into opposition. As early as January 1881 he arranged a permanent time for meeting any clergy who wanted to see him: on Tuesdays at the Diocesan Offices.¹⁹⁰ This was designed to avoid the inconvenience of travelling into Liverpool to see the Bishop and then finding him unavailable. It was held at the Diocesan Offices because these were centrally located and more easily accessible than either Ryle's temporary residence in Croxteth or his future 'palace' in Abercromby Square.¹⁹¹ It was rumoured that clergy who turned up at Abercromby Square were directed to Rodney Street, where the Roman

Abercomby Square.¹⁹¹ [~~It was rumoured that clergy who turned up at Abercomby Square were directed to Rodney Street, where the Roman Catholic Bishop resided.~~] However, this streamlining was not liked; older clergy preferred the more leisurely style of Bishop Jacobson, who fitted classically the description of an old-fashioned Bishop as 'a kind, fatherly man, stuffed full of Greek and with sound views on the praeterpluperfect tense'.¹⁹² Some argued that nothing caused so much estrangement between Ryle and his clergy than this 'office routine'.¹⁹³ The 'fatherly intercourse' of Bishop Jacobson 'in his own house at Deeside' was looked back to with enthusiasm.¹⁹⁴

Another streamlining proposal was to increase the number of rural deaneries by dividing three of the current ones. This proposal was discussed at the rural deanery meetings. There was opposition to it on the grounds that meetings would become so small they would not generate enthusiasm for church officers, and because it would lead to a separation into rich and poor deaneries.¹⁹⁵

A third early proposal by Ryle was to alter the arrangements for confirmations. He wanted to regularise the system by suggesting each clergyman should aim to present candidates only every two years. To encourage further preparation he wanted the age raised from thirteen to fifteen. To speed up the services he would confirm candidates two at a time.¹⁹⁶ These proposals also brought complaints, although the practices were not uncommon.¹⁹⁷

(b) Diocesan Institutions

Ryle sought to create a more efficient and less independent-minded diocese by the promotion of the Diocesan Institutions. There were five of these: the Church Building Society, The Benefices Augmentation Fund, the Church Aid Society, the Board of Education, and the Warrington Clergy Institutions.¹⁹⁸ The object of these societies was to maintain the Church of England, extend the means of grace within the church, and to identify and supply deficiencies.¹⁹⁹ In essence that meant to supply money in order to create new parishes by building churches and funding men. Ryle kept the old committees that had existed in the

Diocese of Chester and specifically denied having anything to do with the selection of names, as he had only been in Liverpool nine months.²⁰⁰ This statement was made necessary by the accusation, at the inaugural diocesan meeting to promote these societies, that the relative committees had been 'fixed'.²⁰¹

At the first annual meetings barely twenty people came.²⁰² Within another year the new Anglican diocese was being compared unfavourably with its Roman Catholic and Nonconformist neighbours.²⁰³ Ryle was not disappointed. He had decided to take the advice of Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford, who had said that a minimum of seven years was necessary to get a diocese organised in any efficient way.²⁰⁴ Ryle was prepared to move slowly: 'they must remember that they who moved fastest did not always move best, and it was not always the slowest moved worst'.²⁰⁵ It was questioned whether, since there was no hare to beat, the tortoise may decline to move at all.²⁰⁶ In order to concentrate on diocesan administration Ryle wisely declined to host the Church Congress.²⁰⁷ But even after three years, nearly half way through his timetable, he was forced to abandon the annual meeting of the Church Building Society when Canon Warr complained of inefficient management.²⁰⁸ Before the meeting was abandoned, however, it had at least been noted that there was still no growing interest in the society.²⁰⁹

The same report was made at the Diocesan Finance Association, the umbrella organisation for the Diocesan Institutions. They had appointed a new secretary who had pleaded the cause of the Institutions in forty-five churches.²¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Church Aid Society had reduced many of its grants and withdrawn some altogether. The grants to widows of clergymen through the Warrington Institution was only £26 per annum. There was a decrease of receipts and no less than sixty-five churches had made no collections at all for any of the Diocesan Institutions.²¹¹

Ryle excused this poor support on the grounds of poor trade and the nearness in time of three large city-wide appeals.²¹² While urging individual clergy to 'meet people face to face saying "This thing wants assistance and I want you to give it" ', and suggesting the appointment of an additional secretary, Ryle's main thrust was that time would show an improvement.²¹³ One Sunday in March was given over to special collections for the Diocesan Institutions, but in 1884 even more churches than before made no contributions.²¹⁴ There was a reduction of more than one-third in grants made by the Church Aid Society.²¹⁵ Ryle still stressed 'the whole trade of Liverpool was in a state of great depression'.²¹⁶ By January 1886, after five years operation, it was admitted that local effort was 'almost paralysed'.²¹⁷ Money was so short that there was public squabbling amongst the Diocesan Institutions about their share of the money collected. The Benefices' Augmentation committee complained that it had to fund the publication of the reports of all the Institutions.²¹⁸ In this crisis more radical views were propounded such as the equalisation of clerical income, but Ryle spoke strongly against such a proposal since prizes were 'a stimulus to all men to work'. The real answer, he thought, was that better trade would promote more giving.²¹⁹ The Diocesan Church Aid Society declared itself 'seriously crippled by the absence of that support which they had hoped to receive from the diocese at large when its operations became co-extensive with the Diocese itself'.²²⁰ The number of churches not contributing continued to increase.²²¹

At this point, 1886, Ryle's optimism remained high. He was pleased that there had not been a total collapse considering 'there never had been such a time of universal depression' as now.²²² A special appeal by the Additional Curates Society had resulted in only £12 increase in subscriptions and £200 in donations.²²³ This was typical of any efforts to increase funds. By 1887, the Church Aid Society receipts had fallen by nearly £1,000, being only half its income of 1881.²²⁴ By 1888, it reached its lowest point since the formation of the diocese. In order to make three new grants it had to reduce nine grants of £20 by £5 each and two by £10 each.²²⁵ There had only been one donation (£10), 151 subscriptions (£263), and forty-seven

collections (£105).²²⁶ Ryle thought that more prayer should be made that the merchant princes of Liverpool would give money.²²⁷ He also lowered his sights in advocating mission rooms rather than churches.²²⁸ He began to look to patrons and rich clerics to supplement the livings of poor clergy, rather than through subscriptions to the Benefices Augmentation Fund.²²⁹ He himself wrote to individuals to encourage them to give to building a church in their local area. This succeeded at St. James the Greater, Haydock, which Ryle had viewed as the second worst provided parish in the whole diocese.²³⁰ He also made first mention of a Sustentation Fund to raise all salaries to £200.²³¹

The Sustentation Fund has been regarded as one of Ryle's successful diocesan administrative innovations. It is true that in the early years of its operation there was a steady increase in the number of grants made and the amount of money distributed.²³² But this progress was illusionary. The real cause of increased grants was the redistribution of income under the Winwick Rectory Act.²³³ Further increases were due to two subscribers doubling their gifts and to special donations given in the Jubilee year.²³⁴ The Sustentation Fund spread the distribution of these donations over the next three years to cover the reality that subscriptions were falling off.²³⁵ In Bishop Chavasse's review of the diocese after Ryle's death, the feature of the Fund was its paltry income and lack of support.²³⁶

In essence Ryle gave up on the Diocesan Institutions from October 1888, on the completion of his own set timetable. He looked to these other ways to construct the mechanisms necessary for a growing diocese. He attributed the failure of the central Institutions to the fact that a large percentage of the wealthiest men in the diocese were not Churchmen; to the prevalency of 'congregationalism'; and to the existence of divisions within the Church of England nationally.²³⁷ Instead of seven years being the time needed to establish the diocese administratively, he now talked of 'a generation or longer'.²³⁸ He contented himself that Liverpool was no worse than other dioceses by emphasising the amount of voluntary giving to the church outside of its 'official' structures.²³⁹ The Institutions slumbered in the 1890s,

their activity 'so uneventful' there was 'little to report.'²⁴⁰ In a somewhat unique occasion, Ryle actually agreed with Gladstone when the latter condemned the illiberality of Liverpool Churchmen.²⁴¹ Out of 205 churches in the diocese only 85 made any collections whatever for the Diocesan Institutions.²⁴² Ryle, himself, admitted that 'it was now vain' to evade the fact that the Institutions were not popular.²⁴³ Even churches which received money from them made paltry givings in return. Eighteen churches which had received grants of £20 made collections of less than £2.²⁴⁴ After fifteen years in the diocese Ryle observed that there had not been the slightest advance from when he first came.²⁴⁵ Despite an energetic campaign by a new organisational secretary, freed from paper work by the appointing of a permanent book-keeper, the increased number of collections was still £500 less than that of 1881.²⁴⁶ The paid pleader was no more successful than Ryle himself had been when he went round canvassing for support fourteen years earlier.²⁴⁷ Neither did any clergy respond to Ryle's call for rich parishes to support poor ones.²⁴⁸ Both laity and clergy failed to see these diocesan affairs as their own.²⁴⁹

(c) Cathedral

It is a fair criticism of Ryle that he showed little interest in the services and functions of the pro-Cathedral. Although Messrs. Elkington had donated plate to the value of £1,800 for use in 'Cathedral' services, there was little public support for either the Sunday or daily services.²⁵⁰ Yet the only money available for the running of these services was that collected during them. To supplement this the choir toured other churches.²⁵¹ Even the special sermons on Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent were poorly attended.²⁵² Consequently, the services only survived because the rector paid £150 per annum out of his own pocket.²⁵³ Ryle was supposed to preach on the first Sunday of every month, except when he was on holiday.²⁵⁴ Yet he often failed to attend for months at a time and made no public announcement of the fact.²⁵⁵ During weekday services he was seen walking by on the other side of the road.²⁵⁶ Although the canons were often equally absent, there was no real excuse for Ryle's blatant discourtesy.²⁵⁷ His 78th birthday was hailed with remarks about his

good health, yet the Sunday before he had excused his attendance at the pro-Cathedral on account of a 'severe headache' and 'a good age'.²⁵⁸ Excluding special events such as confirmations, ordinations, Jubilee services, it is extraordinary that in the 1890s Herbert Ryle preached more often in the joint parish church than his father.²⁵⁹

In contrast, Ryle was keenly interested in the administrative centre that he hoped would be provided by a suitably sited Cathedral. The pro-Cathedral of course provided none of these facilities, and Ryle was forced to hire out central offices in Lord Street. With the collapse of the Cathedral scheme, he turned his attention to the provision of separate administrative offices in the form of a Church House. This building was to be large enough to contain reading rooms in which he could bequeath his library (3,000 volumes) to the diocese. A provisional committee appointed by the Bishop had acquired the premises of the Clarendon Buildings on Lord Street, at a cost of £48,480, but this was only through a mortgage to be paid for over thirty-five years. The buildings also needed extensive alterations or even replacing. Donations only amounted to £10,317.²⁶⁰ Ryle personally gave money by selling his stock in the Midland Railway Company and hoped others would follow this example.²⁶¹ A circular appeal was sent out to 25,000 people and Ryle requested that the Jubilee Sunday offertories be made over to this project.²⁶² Not all churchmen shared the Bishop's enthusiasm for the scheme. Douglas Horsfall chose this moment to announce that he would build another church at a cost of £16-18,000.²⁶³ The scheme, therefore, hardly got under way before Ryle's death and he can hardly be held accountable for its slow progress. Ryle, however, is traditionally portrayed as being opposed to the building of a Cathedral in Liverpool. This criticism is unfounded. The failure of the Cathedral project was largely due to factors outside his control.

It was not until July 1882 that the original Bishopric Committee, set up to promote the creation of the see, decided that its own scope of reference did not include the founding of a Cathedral.²⁶⁴ Another year passed by before an executive committee was established to

implement such a scheme.²⁶⁵ This, in turn, divided into a secretariat, a sites committee, an architectural committee and a finance committee.²⁶⁶ In each of these areas Ryle faced major problems and delays over which he had little control. The most pressing question was where to build the new cathedral. Within a month of his enthronement, Ryle had drawn attention to this question in observing that some people thought Sefton Park would be a good site because, if Liverpool kept growing, what was now the outskirts would one day be the centre of the city.²⁶⁷ When the sites committee eventually grappled with this problem it faced the mammoth task of investigating no fewer than twenty-three sites.²⁶⁸ These were soon reduced to five: St. John's churchyard, St. James Cemetery, Kensington Fields, Marsh's Park and St. Peter's, the designated pro-Cathedral.²⁶⁹

Each of these sites had advantages and disadvantages and, more importantly, strong personalities in favour of them. Ryle was in favour of Marsh's Park, which was adjacent to Abercromby Square and would therefore make a good administrative location with the Bishop's Palace on site.²⁷⁰ However, this did not command widespread support, so Ryle did not press it. The two main contenders were St. James' Cemetery and St. John's churchyard. The former's main advantage was its large space and commanding position. Its main disadvantage was the distance from the administrative and commercial centre of the city.²⁷¹ The main advantage of St. John's churchyard was its central location. Its main disadvantage was its relatively small space and the immediate presence of St. George's Hall.²⁷² But it took a further year of discussion to reduce the sites to these two.²⁷³ Even so there were some who still argued for Kensington Fields.²⁷⁴

These discussions by the Cathedral Sites committee took place in the setting of widespread local publicity and voiced opinions. In the year from June 1883 to June 1884, there were in the Liverpool press one hundred and ten anonymous letters, sixty-one signed letters and sixty-one leading articles.²⁷⁵ There were also some independent publications about particular sites. The language and viewpoint of most of these items was extreme. Indeed, one of the secretaries of the Executive

Committee accused some people of deliberately engaging in a public 'campaign of rumours' to discredit the Bishop.²⁷⁶ Some of these criticisms were theological rather than pragmatic. Dr. T. W. Christie, a surgeon, had buried his wife, in November 1879, in St. James' Cemetery, after purchasing the burial freehold from the Corporation who were the trustees of the site.²⁷⁷ He accused the committee of ignoring the feelings of the owners of the graves, of which there were 40,000.²⁷⁸ He observed :

I do not believe that the body of a human creature is a mere bit of clay, to be buried and again dug up, dragged from the grave and shovelled hither and thither, or obliterated, by ecclesiastics in their search for commanding sites to carry out their rival and pet schemes for the erection of cathedral pomp.²⁷⁹

Such an act would be impious, sacrilege, blasphemous.²⁸⁰ Since the Scriptures asserted that a Christian was a part of the body of Christ, the Bishop would be responsible for 'mutilating' Christ's own body.²⁸¹ Such behaviour was worse than the evil recorded in the Bible. Christie concluded :

Bishop Ryle, whom are you following? God and his servant Josiah, David, the disciples of Jesus? No, but Satan and the Philistines and Moab and Herod ... ye are on the side of the Devil, and with him contending against God and his Christ ... Jesus said 'The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan!'²⁸²

The Council trustees intimated that a special Act of Parliament would be needed to permit building on that site.²⁸³ This combined attack, official and personal, told against Arthur B. Forwood, a prominent city councillor, who argued for the site in the crucial Executive Committee discussion in March 1884.²⁸⁴ It lost by seventeen votes to eleven.²⁸⁵ Ralph Brocklebank, a leading shipowner, argued for Kensington Fields, but that too lost to St. John's churchyard, which passed by nineteen votes to eight.²⁸⁶

All these points had to be reargued when this proposal was put to the General Cathedral Committee. The narrowness of the voting in the smaller debate persuaded the Post to anticipate rejection of the proposal.²⁸⁷ This discussion was, in fact, the first one which the General Committee had since its inception at the Diocesan Conference of 1882.²⁸⁸ The committee was almost evenly divided and St. John's churchyard passed by a mere nine votes.²⁸⁹ Ryle was content to accept this decision, although it was not his own choice, and on the fourth anniversary of his consecration he spoke warmly in anticipation of seeing a Cathedral built.²⁹⁰ However, the problem of the site was not resolved. There was opposition to it from two key quarters. First, when the Bill for the Cathedral came before the House of Commons committee on unopposed Bills, there was opposition expressed by the churchwardens of St. John's Church.²⁹¹ Their case was dismissed on the technicality that their protest had been entered a few days after the set deadline.²⁹² However, two Liverpool MPs, Mr. Samuel Smith and Mr. William Rathbone, did manage to argue against the Bill because of the proposal, in clause twelve, to levy a rate on the parish of Liverpool to pay for the endowment of a Cathedral,²⁹³ on the grounds that two-thirds of the parish were not churchmen.²⁹⁴

This added to the delay in getting the Cathedral project established. But the more crucial opposition was from Liverpool churchmen who declined to follow Ryle's example and accept a corporate decision with which they may not have personally agreed. A public meeting in St. Saviour's schools, in February 1885, heard a lecture by a Mr. Edgar Browne condemning the St. John's site.²⁹⁵ The meeting was chaired by Archdeacon Bardsley. He spoke in support of Browne, arguing that, if the issue was put to a popular vote, the people of Liverpool would not support this site. He said further that St. John's had obtained a majority vote only because a number of clergy had voted tactically to stop Kensington Fields being chosen.²⁹⁶ The Mercury editor observed, 'it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this statement by the Archdeacon'.²⁹⁷ Bardsley was the most senior clergyman in the diocese, the first Liverpool clergyman to be elevated to a Bishopric and a personal friend of Ryle. In this one move he in

practice reopened the whole debate on the site, revealed that a minority were in favour of St. John's churchyard and in effect declared open opposition to the scheme. At the end of Ryle's episcopate some at least recognised that it was the division over the site that killed the Cathedral.²⁹⁸ It was Bardsley, not Ryle, who was responsible for the fiasco.

Nor was Ryle responsible for the inordinate delays that accompanied architectural issues surrounding the Cathedral. There were no fewer than ninety-nine applicants who sent portfolios of their work for consideration for the job of designing the Cathedral.²⁹⁹ It took two months for the consulting architect to reduce these to four, who were then given eight months to produce their plans.³⁰⁰ One of the four dropped out, but Mr. G. F. Bodley, Mr. J. Brookes and Mr. W. Emerson eventually produced their respective plans for the St. John's churchyard site, for which they were each paid three hundred guineas.³⁰¹ Their plans were then displayed in the Walker Art Gallery for the whole of January 1886 and public comment was invited.³⁰² The architectural committee had set the figure of £500,000 as the cost allowed.³⁰³ More than 36,000 people visited the display of the plans.³⁰⁴ In February, the Cathedral Committee appointed Mr. Ewan Christian to review the plans and furnish them with a report 'as soon as possible'.³⁰⁵ However, Mr. Christian was immediately ill and it was three months before he even looked at the plans. He was then supposedly overworked in his position as architect of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. He was then ill again. It was nearly a year before he furnished his report. The gap was so long that the Cathedral Committee decided to redisplay all the plans.³⁰⁶ It was thus nearly three years before Emerson's plan was chosen from the start of applications. The other two architects then complained that he had broken the rules of the competition in two ways. He had not kept to the limitations of the site, since his plans involved the alteration of street levels and demolishing nearby buildings. He had also not drawn his plans to the stipulated scale and therefore they looked better.³⁰⁷

The net result of the dissension over the site and the perpetual delays over the selection of an architect was that the Finance sub-committee failed to obtain any funds. The Bishop made a strong appeal for funds and the adoption of the Cathedral as the city's celebration of the Royal Jubilee.³⁰⁸ Sir Andrew Walker responded to this with a donation of £10,000.³⁰⁹ But a town meeting under the chairmanship of the Mayor, James Poole, rejected this in favour of a clock tower on the Pierhead.³¹⁰ Ryle also faced opposition from two of the most prominent financiers of church buildings in Liverpool, Charles Groves and Christopher Bushell. Both these men declined to support the project on the ground that they preferred to use their energy and resources to build churches.³¹¹ The total sum raised was only £41,000.³¹²

The consequence of this failure was that the Act of Parliament secured for the site lapsed since no building had begun.³¹³ The Cathedral Executive sub-committee met to discuss this, in February 1888, and recommended that an alternative smaller site be found.³¹⁴ The General Committee, after a prolonged debate, resolved by eighteen votes to eight to relook at the possibility of St. Peter's, although Sir Andrew Walker, who had made the largest donation, was against the erection of a small cathedral.³¹⁵ Within a month, the Executive Committee recommended the alternative site and Ryle made a gift of £1,000 to initiate a new subscription.³¹⁶ Sir William Forwood and Clarke Aspinall, leading city personalities, approached a 'large majority of the leading citizens of Liverpool' for aid.³¹⁷ Despite this, only £15,000 was raised. Ryle therefore proposed that an account be kept open but that nothing further should be done to promote a cathedral until more favourable times.³¹⁸

At the time that Liverpool Cathedral was being proposed five other cathedrals were built or rebuilt. Four of them (in Dublin (two), Cork and Edinburgh) were built largely as the result of the gifts of one or two individuals.³¹⁹ The exception was Truro. Ryle was quick to point out that Truro was in a county which needed no parish churches, whereas in Liverpool there were three or four churches built every year.³²⁰ By 1888 Liverpool had already built the equivalent of Truro twice over.

He also pointed out that the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London had canvassed the whole of England hoping to raise £250,000 for their Church House scheme and had only raised £49,000.³²¹

The Cathedral scheme in Liverpool failed for a variety of reasons. Principally, divisions over the site were not resolved and were deliberately exacerbated by Archdeacon Bardsley. The whole procedure of the design was marked by delays. When Bishop Chavassee asked Sir William Forwood to act again as treasurer, he agreed to do so provided no site was proposed and no design suggested.³²² After six weeks of canvassing he raised £168,000.³²³ Much of this was given by a few individual families. It is certainly not true that Ryle was not in favour of building a Cathedral. In the first speech he made after his consecration he looked to the foundation of a Cathedral.³²⁴ He maintained this desire throughout his episcopate, forever hoping that a few wealthy merchant princes would foot the bill.³²⁵ The Post praised Ryle because he had 'from first to last pursued a course in this matter that has done him honour'.³²⁶ The Courier laid the blame on the lack of giving by Lancashire peers and rich merchants.³²⁷ This lack of generosity was a feature that also bedevilled Ryle's major work as Bishop: raising money for charity.

Ryle's work with the Diocesan Institutions was largely a continued appeal for money in the yearly round of annual meetings. This was also true of another of his major activities: charity work. There were two particular groups of people in need of economic aid in Liverpool, the lower middle class, desperately trying to be respectable, and those who lived in slums. Both these groups and the problems they presented were new to Ryle, but there were also more traditional groups in need of help: the ill, those working in a hazardous environment, and orphans. For some of these Ryle was unwearingly active, others he ignored.

3. CHARITIES

(a) 'Clerkland'

While the docks might employ around 25,000 men, in the immediate

office hinterland there existed 'clerkland'. In 1871, there were 17,000 clerks in Liverpool.³²⁸ The goal of the clerk was to 'fulfil the Victorian dream of achieving respectability through economic independence'.³²⁹ This dream was based on the visible evidence that others had done it. It was believed that half the partnership firms in Liverpool of more than twenty years standing contained a partner who was once a clerk.³³⁰ The shipping merchant princes George Holt, Charles McIver, Alexander Balfour and Alfred Jones were all held up as ideal self-made men. But this was a myth. Every one of these men 'had assets other than self-education or native talent'.³³¹ They either inherited wealth and possessions, or had good social connections to get them going.³³² Above all, they started before the advent of the steamship with its much higher capital demands.³³³

Although the myth of the self-made men never died, by the time Ryle became Bishop, the Liverpool clerk, far from being potentially a young upwardly mobile professional, had become a figure on the margins of respectability.³³⁴ Clerks were not included in any factory act or shop act until 1936.³³⁵ They had no protection from their employers' desires to make profits. The Baring Brothers reduced their 1889 offices back to a pre-1867 size to save rent of £300 per annum.³³⁶ Clerks in banks worked the prestigious hours of nine to four and the larger shipping companies worked nine to five. But elsewhere you were lucky to finish before seven or eight Monday - Thursday and eleven p.m. on Friday.³³⁷ There was no guarantee of a job after a five or three year apprenticeship.³³⁸ The banks generally kept their apprentices, but the cotton brokers dismissed many of theirs.³³⁹ If a clerk obtained a permanent job, there was an immense range in salaries.³⁴⁰ It took from twelve to seventeen years to get on to a salary of £150 per annum in the bank.³⁴¹ The average wage for ship store dealers was £80 per annum.³⁴² A regular stevedore would earn more than that. The main gain was not money but job security. Absence, insubordination, or intemperance would lead to dismissal, but otherwise a clerk could stay for life.³⁴³ Provided, that is, they could put up with low pay. Their employers treated them no better than dockers:

We engaged in commerce to make money, not to give it away. Clerks, like cotton, corn, or timber, must be obtained as cheaply as possible. If we pay £150 to a man whose work would be gladly performed by another for £100, we are neglecting the great principle which governs and must always govern our commercial careers.³⁴⁴

Even James Sexton recognised that this representative of the struggling middle class was in as invidious a position as the docker on the stand.³⁴⁵ The clerk, like the docker, also faced the problem of an expanded labour force. There were some women obtaining jobs, but they did not really make a mark until after 1900. A greater problem, in the late nineteenth century, was the threat from foreign clerks, especially German. They were prepared to work longer hours for less pay. They were also 'steadier' and could speak two languages.³⁴⁶ Their main impact was in the sugar refinery industry where they supplied 25% of the labour force.³⁴⁷

Foreign competition also affected other fields of lower middle class employment. A special commission on sweating among tailors identified three classes of employment. There were tailors who supplied shops and usually worked on the shop premises for twelve to thirteen hours a day at sixpence an hour. With full employment seven months of the year they could afford decent housing at 7s 6d per week. There were 700 such workers in Liverpool. But their position was undermined by the home worker who bribed shop foremen for jobs and did it cheaper through working in their own hovels. So a 23s job could be done for 7s 6d, in a room five feet below street level with no sunlight or ventilation. Even these people were further undermined by the sweating dens where ten people would work in a room ten feet by thirteen feet in size and produce a 7s 6d waistcoat for ten pence.³⁴⁸ This report provoked a public meeting which laid the blame on Polish and East Prussian immigrants who were prepared to work and live 'in a way repulsive to the working class of Britain'.³⁴⁹ Since these places were not registered and therefore lay outside official inspection, the clergy were condemned for not visiting and exposing them.³⁵⁰

Middle class status was very clearly defined. First and foremost it meant no appeal to charity.³⁵¹ But this was simply 'unseen' respectability. The real goal was the trappings of respectability: wine, spirits, books, holidays, subscription to a gentleman's club, indoor servants, grooms.³⁵² The big difference between the £80 clerk and the £150 clerk, apart from holidays, was that the latter could afford a servant, which was the key to visible middle class membership.³⁵³ Provided he was prepared to live outside the town in a house with no bathroom, did not drink beer or smoke, and avoided any doctor's bills, a clerk on £150 could budget for a servant and a summer holiday and pay £6 per annum for a pew and collections.³⁵⁴ An £80 clerk kept no servant, had no holiday and existed on 17/- per week (the £150 clerk budgeted 24/- per week).³⁵⁵ Marriage was out of the question unless house rent and food were kept down to £1 per week and all the clothes were made by the wife, who would also do all the cooking.³⁵⁶ This was the struggle for existence that most of the clerks faced, assuming they had not been dismissed after their apprenticeship. It was endured because of the belief that it was only the first step towards merchant princedom. It was not until 1909 that clerks began to realise they were simply workers, who 'had nothing to sell but their labour power and were similarly subject to the caprice and malice of their employers'.³⁵⁷ Throughout Ryle's time their ideology was well expressed by a girl clerk acquiring her first job:

I walked down Charing Cross Road in the seventh heaven. I had justified myself before the important tribunal of political economy. I could earn my own bread. In the struggle for life I had obtained a footing ... my energy, my promptitude had secured for me a prize of modest starvation ... if I kept the job ... I had fulfilled the whole gospel of Darwinism.³⁵⁸ (my emphasis)

In the concern to evangelise Liverpool only once was the astute observation made that the fault of the Church of England was not so much its failure to reach the working class, as its loss of the middle class. It was frankly admitted of the business and commercial world 'in the vast majority of cases we (the clergy) are practically ignorant

of the peculiar character of their toil'.³⁵⁹ The Vicar of St. John the Divine, Fairfield, George Nickson, was prepared to admit that 'in the serene atmosphere of our studies or standing on the Gibraltar rock of our pulpits' the clergy deserved the contempt of the business world.³⁶⁰ He went on to say that the middle class commercial world was more stressful, and involved harder work, than that of the working class.³⁶¹ This was especially so for the struggling middle class rather than the successful employer.³⁶² He quoted with favour the words of an Irish Professor describing the modern competitive world:

Life, my brethren, has been defined as the conjugation of the verb 'to eat: I eat, thou eatest, he eats'; with the terrible alternative, 'I am eaten, thou art eaten, he is eaten'.³⁶³

The vicar's primary advice was that the clergy should visit such people in the evenings in their own homes 'and get to know them'.³⁶⁴

Other clergy thought the Church ought to do more to promote the economic welfare of struggling people. At the Croydon Church Congress a debate was held on the Church's relationship to Trade Unions.³⁶⁵ It was argued that righteousness was difficult for those who lived with the petty but grinding cares of hopeless poverty.³⁶⁶ The Church was too much on the side of men of money and too concerned to protect the sacredness of property, rather than that of life, or health, or happiness.³⁶⁷ The Church ought to range itself 'firmly on the side of these organisations' (Trade Unions).³⁶⁸ The clergy should be aware of the new relationship between masters and men. Employers only knew their men 'arithmetically'.³⁶⁹ It was the duty of the clergy to enforce on the employer his duty to provide his work people the means of subsistence.³⁷⁰ The clergy could not afford to ignore these conflicts and must enter knowledgeably into the merits of each individual question.³⁷¹ One contributor lamented that 'Labourers have had cruel wrongs even down to the most recent times'.³⁷² It was a matter of ordinary justice that a master should share his profits with

the men.³⁷³ In sum 'preaching the gospel without improving their circumstances is casting good seed on gravel walks'.³⁷⁴

Some Liverpool clergy supported these sentiments and were active Christian Socialists. Charles Stubbs produced a book entitled Christ and Economics. He argued that the main principle of Christian Socialism was to attack Individualism. The difference between Christian Socialism and secular Socialism was that the former said 'what is mine is thine', while the latter said 'what is thine is mine'.³⁷⁵ Stubbs thought that the first duty of Christianity was to provide pure air, pure water and pure food. The provision for the spiritual life was only the second duty.³⁷⁶ Similarly, Bishop Fraser of Manchester was a keen arbiter in industrial disputes.³⁷⁷ Ryle, however, spoke against all these views. He believed that a clergyman should play no part at all in industrial disputes.³⁷⁸ There were two reasons for this. First, ignorance. Ryle believed that no-one except the people directly concerned could make any judgment as to what was a fair day's wage for a fair day's work.³⁷⁹ Second, Ryle believed that it was theologically wrong for a clergyman to interfere in any dispute between class and class, master and servants, in temporal matters:

He (the clergyman) must never forget his Master's words when one said to Him, 'Speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me', our Lord replied, 'Man, who made me a judge or a divider among you?'... I earnestly recommend my brethren in the ministry never to be tempted ... to interfere between class and class.³⁸⁰

The attempts to form a Clerks' Union in Liverpool were never greeted with much enthusiasm.³⁸¹ The Dockers were successful in 1890 in forming a union at the South end.³⁸² In neither of these cases, nor any other, did Ryle show any interest. His role was to be friendly to everybody, speak about the duties of charity and mutual toleration and preach the gospel.³⁸³ It was known that Ryle walked on the docks daily, but it was joked that though he had once been seen to put his hand to a bale of cotton 'no-one would suggest that the Bishop

interfered with the work going on at the docks'.³⁸⁴ When 'the Church and Social Questions' was discussed at the 1894 Diocesan Conference, it was Ryle's views that prevailed. Socialism was seen as a threat to both family ties and individual freedom.³⁸⁵

(b) 'Squalid Liverpool'

Ryle did believe in the duty of charity and was well aware that this was the major point of contact with many non-Church attending people. It was estimated that 35,000 adults in Liverpool were either paupers or on the verge of pauperism.³⁸⁶ The bottom 4,000 of these lived in lodgings and earned no more than 4/- per week out of portering, window-cleaning or making matchboxes. The 'casual casuals', if they got two days work on the docks and their wives worked as charwomen, might earn 10/- per week. They would pay half the rent of a cottage or a shared court house.³⁸⁷ Breakfast and tea for such people were identical, bread and margarine or dripping, or treacle, or jam and tea.³⁸⁸ Cooking utensils consisted of a tin on an open fire, as a gas stove at £4.4s (in 1891) was beyond the pocket of all of these.³⁸⁹ Food was bought for the meal, not the week, and the usual amount was ½d worth.³⁹⁰ If there was a baker's nearby it was sometimes possible to have Sunday dinners cooked in the ovens still hot from Saturday's bread-baking, at a cost of 1d.³⁹¹

If the quality and quantity of food was poor, the accommodation was no better, either in terms of space available or condition. In 1700, the population of Liverpool was only 5,000, with only 24 rated streets comprising a total of 1,287 houses.³⁹² By 1790, the population had grown to nearly 54,000.³⁹³ The town's development in the eighteenth century was unplanned and uncontrolled. The problem of cellar dwellings was already acute by 1800.³⁹⁴ Cock-fighting, dog-fighting and bull-baiting were common.³⁹⁵ By 1841, however, the population had expanded so rapidly that 76,000 were living in closed courts and cellars.³⁹⁶ The total population mid-century was 376,000.³⁹⁷ Most of this population was crowded into the old town centre. From this point on emerges the miles and miles of terraced housing that spread mainly to the North (Bootle), and East (Everton,

Kirkdale), but with some growth to South (Toxteth Park).³⁹⁸ Merchants moved to plush residential squares (Abercromby) or new surrounding villages such as Grassendale, Mossley Hill, Allerton.³⁹⁹ From 1851 it was possible to define distinct zones in Liverpool.⁴⁰⁰ Although the population rapidly grew in the latter half of the nineteenth century to 709,000 in 1901, the shape of the city had been set.⁴⁰¹ The basic shape was of a commercial-administrative centre, immediately surrounded by the worst housing conditions in the city, passing into rows and rows of terraced housing, with some smart residential squares nearby, but with the majority of decent dwellings in the outer rim of the conurbation.

Ryle spent most of his time in what was called the five hundred yard gap.⁴⁰² He went to meetings in St. George's Hall and the Town Hall, the rented Diocesan Offices in Lord Street and walked every day on the landing stage. All of this lay in the commercial-administrative centre. If he wanted to preach in any but the centrally located Corporation Churches, he had to go into what became known as 'Squalid Liverpool', stretching for two miles north and south of the 'gap' and containing more than half the total population of the town.⁴⁰³ It was the proximity of wealth and squalor which seemed such an abuse:

You find traces wherever your eye turns of wealth and ambition - political, municipal and commercial - of busy, happy men, all bent on winning some prize in the world ... yet walk a few paces from this bright and cheering scene, and you will find gathered upon the very edges of it a deep fringe of suffering, helpless, hopeless poverty, all the more distressing in that it is so near a region of hope, of comfort, of activity.⁴⁰⁴

A Special Commission was set up to investigate and describe the city in 1883 and published a report, Squalid Liverpool, which shocked the reading public and, in effect, outlined the major part of Ryle's diocese for the whole of his episcopate. Half the city was 'ceaselessly ravaged by fever, plagued by the blankest, most appalling poverty, cut off from every grace and comfort of life'.⁴⁰⁵ Beds were untouchable, chairs had no backs, brown paper served for glass.⁴⁰⁶ A

hundred people would live in a closed court of four to sixteen houses with no water supply or closets.⁴⁰⁷ The worst areas were around Northumberland Street, Great Howard Street, Vauxhall Road and Scotland Road.⁴⁰⁸ The overcrowding was beyond belief. A typical 'home' would have two or three rooms, one on each floor, the parlour downstairs, the bedroom upstairs.⁴⁰⁹ Henderson Street, consisting of 160 such houses and twentyfive courts, contained a population of 1,800.⁴¹⁰ This one street was more populous than Ryle's parishes in Suffolk.

The Commission, consisting of a city councillor, a prominent local physician and a member of the Daily Post, condemned as ineffective in dealing with these people, either education, or tract distribution, or criticism of drinking.⁴¹¹ They thought the poor were 'entitled to credit for not being twenty times more depraved than they are'.⁴¹² Education was useless if the children were simply left in this environment, devotional meetings were pointless, and the pub, in contrast to the home, was 'a long, brightly-coloured room, warm and gaily ornamented'.⁴¹³ The Commission praised the Roman Catholic priests for their involvement in these slums: 'at present the priest is the parson, the policemen, the doctor, the nurse, the relieving officer, the nuisance inspector, and the school board inspector all in one'.⁴¹⁴ This was precisely what Ryle said the Anglican clergy should not be.⁴¹⁵ But the Commission's comment on the Protestant church was that it was ineffective and absent:

The Protestant churches apparently have no sufficient machinery for penetrating so far beneath the surface of smug respectability ... these bodies appear to be able to thrive only amid comfort and comparative affluence.⁴¹⁶

The Commission accused the Protestant churches of knowing more, and doing more, for the savages of Africa than the inhabitants of 'Squalid Liverpool'.⁴¹⁷ The Anglican clergy tended to excuse their own absence by equating 'Squalid Liverpool' with 'Romish Liverpool'.⁴¹⁸

As well as 'Squalid Liverpool' there was 'Savage Liverpool'. This referred to the warehouse and timberyard land stretching between Athol Street and Bankhall Street, Vauxhall Street and Great Howard Street. This was ruled by gangs who joined together for the purpose of plunder, and against whom no-one talked for fear of retaliation.⁴¹⁹ The gangs were known as 'High Rippers'. The North Dispensary had to deal with fourteen cases of violence every day, yet no prosecutions were ever brought.⁴²⁰ The violence was blamed on the filthy environment. One home was full of fowl excreta, a bacon box served as a table, shavings formed the bed, and an old tin can was the only crockery. One chair was fashioned out of a small box, otherwise holes were cut in the floor for legs.⁴²¹ An attempted murder at Aintree racecourse led to the arrest of two High Rippers, who eventually received four years' penal servitude.⁴²² But generally the police were as absent as the clergy. Ryle thought the phrase 'Red spot on the Mersey' was a more accurate description of Liverpool than 'Black spot', because of the number of stabbings. He advocated a good sound flogging and corporal punishment for High Rippers, and whipping rather than imprisonment for certain classes of young criminals.⁴²³

These reports brought the subject of working class housing to the fore. At least the centrality of the question was admitted by Arthur Forwood, at the Diocesan Conference of 1883, when he declared 'no-one denies that to promote the spiritual and material welfare of the people, the prime necessity is to provide them with decent, healthy abodes'.⁴²⁴ No fewer than six-sevenths of the population of Liverpool existed on earnings of less than thirty-five shillings per week. At least 75,000 depended on less than fifteen shillings per week, 'a sum that means a constant grinding poverty'.⁴²⁵ The maximum sum such people could spend on housing was three shillings per week.⁴²⁶ This was the major problem, for the cheapest private house cost £150 to build and consequently could not be rented at three shillings per week.⁴²⁷ So although 60,000 people in 15,000 houses ought to have been rehoused immediately, there was simply nowhere to put them.⁴²⁸ In practice, although cellars had been outlawed and courts subject to new regulations, both continued to exist.⁴²⁹ One answer was to persuade

the Council to build flats. But even at a rental of 2/9d per room they would still make a loss. And they ought to aim to give each family three rooms.⁴³⁰ The Council, far from improving housing, had obtained exemption from National Building Regulations and had erected its own cellar dwellings.⁴³¹ It ignored the 1875 Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act because it authorised area-wide clearing of slums and the Council preferred scattered demolition.⁴³²

Within a year of the discussion promoted by Squalid Liverpool the whole subject was in danger of lapsing into the background.⁴³³ In a paper to the Rural Deanery of Toxteth Rev. Frederick Millard impressed on his hearers that the need to be within walking distance of work inevitably meant overcrowding.⁴³⁴ Most of the accommodation was not as good as a stable and was a 'scandal to our nation'.⁴³⁵ Any good clerical influence on a family usually resulted in its migration out of the slums, to be replaced by even poorer people.⁴³⁶ But Millard blamed drink, reckless marriages and large families for the situation, although he was critical of the aristocratic landlords who failed to recognise their duties.⁴³⁷ Rather than move people out of these dwellings, he thought Christian men and women should go and live with them.⁴³⁸ He admitted that 'it is a sacrifice, perhaps the greatest of sacrifices, to face these scenes'.⁴³⁹ But he averted 'if our Christianity is unequal to such a task, it must be a poor travesty of the original'.⁴⁴⁰ Such people could then help set up local voluntary committees who would see that existing laws were carried out and suggest improvements.⁴⁴¹

Ryle believed that something should be done to improve working class housing and publicly said so.⁴⁴² However, he never made any specific suggestions (unlike Bishops Fraser and Wilberforce) except, somewhat optimistically, that a flyleaf should be circulated to the poor encouraging thrift, so that they could save to buy their own property.⁴⁴³ This was obviously nonsense and by the end of his time in Liverpool Ryle realised that the poor could not help themselves and depended on the charity of the rich. Indeed, Ryle sought to promote that charity by encouraging rich ladies to tour 'Squalid Liverpool' with him so that they would go home and persuade their husbands to give

money, a tactic probably started by William Champneys, vicar of Whitechapel 1837-60.⁴⁴⁴ He applauded the initiative of the Mayor, in 1889, when he provided a Christmas lunch for 1,000 widows and 2,000 waifs and strays.⁴⁴⁵ Ryle made it clear that charity should be organised and careful and certainly not simply the giving of alms, a point on which he and Bishop Fraser agreed.⁴⁴⁶ He was consequently a keen supporter of the Liverpool Central Relief and Charity Organisation Society (C.R.S.). Any applications for charity which he personally received he passed on to the C.R.S.⁴⁴⁷ The main reason for his support of the C.R.S. was that it never gave any assistance without prior proper enquiry.⁴⁴⁸ Ryle thought indiscriminate alms giving 'one of the greatest evils of the day'.⁴⁴⁹ Others thought that the C.R.S. was too strict.⁴⁵⁰ In the mid 1880s it only distributed £10 per day.⁴⁵¹ It was observed that about fifty percent of the subscriptions was spent on the working expenses of the society. £1,308 was spent on salaries, office rent and advertising.⁴⁵² Despite having £1,100 to invest in Dock Bonds and carrying over £1,400, it turned down 5,000 applications for relief.⁴⁵³ Penny Dinners in Elementary Schools, despite only costing £79 per annum, were 'only to be granted while distress is exceptional and in such a way as not to relieve parents of their natural obligations'.⁴⁵⁴ Similar criticisms of the parsimony of this society were made of its parallel organisations in other towns.⁴⁵⁵

Another reason for the Bishop's support was that wherever possible the C.R.S. employed men in its own workshops, rather than give money for nothing. Ryle thought that to give money rather than find a job was 'an abominable practice'. Hence he also supported a 'Labour Home' in connection with the Church Army Social Scheme where men could stay for two or three months, but were made to work.⁴⁵⁶ He subscribed to the C.R.S. and attended its annual meetings.⁴⁵⁷ He was entirely in tune with the C.R.S. proposals on dealing with this mass of poverty. Although it did propose the systematization of labour supply at the docks, nevertheless the chief culprit was drink.⁴⁵⁸ This latter was compounded by indolence and improvident marriages⁴⁵⁹. Since poverty was really a moral issue rather than an economic one, indiscriminate giving, like the scattering of pennies 'by a tipsy milk-hearted, soft-headed

sailor', was useless.⁴⁶⁰ The C.R.S. carried out investigations in the home by voluntary friendly visitors responsible for a maximum of five families.⁴⁶¹ In essence they sought to imitate the motto of the Boston (USA) society, 'Not alms but a friend'.⁴⁶² They promoted internal migration to industrial cities, especially in Leicestershire, and emigration to the colonies.⁴⁶³ Otherwise thrift and temperance were to be encouraged.⁴⁶⁴

The philosophy of the C.R.S. and Ryle was typical of Victorian England. It was ably expounded by Samuel Smith in an address to the University College in Liverpool in 1888 on The Economics of Charity. At the heart of this philosophy was the belief that

all sound charity, whether dispensed by the State or the individual, must take account of the essential elements of human nature, and one of these is that no great mass of human beings will work hard, and deny themselves present enjoyment for the sake of distant advantage, if they are guaranteed against the consequences of their own idleness and folly.⁴⁶⁵

To add to the wages of the impoverished dock labourer 4/- per week would lead to an influx of labourers and within two years the city would be bankrupt.⁴⁶⁶ The experiment had been tried in Paris, London and New Brighton and each scheme had simply created more poverty.⁴⁶⁷ The object of charity was to lift up permanently, encourage self-reliance and to remove the conditions which beget poverty.⁴⁶⁸ In order of importance, therefore, the things to be dealt with were drink, parental neglect, corrupt literature, education, excess labour supply.⁴⁶⁹ Where benevolent action was needed it was not a matter for the State, which would be in danger of becoming a huge relieving agency, but for private wealth.⁴⁷⁰ But benevolent action was only needed in a small number of cases as 'at least three quarters of all the destitution in this country is moral'.⁴⁷¹ The prime means of redress was the education of the young.⁴⁷² All of this was re-echoed by other public figures in Liverpool, and as late as 1902 a Handbook

for the Clergy was urging 'we want better people for the houses rather than better houses for the people'.⁴⁷³

If Ryle fitted completely into the thinking consensus of his time, rather than with those who wanted to deal with the economic causes of poverty, he did at least seek to encourage benevolent charity where it was rightly due. One Liverpool newspaper advised him on his arrival that this was his prime function as Bishop.⁴⁷⁴ While much of Ryle's promotion of generosity related to internal church needs in the form of schools and church buildings, he identified three other areas of need: sickness, children and hazards at sea.

(c) Sickness

Ryle believed that plagues were visitations sent by God because He had 'a controversy' with a nation.⁴⁷⁵ As such they were ended by humble repentance and prayer.⁴⁷⁶ But such plagues were to be distinguished from the general existence of sickness, pain and suffering in the world. These were the result of Sin.⁴⁷⁷ They were not preventable by man, although the effects of them might be alleviated either by wise sanitary laws, or by the skill of a doctor.⁴⁷⁸ In the case of an individual, no doctor's skill would prevent death if God's timing for death had been reached.⁴⁷⁹ It was not the role of a minister to perform miraculous healings. The healings which Jesus performed were not 'wonders' like the plagues of Egypt, but merely examples of the alleviation of suffering and as such were an indication of the high value Jesus placed on doctors.⁴⁸⁰ The apostolic healing miracles were not the normative activity of Christian ministers, but the specialist, short-lived, activity of the personally chosen disciples of Jesus.⁴⁸¹ Indeed, suffering was to be welcomed as 'a friendly letter from heaven. It is a knock at the door of conscience. It is the voice of the Saviour asking to be let in'.⁴⁸² The principal role of suffering was to check Sin by reminding men of death, making them think seriously of death and bringing into relief the hollowness of the world's good things.⁴⁸³ It was a test of the genuineness of faith in a believer and a spur to sharpen up the

minister's sermon.⁴⁸⁴ To everyone, it was a means of contrast between this world and the world to come. It was a preparation for heaven.⁴⁸⁵

The main response to suffering, therefore, was patient endurance in the belief that all things were 'in the covenant and must be for good'.⁴⁸⁶ When conducting the first service in the Church for the Deaf and Dumb, Ryle admonished all who were afflicted to remember that all bodily defects were assigned in perfect wisdom by Almighty God. The worst infirmity was to be without God.⁴⁸⁷ Suffering was intended for good and was 'one of God's most important subordinate instruments in the saving of men'.⁴⁸⁸ However, people around the sufferer were to help in every way.⁴⁸⁹ All reasonable means were to be used in the prevention of the spread of disease.⁴⁹⁰ This was because in coming to earth in 'a bodily nature', achieving atonement by the physical death of that body, and being resurrected with a body, Jesus gave dignity and importance to the human body.⁴⁹¹ It was, therefore, the 'highest wisdom, both in the Church and the State, never to forget the importance of the body'.⁴⁹² The work of the minister and the medic were both sanctified by Christ. It was right to be thankful at the vast improvement in medical care which England had experienced, especially in the last two hundred years.⁴⁹³ Ryle concluded, 'He that has a good servant in the house and a good doctor within reach ought to be a thankful man'.⁴⁹⁴

In summary, Ryle thought that, while living quiet in God's hand, the sick should go to the doctor and the well should build hospitals.⁴⁹⁵ Liverpool had a large number of hospitals. The first Royal Infirmary was built on the site of St. George's Hall in the 1740s with a separate Seamen's Hospital by the side.⁴⁹⁶ The first Dispensary was established in 1778.⁴⁹⁷ The Eye and Ear Hospital was opened in 1820, the Northern in 1833, the Southern in 1841 and the Children's Infirmary in 1851.⁴⁹⁸ All of these buildings were inadequate by the time Ryle became Bishop and the Infirmary in particular was rebuilt and re-opened in 1881. By 1898, more than 200,000 people attended the dispensaries and the six main hospitals had 10,000 in-patients and 83,000 out-patients.⁴⁹⁹ The hospitals were the main recipients of

Liverpool's charity, yet not only did they never have enough money, but also the money given declined in the late nineteenth century.⁵⁰⁰ In 1882 the Royal Infirmary was in debt to the tune of £3,602, the Southern £1,800, the Eye and Ear Hospital £1,302 and the Dispensaries £2,000.⁵⁰¹ It was lamented that 'the charities are more in need than last year and the city has more money, yet the collections show a falling off'.⁵⁰² The previous year, when Ryle preached to a full pro-Cathedral on Hospital Sunday, the largest charity collection of the year, only £32 was collected,⁵⁰³ though the service was attended in state by the Mayor 'with numerous gentlemen distinguished either in public or private life'.⁵⁰⁴ In 1883 the Bishop affirmed that 'he knew of no one thing deserving of so much attention from Christian people than the hospitals'. He hoped they would give 'liberally and gladly'. Yet the collection only amounted to £22 14/-.⁵⁰⁵ When Ryle promoted a concert in aid of the Children's Infirmary so few people came that the performer was out of pocket by eighteen pounds.⁵⁰⁶ The subscription list to the Bluecoat Hospital diminished annually until in 1884 it was £600 less than it was in 1870.⁵⁰⁷ The same story of decrease applied to the Hospital Sunday collections.⁵⁰⁸ Since Ryle believed that hospitals were a grand evidence of Christianity, the failure to raise money successfully for them could be seen as reflective of the state of Christianity in Liverpool.⁵⁰⁹ But other Bishops (e.g. How) found the same lack of generosity elsewhere.⁵¹⁰

Ryle believed in specialist hospitals for special diseases and one hospital that was a success which he supported was the Magh^{all} Home for Epileptics.⁵¹¹ This was set up in 1889 and was the first of its kind in the country.⁵¹² It was initially financed by Mr. Henry Cox, but the object was to be self-supporting. It provided three classes of accommodation at two guineas, one guinea and seven shillings and sixpence for one week's lodgings.⁵¹³ Within two years there were thirty-four patients. The most popular occupations were gardening and handling livestock.⁵¹⁴ Ryle praised the fact that the home was situated in a beautiful environment.⁵¹⁵ By 1892, there was enough income to buy a neighbouring plot of land to erect a second building.⁵¹⁶ This would have sixty men and the original building would

be given over to fifty women.⁵¹⁷ To these was added a new recreation hall and Ryle was full of praise for the advance of treatment and skills in medicine.⁵¹⁸ Ryle also promoted other specialist medical work and initiated a movement to set up a permanent endowment for the College of the Blind at Worcester, as well as showing interest in the promotion of work among the deaf and dumb in Liverpool.⁵¹⁹ Despite this personal enthusiasm and pioneering work, Ryle made little impact in the field of charity for the sick. As in other areas involving money the record of his episcopate was of a steady decline in generosity.

(d) The Sea

Ryle's interest in the sea can be seen in the frequency of nautical illustrations in his sermons, the delight in his daily walks on the landing stage at the Pier Head, and his reiterated observation that had he not been so tall he would have been a sailor.⁵²⁰ He frequently appealed to merchants to support missions to seamen, especially St. Andrew's Waterside Mission and the Mersey Mission to Seamen.⁵²¹ Altogether the latter mission had five chaplains and three institute keepers. The annual running costs were something over £3,000.⁵²² But even this mission was rarely prosperous. It was over £300 in debt in 1896 and only a special appeal, concerts and a sale of work prevented closure in 1897.⁵²³ Yet the following year the mission was able to buy a launch so as to be able to visit boats moored offshore in the river.⁵²⁴

Ryle's concern about the dangers of the seafaring life involved him in two particular concerns in the 1890s. The first was the provision of a lifeboat. Liverpool's support of the R.N.L.I. was poor, giving only £500 to a society whose outlay per annum was above £70,000.⁵²⁵ Ryle claimed to have inspected the R.N.L.I. lifeboats on the East Coast and recommended that Liverpool should raise the money for one, despite the high cost.⁵²⁶ He was against the suggestion that there should be an annual 'Lifeboat Sunday' on the grounds that there were already seven charity Sundays. He thought, characteristically,

that shipowners should provide the money.⁵²⁷ This would mean a capital outlay of £3,000 and an annual subscription of more than £500. The response to this appeal was insignificant.⁵²⁸ Nor was there much response for the other cause which Ryle approved, that of the Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen. There were 20,000 men engaged in this and they spent nine out of every ten years away from home.⁵²⁹ The mission ran eleven ships which provided clothing, literature, cheap tobacco, medical and 'spiritual' supplies.⁵³⁰ The first meeting in Liverpool attracted only a small attendance.⁵³¹ Two years later a further attempt to promote interest led to one of the mission ships anchoring in the Mersey. But there had been no increase in the size of the fleet, although the scale of the Mission activities had considerably enlarged in establishing a permanent ship to the 4-5,000 deep sea fishermen residing all the year round in Labrador.⁵³² Ryle was again showing an interest in a worthy, minority cause, that nevertheless ought to have had some appeal to the city of Liverpool. Personal support from the Bishop was not a sufficient stimulus to establish a permanent successful work.

(e) Children

The charity par excellence in Liverpool was the Seamen's Orphan Institution. Most of the leading shipping merchants sat on the Executive Committee.⁵³³ The Queen was a patron from 1886 onwards. Ryle's daughter was a lady visitor from 1885-1894.⁵³⁴ Yet the subscriptions steadily declined from £1,939 in 1880 to £1,359 in 1899.⁵³⁵ Donations were around £5,600 in the 1880s but dropped £1,000 in the 1890s.⁵³⁶ Church collections, only once below £150 in the 1880s, and five times above £180, never reached £150 in the 1890s and at the end of the century were scarcely above £100.⁵³⁷ It was the gift of legacies that saved the institution. In only five years were they under £1,000; they were frequently around £2-3,000 and occasionally much larger.⁵³⁸ In 1883, there were legacies to the value of £4,685 and in 1882, £11,080.⁵³⁹ Nevertheless, in twelve years of Ryle's episcopate the Institution ended up in debt.⁵⁴⁰ The usual expenditure on the Orphanage was about £9,000 per annum, of which one-third was met from the original endowments.⁵⁴¹ This left two-thirds of the running

costs to be met from annual gifts. For this money, throughout the 1880s and 90s, around 700 children and widows were relieved.⁵⁴² The Orphanage put up 350 children and the rest were provided for in their homes. The former cost £15 each and the latter £8.

The money came largely from three sources, Masters of ships and those who sailed in the Atlantic passenger ships, collections at the anniversary sermons and concerts given by the Pilots. By far the bulk of the income was derived from the first source.⁵⁴³ In other words, it was seafaring people themselves who were giving to the charity, rather than residents of Liverpool.⁵⁴⁴ The subscription list of 1,000 in 1870 had reduced to 900 by 1880 and 650 by 1900. There was a constant complaint that the new young shipowners of Liverpool were not as generous as their fathers. The number of subscribers was described as a 'disgrace' even in 1880, although there was initially a hope that with £1,900 contributed the target of £2,000 might be raised and from there the subscription list would take off.⁵⁴⁵ This never happened and the appeal for money became spread over a larger and larger area. Initially, the appeal was directed entirely to wealthy shipowners.⁵⁴⁶ However, this appeal failed.⁵⁴⁷ This was 'perfectly dreadful', they 'had not yet realised what is their duty'.⁵⁴⁸ Trade was increasing and commerce prospering, according to T.B.Royden, M.P., who failed 'to understand how any man possessing an interest - I begin with the shipowner first - how any man possessing an interest in a ship can possibly wish to see his name absent from that list of subscriptions'.⁵⁴⁹ By 1893, the subscription list was 'far in arrear of what it was'.⁵⁵⁰ Consequently, there were many who applied for help who had to be turned down.⁵⁵¹

This unhealthy state of affairs was to be redeemed by an appeal to foreign ports which traded with Liverpool, even though seventy-five percent of the charity's income already came from outside the city.⁵⁵² Within Liverpool there was an appeal away from the shipowners and asking for small contributions of only ten shillings from the 'modest class'.⁵⁵³ This became extended to 'every citizen in the city, because even the small trader in Toxteth gained from the trade of the port'.⁵⁵⁴

This was extended to other cities in England who traded through the port of Liverpool.⁵⁵⁵ Finally the claim, 'the sacred claim', of patriotism was invoked.⁵⁵⁶ By this time hopes of money from the really wealthy in Liverpool had been dismissed, the words of Charles Groves being remembered: 'When a man has made £100,000 I never go to him, his pocket is closed. It is the struggling man who helped me, and from him I have got all my money'.⁵⁵⁷

Ryle was an enthusiastic supporter of the charity, although his attendance at meetings in the 1880s was interrupted by business in London, the funeral of relatives and the death of his wife.⁵⁵⁸ He was quick to assert, 'as long as I have the honour of filling the position I occupy I hope I shall always feel a very deep and a very keen interest in the prosperity and welfare of the Seamen's Orphanage'.⁵⁵⁹ He was also soon aware that the needs of the Institution were 'continually increasing' and hoped, therefore, that 'the annual income will increase very greatly'.⁵⁶⁰ He blamed the increasing death toll at sea on the fierce commercial competition of recent years, reminiscing that he remembered the first two steamships which took 20 days to run from Liverpool to New York.⁵⁶¹ Despite this moral pressure on shipowners there was no increased giving. The committee put a heavy reliance on the Bishop and throughout the 1890s Ryle promoted the cause.⁵⁶² He asserted that he knew no other charitable or philanthropic institution in the city that deserved more support.⁵⁶³ This was partly because the buildings needed repair and modernisation, Ryle himself drawing attention to the laundry facilities.⁵⁶⁴ He thought it ought to be successful because 'there is none so pitiable as Orphans'.⁵⁶⁵ Unlike other promoters, Ryle always drew attention to the responsibilities of the rising young shipowners to replace their 'grey-headed' fathers and grandfathers in the cause of giving, especially to orphaned children, 'after all there is no greater and more Christian duty put before us'.⁵⁶⁶ Further, the actual amount of 'wreckage of society' was great.⁵⁶⁷ The old benefactors had died but it was not to a wider public that Ryle addressed his appeal:

We are losing friends continually, and they are not being replaced as quickly as we should like. We have lost Mr. Brocklebank, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Beazley and others, and we want more Brocklebanks, more Beazleys and more Balfours, to be raised up to take part in this good work...⁵⁶⁸

The old men gave 'their time and their property, and their influence' and 'the younger men of Liverpool' ought to follow their example.⁵⁶⁹ Ryle urged the new generation not to be content with running after sport and recreation, but to also throw themselves heart, mind, strength and soul into 'some useful institution'.⁵⁷⁰ Despite this appeal, Ryle was no more successful than any other of the charity's promoters, and he had to admit in his last address that 'death makes a very great difference in the number of our friends'.⁵⁷¹ This was the response to around 4,500 seamen dying abroad each year.⁵⁷² People came to Liverpool to get, not to give.⁵⁷³

In his appeals for hospitals, missions to seamen and for children, Ryle failed to evoke any significant giving from the Liverpool populace. This was neither new or unusual. A survey carried out in Liverpool in 1873 revealed that the principal thirty-eight charities produced a combined subscription of only £6,668 and that more than half of these only subscribed to one charity.⁵⁷⁴ The regular annual subscribers were few. In 1878 it was reckoned that there were at least 30,000 premises in Liverpool rated at £20 or more.⁵⁷⁵ At a conservative estimate there were at least 20,000 people who could afford to subscribe regularly to charities.⁵⁷⁶ In practice only 1,200 did so.⁵⁷⁷ Creating a bishopric made no difference to this dismal lack of generosity. Ryle complained that when the working class had money they wasted it on useless luxuries, such as bucketfuls of champagne and pianos for girls who could not play.⁵⁷⁸ Outside visitors, such as Dr. Barnado, observed that Liverpool's giving was 'insignificant' and he declined to congratulate them on their generosity.⁵⁷⁹ The Seamen's Orphanage was not untypical of a prominent children's charity being perpetually in debt. The Liverpool S.P.C.C. was in the same predicament to the tune of £700.⁵⁸⁰ The Waif and Strays Society had to

board most of its girls out because it had no home for them.⁵⁸¹ An appeal for funds failed.⁵⁸² Yet there were always new areas of need. The Society was looking to set up a home for crippled children and for 'tiny tots'.⁵⁸³ But that meant raising £10,000.⁵⁸⁴ If only a tenth of the population of Liverpool would give money, the Courier cried, all the charities would meet their needs. But it computed that less than a sixth of a tenth was giving.⁵⁸⁵

It is difficult to analyse precisely Liverpool's wealth in the 1880s and 1890s. Clearly some companies and trades did not make as much profit as they had done earlier. The West India and Pacific Steamship Company Limited made a profit of only £887 in 1885, which was £33,000 less than the previous year, and this was only achieved by cutting the managers' salaries by 20% and those of many other employees by 10%.⁵⁸⁶ But the Cunard Line's earnings had remained steady in the first half of the 1880s at £1.1 million.⁵⁸⁷ On the other hand, some companies were always struggling even before the 1880s. The Liverpool United Tramways and Omnibus Company carried thirty-four million passengers in 1890-91, earning £263,000.⁵⁸⁸ But the Company had to stable 3,230 horses, costing £32 each, and the annual feeding expenditure was over £50,000.⁵⁸⁹ There was a stock of 364 tramcars and omnibuses which cost £8,000 per annum on repair and maintenance.⁵⁹⁰ The Company employed 1,443 men and boys and although the hours were long, over twelve a day, the wages at thirty-five shillings per week were 'exceptionally high'.⁵⁹¹ But this was for the 1880s; in the 1890s new drivers were employed at twenty-eight shillings per week.⁵⁹² The wage of 'pullers up' (boys who rode extra horses on steep gradients) was reduced from ten shillings to eight shillings and sixpence. The number of boys employed to turn the points at junctions was halved.⁵⁹³ The success of the dockers strike and cheap fodder prices caused a gradual elevation of wages to their old level.⁵⁹⁴ But throughout the whole of its existence, the revenue was not high and the company were never a great financial success.⁵⁹⁵ Thus tramway workers experienced little change in their conditions throughout Ryle's episcopate. In stark contrast, cotton porters lost a third of their work by the simple

change of manufacturers moving their shipment direct from the quay to the railways instead of to an intermediate warehouse.⁵⁹⁶

Whatever individual changes may have occurred, there can be no doubt that 'the overall pattern of Liverpool's trade in the nineteenth century was one of tremendous expansion'.⁵⁹⁷ This position was maintained into the present century. The really noticeable problems in the nineteenth century were in the 1860s not later.⁵⁹⁸ This was understood even at the time. The Daily Post carried out an extensive survey in 1896 on the state of the city's trade. They recognised a decline, but it was almost entirely accounted for by the fall in the price of cotton. If the cotton trade was excluded, the fall in the import trade was only 1.2 percent.⁵⁹⁹ Some trades had increased dramatically, especially live cattle, sheep and horses, and the grain trade.⁶⁰⁰ Pig and bar iron imports had also increased.⁶⁰¹ Palm oil, petroleum, pepper, sugar, tobacco and wool had all steadily increased. The second largest import trade, after cotton, was that of provisions, and it held steady.⁶⁰² The same story was true of the export trades, where fourteen-fifteenths of the whole loss was in the textile trades.⁶⁰³ This was largely due to competition from Southampton.⁶⁰⁴ Most of this loss was in cotton, though Liverpool also lost out in silk, but she increased her shipment of jute.⁶⁰⁵

The overall conclusion was that Liverpool's position was 'immensely strong' and the leakages were 'small'.⁶⁰⁶ There were no general signs of decay. The only observation was that there was competition in some trades from other ports which required watching if Liverpool was to remain competitive.⁶⁰⁷ In short, as far as the reservoir for giving was concerned, the Mayor of Liverpool was right to say 'not a few are to be found among the well-to-do people in the city taking little or no interest whatever in many of its benevolent societies. There is a great amount of untapped wealth in Liverpool'.⁶⁰⁸ Ryle, as usual, was more blunt. He spoke of 'the luxury of those to whom God had given wealth, how they spent it in self-gratification and recreation and turned a deaf ear to calls of charity'.⁶⁰⁹ Sir Andrew Walker gave £50,000 to the Art Gallery,

£20,000 to the University and offered £10,000 to the Cathedral building project, but he owned a luxury yacht and cruised in the Mediterranean and his house was valued at £235,000.⁶¹⁰ And he was exceptional in giving. Most charities depended on constant begging. The Little Sisters of the Poor ran a home in Belmont Grove, Anfield, for infirm old men and women. Their food was obtained by daily trips to the principal hotels, restaurants and refreshment rooms of the city, as well as collecting scraps from the traders in St. John's Market.⁶¹¹ There were fifteen sisters and 138 inmates of the Home. They survived because they begged systematically every day.⁶¹²

Much of Ryle's work, then, was that of begging systematically either for internal church purposes or for charity. He was well aware of the poverty of 'Squalid Liverpool', but provided no solutions other than the provision of money for traditionally accepted groups: the sick, those working in hazardous environments and children. He had no conception of the struggle for respectability which left the lower middle classes in as much an economic grind as the cellar dwellers. The constant call for money was, however, bedevilled by the image of the church. The publicity given to drunk, adulterous and indebted clergy, along with empty Corporation Churches and perpetually bickering congregations, told against Ryle. Any attempt at promoting Christianity in Liverpool was an uphill struggle in this context, as another Bishop remarked: 'These cases ... are fatal to the success of church work'.⁶¹³

CHAPTER SIX

BISHOP RYLE: THE MISSION TASK OBSTRUCTED -

THE PROBLEM OF RITUALISM

(1) RITUALISM PERSONIFIED: THE CASE OF JAMES BELL COX

His name will stink in history.¹

The event which earned this epitaph for Ryle was the last imprisonment of a clergyman in England for illegal Ritualist practices. Although the Church Times carried a centenary memorial notice of this event in 1987, it has on the whole been forgotten not only by general religious histories of the late nineteenth century but even by histories specifically concerning Ryle.² M.L.Loane in his biography passes over the major troubles that the Bishop faced from his clergy in a brief three pages by concluding that once the case entered the law courts there was nothing he could do about it.³ Loane also has the case finish four years earlier than it actually did.⁴ The only other modern account of Ryle's life by Toon and Smout is equally brief on this issue, and concludes that while Ryle had a duty as Bishop to 'prevent the use of illegal ceremonies and vestments', it was a mistake on his part not to exercise the Bishop's veto, given his knowledge of the Church of England at large, the history of ecclesiastical court cases, the personal work of the vicar involved, and 'the love of the English for the under-dog'.⁵ Yet the way in which Ryle handled this particular matter and the wide ranging aspects of Victorian Anglicanism which it highlighted make it central to a correct understanding of his episcopate. Especially, it threw into relief, and directly challenged, the main tenets of his theology of salvation and his theology of the church.

(a) The Arrest and Imprisonment of James Bell Cox

The Rev. James Bell Cox of St. Margaret's, Prince's Road, Liverpool, had celebrated early morning communion at 7.30 am on Thursday 5 May 1887⁶, and was about to leave his house for the 10 o'clock service when he was arrested and taken in custody at Walton Gaol.⁷ His arrest had been expected, and the previous Sunday Bell Cox had allowed himself to be interviewed by the most prestigious Liverpool newspaper. The evening service was packed and the congregation would not leave until Bell Cox had re-entered the church from the vestry after the close of the service. 'Hundreds' wanted to speak to him individually, and the report describes men, as well as women and children, in tears at their minister's suspected arrest. The pathos of the scene was heightened by the fact that he expected to be arrested the next day and the knowledge that there was no fixed term of imprisonment, so that in his address in the church Bell Cox had anticipated imprisonment 'for many a weary month to come'.⁸ When the reporter carried out the private interview in the parsonage he pressed Bell Cox to be more specific on his length of imprisonment: 'I suppose as long as he (Mr. Hakes, the man who brought the complaint to court) chooses to keep me in prison, the whole power having been handed over to him. I suppose he has the power to keep me under lock and key as long as he likes. And he says he will'.⁹ In the event he was not arrested for another four days, but he was packed and ready to go and was accompanied by his churchwarden, Mr. Coltart, to Walton Gaol leaving the curate, the Rev. A.H. Paine, and the other churchwarden, Mr. Scott, with his wife and young son at the parsonage.¹⁰

The imprisonment of Bell Cox escalated what had been a fairly minor diocesan headache for Ryle into a national controversy. More than that, the imprisonment was reported in Canada¹¹, India¹² and Australia.¹³ Those who sought to defend Ryle drew sharp attention to the fact that Bell Cox's stay in gaol could hardly be described in terms of martyrdom. The governor of the gaol had received telegrams from the Commissioner of Prisons instructing him to allow Bell Cox 'all the comforts that can be provided consistent with the discipline of the

prison'.¹⁴ Consequently he occupied two cells, rather than the standard one; one acting as a sitting room the other as a bedroom.¹⁵ Both were carpeted.¹⁶ He had writing materials, a large supply of daily newspapers and any number of books he wanted¹⁷; his meals were supplied privately at hours of his own choice¹⁸; he could arrange to see friends on Thursdays as well as the routine visits on Monday, Wednesday and Friday; officials were not present at any of these meetings; the chaplain, Rev. D. Morris, visited him daily¹⁹, as did his doctor.²⁰ The churchwardens were allowed to supply any furniture that Bell Cox wanted which would fit into the rooms (14' by 6').²¹ He could exercise in the yard daily and was provided with gaslight so that he could read and write in the evenings.²² Protestant papers such as The Rock were quick to point out that 'his rooms are as well furnished as any bachelor's chambers in a London flat'²³, but many private letters also drew attention to the fact that Bell Cox's accommodation was better than that of many people in Liverpool.²⁴ One provincial newspaper pinpointed the difficulty that this sort of martyr^{8r}dom would have created for mediaeval artists: 'It was comparatively easy to distinguish one martyr from another by painting at his side a gridiron, a cauldron, or a saw, but carpeted cells, stuffed furniture, a bookcase and an escritoire would have tasked the resources of the old workers in mosaic and stained glass'.²⁵

All of this seemed to justify Pusey's former word of warning to High Churchmen that prosecution was not persecution.²⁶ Although some defenders of Bell Cox drew attention to the privations of his imprisonment, on the whole they concentrated on referring to the mere fact of loss of freedom, or to stressing the mental strain that the prisoner was experiencing. The Times resorted to emphasising the truism 'Prison is prison'.²⁷ The Liverpool Echo concluded that, despite the floral presents making his cell 'unbearable by the intensity of their perfumes', nevertheless 'loose as the shackles may be, shackles they are'.²⁸ The Post sent a reporter to the prison who opened his description with, ' "Abandon hope all ye who enter here" might well be inscribed at the entrance to the corridor. I left the sunshine behind me in the courtyard', and closed with 'I left Mr. Cox

standing in the corridor leading to the prison proper. Thrice I turned to look and thrice he waved a mournful regard. In the courtyard lay the sunshine; in the prison all was gloom'.²⁹ The Liverpool Mercury carried a report of Rev. J.F.Ponsonby of the church of St. Mary Magdalene, Minster Square, St. Pancras, who occupied the pulpit at St. Margaret's in the absence of Bell Cox. The preacher was well aware of the published facts of the state of the cells at Walton and therefore, 'he wanted to call their attention not to the inconvenience of prison life so much as to the mental suffering of one placed in the position of their Incumbent. The greatest trouble the prisoner would undoubtedly feel was in being probably misunderstood and sometimes even misrepresented.'³⁰

The one person who took exception to the playing down of the physical suffering of the prison was Bell Cox himself. He described the gaol as 'this house of bondage'³¹; the life in it as unimaginable³², and of being weak in strength and suggesting that those on the outside who talked glibly of desiring to share his imprisonment as only needing to experience twenty-four hours inside and they would soon change their minds.³³ But despite his personal comments, the centre of attention lay not so much on his own discomfort but more on the state of affairs that allowed any clergyman to be put in prison and treated as a criminal for offences that injured only other people's consciences. This discontent was exacerbated by the division amongst churchmen as to whether the actions Bell Cox was accused of were actually offences. In the storm of public criticism that issued in the wake of Bell Cox's removal to Walton Gaol, two people were singled out for blame: Dr. James Hakes and the first Bishop of Liverpool.

(b) A Comparison of Services: St.Bride's and St.Margaret's

Dr. James Hakes was a member of St. Bride's church in the rural deanery of Liverpool South which from 1885 had Rev. William Lefroy as rural dean.³⁴ The minister in 1887 was Rev. Thomas Graham. When Liverpool started as a diocese, St. Margaret's, Prince's Road, was also in the deanery of Liverpool South, but under Ryle's administrative

reorganisation it moved from 1883 into the rural deanery of Toxteth.³⁵ Bell Cox's rural deans were Revs. John Eyre, 1883-86, John Burbidge, 1886-96 and Herbert Woodward, 1896 - end of Ryle's episcopate.³⁶ Although there was a change of deanery boundaries which separated St. Bride's and St. Margaret's, the fact remained, of course, that they were neighbouring parishes. There was a clear difference in the churchmanship of the two churches which had been visible before Ryle's elevation to a bishopric and which was continuously visible. St. Bride's was a typical city parish. It performed three services on Sunday, one of which was a children's service, only two services in the week (on Wednesday evening and Friday morning), and only three administrations of communion a month.³⁷ This was typical of the churches in the deanery of Liverpool South where there were no churches which offered a daily service in 1887 and by 1900 there were only two that did so³⁸, one starting in 1892³⁹ and the other in 1895.⁴⁰ The staunch low churchmanship of this part of the diocese was reflected in a controversial deanery meeting in December 1888 chaired by Dyson Ryecroft, who had replaced Lefroy as rural dean. Rev. E.J.A. Fitzroy, vicar of St. Jude's, West Derby, one of the two churches which later introduced daily services, protested strongly against the possible election of Dr. Hakes to the Bishop's committee of inquiry respecting church accommodation in the city. He complained about the public exposure of Dr. Hakes and the continued prevalence of 'Orangeism', i.e. extreme Protestantism, in the deanery of Liverpool South when it was dying out elsewhere. This remark was greeted with cries of 'No, no'. Fitzroy went on to condemn Dr. Hakes' persecution of Bell Cox and for his biassed and unscrupulous partisanship. Throughout his speech he was interrupted by Rev. Thomas Graham who moved that Fitzroy 'be no longer heard', but he was overruled by the rural dean. Dr. Hakes was elected by 15 votes to 5. But the significance of the meeting was Fitzroy's constant repetition that 'what I say here is mostly useless'. Clearly any inclinations towards a defence of High Churchmen were to no avail.⁴¹

The importance of this description of low churchmanship in the deanery of Liverpool South lies in its comparison with the rural

deanery of Toxteth. When this was created there was only one other church, apart from St. Margaret's, that offered daily services. By 1887 this had increased to five and by 1900 to only six and by then the deanery had gained two churches and grown from 20-22. For the whole of Ryle's episcopate, then, 75% of the deanery did not offer daily services. Furthermore, 50% were only open once a week. The same percentage only offered two services on Sunday, a higher percentage than in Dr. Hakes' deanery.⁴² Even this does not emphasise enough the distinctiveness of St. Margaret's. Of the five churches that offered daily services, three offered one service and one offered two. They were all either morning or evening prayer. St. Margaret's offered three daily services and four on Thursday and Friday. On Sunday in contrast to the usual two, Bell Cox and his curate performed six services. No other church in the diocese offered this number throughout the whole of Ryle's time in Liverpool.⁴³ Less than 25% of the churches in the diocese were open daily even in 1900. The key factor in the imprisonment of Bell Cox was that his daily services and most of his Sunday services were administrations of the Lord's Supper. Between 1882 and 1885 St. Margaret's was the only church in the diocese to be open for daily communion services. She was joined by St. James-the-less in 1885, All Saints, Wigan, in 1889, St. Thomas's, Toxteth, in 1895, and St. Margaret's, Anfield and St. Catherine's, Abercomby, in 1897.⁴⁴ This was a mere total of six churches out of 203. St. Margaret's, Princes Road, was unique. The controversy between Dr. Hakes and Bell Cox was not a party conflict within the church between 'High' and 'Low' church principles. There was no High Church party in the diocese of Liverpool. Neither for that matter was there an organised Low Church party. The controversy sprang out of Dr. Hakes' attitude to finding on his doorstep a minister who believed that his main role was to perform the Lord's Supper as often as he could in a manner which Dr Hakes interpreted as Romanism and, therefore, was against the foundational beliefs of the Church of England. It was certainly not simply a reaction of spite, because Ryle had agreed to consecrate a church which had been built under the patronage of a man who favoured High Church services.⁴⁵

(c) Personal Relationships of Bell Cox and Dr. Hakes

That the dispute between Dr. Hakes and Bell Cox was not a matter of personality and feeling is further elucidated by the manner in which they conducted themselves throughout the twelve years of the controversy. The Church Review, which was not in favour of the prosecution, nevertheless commented, 'No-one for an instant doubts the sincerity and single-mindedness of Dr. Hakes, who is generally respected in a city where sectarian differences are very bitter'.⁴⁶ The Courier argued that no blame could be attached to him for being earnest in his convictions.⁴⁷ The Porcupine concluded, 'Here ... are two earnest Christian men, zealous for goodness and religion each in his own way striving to make the world a little bit better than he finds it'⁴⁸; and in a previous report described Dr. Hakes as mild-tempered, serene, placid and gracious so that it was 'almost a pleasure to be damned by him'.⁴⁹ In April 1891 Dr. Hakes and Bell Cox become involved in a public correspondence whereby they tried to come to a private settlement of their differences. This failed, but the local Press were quick to comment that the correspondence 'has been carried on with marked good feeling and courtesy on both sides'.⁵⁰ The Courier effectively summarised the tone of the whole conflict as far as the personal attitude of the disputants was concerned in its comment on these letters: 'They are free from personal rancour and irritating recrimination. No offensive word is written on either side and each of the disputants recognises the conscientious scruples of his opponent'.⁵¹

This willingness to see the whole conflict in terms of principles rather than personalities was illustrated practically in the contested School Board elections of November 1888. The Liverpool School Board was set up in 1870 in the aftermath of Forster's Education Act with fifteen members elected every three years. Usually no election was necessary as the three religious groups (Churchmen, Nonconformist and Roman Catholic) nominated 'official' candidates which normally meant six Roman Catholics, five Churchmen and four Nonconformists. In 1888, however, there were twenty-seven candidates for the fifteen places, so

an election had to take place. Every person on the municipal register was entitled to fifteen votes, which he could place as he pleased e.g. all 15 votes to one candidate, or 5 each to three candidates and so on. The main interest of the election was in two unofficial candidates, Mr. S.G.Rathbone, who had been the chairman of the previous Board but whom the Nonconformists refused to adopt on their official list, and Bell Cox, who stood independently having failed to get on the official Church list, mainly because he did not organise himself for the committee under Archdeacon Lefroy which arranged the selection of the official Church candidates. Both these unofficial candidates were elected. Bell Cox obtained 17,763 votes, which was slightly more than Dr. Hakes (17,601)⁵², who was elected as an official Church candidate. He had been on the Board for fifteen years and was chairman of the Sites and Buildings Committee.⁵³ It is likely that most of Bell Cox's votes came in totals of 15, whereas Dr. Hakes' would have been much less, but the point was that they would be working together. In the very first meeting there was some dispute over the post of vice-president, Dr. Hakes being one candidate. The voting was seven to four for him. Bell Cox abstained with the comment, 'His desire would always be to have the best man in the best places and to have the best thing done. Of the gentlemen who had been proposed he knew nothing except what had appeared in the public Press'.⁵⁴ There was no recorded conflict during their time working together, which is precisely what the Press predicted when their joint election was known.⁵⁵

Although the truth was that there was no personal animosity between Bell Cox and Dr. Hakes, not all the Press portrayed the controversy in the light of the principles under debate. On the whole Bell Cox was not criticised personally, the Protestant Press restricting its criticism to its interpretation of his theological views as false. The one exception to this was the Bishop of Oxford, Mackarness, who condemned Bell Cox publicly in his sixth triennial visitation of the diocese, in June 1887. He accused Bell Cox of deliberately undertaking a 'plan of campaign' to bring the Ecclesiastical Courts into public disfavour by so behaving as to ensure his own imprisonment.⁵⁶ There is no evidence to suggest such

machinations on the part of the accused clergyman, and the Bishop was dismissed with the accusation of being 'a balloon wandering in a fog'.⁵⁷ Dr. Hakes, however, was singled out for severe personal criticism. This usually came from liberal papers incensed at the infringement of the right of personal choice of belief, rather than from High Church papers who simply thought he was wrong. The Liverpool Review (later the Liberal Review), observed: 'The legislature would really confer a generous boon on this community if it passed a law to put this Mr. Hakes into a straight waistcoat and consign him to Rainhill ... He ought to be tarred and feathered and kicked out of society'.⁵⁸ The Liverpool Citizen was more succinct: 'Mr. Hakes possesses all the fervid bigotry of a regiment of Spanish Inquisitors'⁵⁹; and the Morning Post concluded: 'The prosecution deserved to fail. It was begun in bigotry, it was carried on with rancour and preserved in with relentless ardour'.⁶⁰ The Literary Review described him as 'the vituperative firebrand of Hope Hall notoriety'.⁶¹ The Liverpool Weekly Post assessed Dr. Hakes' prosecution as 'just persecution: petty, partial, paltry, gratuitous, useless, ineffectual ...'.⁶² The Brighton Gazette repeated a remark of Leigh Hunt in condemning the attack on Bell Cox: 'The paucity of Christians is astonishing, considering the number of them'.⁶³ Most of the papers that described Dr. Hakes in this way were either pronounced political weeklies with a short life-span or were external to the city of Liverpool. The main Liverpool papers portrayed a more accurate picture of the man and recognised the conflict as one of principles even if they sided with Bell Cox in the end.

(d) The Ritual Practices at St. Margaret's

Throughout the years 1880-1892 Dr. Hakes insisted that he was motivated to prosecute Bell Cox because the priest engaged in ritual practices which implied a theology of salvation which the Church of England had rejected at the Reformation, and that it was his duty as a member of that church to do something to stop these practices. It has been noted above that Bell Cox's church was unique in its services in the diocese of Liverpool. It was not so much the number of communion

services that provoked Dr. Hakes as the way in which the services were carried out, but it was precisely because of the clergy's conduct of the services, with all the theology that that implied, which accounted for the large number of communion services. Naturally, throughout the controversy there were a number of descriptions of services in the church. The Porcupine's account did not describe the actual service, but simply the interior of the church, observing that the sittings were free, that men and women were separated and that there was a fully surpliced choir; but the report singled out the altar: 'The interior of St Margaret's is singularly handsome, especially the chancel, where there is a very magnificent altar in mosaic and gold. The latter is, of course, the most remarkable feature of the church and is, in fact, the only real point of difference apparent between St. Margaret's and the general body of the Established Churches'.⁶⁴ The Albion observed that the altar was covered in a green cloth, which was the same colour as the attire of Bell Cox, that there was a large number of candles on it, but only two were lighted, and that although the church was full only about a dozen people went up to communicate at the altar. During the celebration of communion the choir sang the 'Agnus Dei'. This was a typical service.⁶⁵ A year later some reporters specially sent to Liverpool to look at the church by the Church Review merely commented that the church attracted men. The reporters attended a 7.00 am Monday morning communion service along with 'about fifty persons ... at least thirty were men'.⁶⁶

In 1888 the English Churchman sent a correspondent who visited the church to look at the building on Maundy Thursday and to attend a service on Good Friday. His description of the building concentrated on the images in the stained glass, drawing attention to three in particular which he interpreted as showing the Sacramentalist view of the clergy. He noted a representation of Mary with a brilliant crown on her head, whereas the baby Jesus had no crown; a picture of a priest 'offering up the blasphemous Sacrifice of the Mass, attended by two little acolyte boys'; and a picture of a Lamb 'out of whose breast a red stream of blood was pouring forth into a Sacramental cup'. The service he did not recognise, but later found it 'word for word in the

Roman Missal', consisting of kneeling in front of the cross while the choir sang words such as 'We venerate Thy Cross, O Lord'. The Reredos was 'entirely covered with black drapery, except the stone Crucifix which, of almost life size, consequently stood out from the dark background in startling distinctness'.⁶⁷ In 1890, another paper described the service, noting that men and women entered through separate doors. The six large candles on the altar were lit by a small boy before the service started and then he came down to light some candles on the altar in a recess at the top of the men's aisle. After the pealing of the bell, the organ struck up 'and the procession, headed by a crucifer in a red skirt, with a huge brass cross, emerged from the vestry, whereupon the congregation arose, kneeled with the choir and again stood up, and the service commenced'. The report went on to criticise the uncongregational character of the singing and the words of some of the hymns before going into a detailed lament over the sermon, summarising the curate as saying: 'The Apostles were not sent primarily to teach truths but to found a Society. This Society was a visible one having its officers with due authority, its Sacraments, its discipline. Outside of this visible body there could be no salvation ... The case of the jailer at Philippi was referred to in this way. 'St Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved". The jailer believed, and was saved; but not by his belief. Baptism intervened, and that made him a Christian, introduced him into the church, and saved him'.⁶⁸

(e) The Doctrines at Stake

If the reported version of the sermon is correct then it provides a good indication of the conflict in belief that faced Dr. Hakes (and Ryle for that matter), and Bell Cox and his curate. Dr. Hakes would not have agreed with this interpretation^t of the role of the Apostles, the visible nature of the church, its sources of authority and the role of the Sacraments. But St. Margaret's Church sought to give visible expression to the beliefs outlined in Paine's sermon by an ornate and elaborate ritual. Dr. Hakes' prosecution was based on a recognition of the connection between ritual and belief. In a letter published on 5

March 1885, he commented that while he believed the things signified in the sacraments (i.e. new birth by the Holy Spirit and eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus), to be absolutely essential to salvation, nevertheless he did not believe that the outward rites conferred those blessings. Therefore, the true believer was 'perfectly and equally safe without them'.⁶⁹ Seven and a half years later the same paper published Dr. Hakes' last public communication on the controversy in which he restated his whole motivation. His aim had been 'to maintain the Protestant, Evangelical and Scriptural character of our national church, believing that the authorities of Church and State had, at the time of the Reformation, secured, what it is certain they intended to do, the exclusion of a great number of Ritual practices whose object was to set forth false doctrine and especially the Romish Mass ... Being jealous for the honour of my church I prosecuted Mr. Bell Cox because he was teaching these denounced doctrines, and setting them forth before his congregation by his illegal ritual'.⁷⁰

On the whole Bell Cox declined to express his own opinion publicly, except on the issues of whether the ritual was illegal and who should determine what was illegal and what was acceptable. He did make a few statements about the real nature of the controversy, the most widely published being a pastoral address to his congregation when the prosecution began in April 1885: 'Let me again remind you that the issues really at stake in the present controversy are far more important than vestments and candles. These are recognised on all sides as but the symbols round which rages a life and death struggle on vital points of faith and doctrine'.⁷¹ He took his own position seriously enough to become a member of both the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and the English Church Union. The goals of the former were five-fold: to propagate belief in the Mass; to propagate the real presence of Christ in the elements; the advocacy of fasting communion; prayers for the dead; propagation of the reserved sacrament.⁷² But it was the latter organisation which took up Bell Cox's case and defended him in the courts, while also taking up a nationwide campaign to discredit both Ryle and Dr. Hakes, mainly

through the pages of the Church Times. By the end of the controversy, in 1892, the English Church Union had spent more than £3,000 on behalf of Bell Cox.⁷³

The English Church Union local branches probably provided the bulk of the 60-80 letters a day which Bell Cox received while in prison.⁷⁴ Support came from all over the country e.g. North Staffordshire, Oxford, Richmond, Bristol, Carlisle, Bedford, York, West Midlands, Central Kent, Barrow and Grasmere.⁷⁵ However, it was the affirmation afforded him by the President, Lord Halifax, in the annual general meetings of the Union, which did more than anything to clarify that the prosecution was a direct attack on the system of belief which the Union propagated. In 1886 when the prosecution had begun, but did not appear to be going anywhere, Lord Halifax merely reminded the Union that one of its three main objects was to vindicate the right of the Church of England to 'her ancient ritual' and remarked that not much more needed to be said and expressed a general feeling that the prosecution would be dropped.⁷⁶ A year later with this assessment proved inaccurate, the prosecution continuing and the imprisonment of Bell Cox, what had been a passing remark the previous year ('But what in truth is the Church's mission? First to offer continually the Eucharistic sacrifice'⁷⁷), became the central tenet of the Presidential Address. Halifax described the Church of England as a waste place, in spiritual degradation and a mere earthly establishment. The whole battle for revival was being fought over 'the doctrine and ritual of the Holy Eucharist'.⁷⁸ The Union wanted to affirm 'the Presence of Christ the King in the Holy Eucharist' and to fight for the pre-eminence of the Eucharist as 'the one great distinctive act of the Church's worship'.⁷⁹ Lord Halifax went on to elaborate, at the first meeting of the West Middlesex District Union of the E.C.U. a month after the annual meeting:

If it is right and fitting to wear magnificent and costly vestments to do honour to an earthly sovereign, then surely it could not be wrong to wear them in honour of the King of Kings when present at that greatest of all services, the Holy Eucharist ... we could not consent to have our worship put

back to that dull and dreary level in which it was before the beginning of the Catholic Revival. We must maintain the externals of religion, not only for the sake of the externals themselves, but for the sake of the truths which they symbolised - truths which concerned the doctrines of the Sacraments, especially the Sacrament of the Altar.⁸⁰

In 1888, Lord Halifax moved on to attack those churches which did not have a communion service every Sunday and Holy Day (which meant 129 out of 195 churches in Liverpool⁸¹), and forwarded a resolution to the bishops meeting at Lambeth Palace that this was an 'abuse unknown ... in any other portion of the Catholic Church and contrary to the universal practice of primitive times'.⁸² In 1889, he spoke strongly on the doctrinal importance of the controversy and urged no surrender or the Church would cease to exist:

There is the importance of ritual in itself. We have to worship God with our bodies as well with our souls. The visible things of this world are, St. Paul tells us, the transcripts of the invisible things beyond the veil. Why is that rule to be disregarded in what concerns the worship of Almighty God, since the Lamb, slain once for all on Calvary, presents Himself for us, not only at the Altar in Heaven, but also at the Altars of His Church on earth? Why is not the earthly offering to correspond in outward symbol and expression with the offering within the veil? Why is not everything which art, music and outward splendour can contribute to be enlisted in the service of the sanctuary? The possibility of abuse attaches to everything, but are there no dangers on the other side? Is our faith so strong that it needs no help to assist us in realising the unseen? Or can anyone deny the importance of the ritual of the Church as a means for teaching and preserving the faith? Lastly, there is the importance of ritual in its connection with doctrine. No-one who has followed the present controversy can doubt that under cover of an attack upon ritual it is the doctrine of the Real Presence that is being struck at. Nay, there is no concealment about it; it is the whole Sacramental system, the belief that the Sacraments are what the Articles and Catechism of the Church of England call them - not bare signs, but 'signa efficacia', that is, signs which effect what they represent, which is the object of attack...'.⁸³

By 1891, Lord Halifax was adamant that the E.C.U. would never abandon

its position: 'We are not children who have entered into a conflict merely to amuse ourselves and without counting the cost ... it is not merely a detail of ritual which is at stake, but the very existence of the Church herself'.⁸⁴

The E.C.U. was not an insignificant organisation. In 1886 it had 21,470 members, there were 17 bishops acting as Vice-Presidents and Bell Cox was on the governing council.⁸⁵ The President was an Ecclesiastical Commissioner⁸⁶ and was important enough to visit the Pope, in Rome in 1894, to arrange discussions on the Catholic validity of Anglican orders.⁸⁷ Its support for Bell Cox was vital in a number of ways, apart from its direct financial giving. It was largely responsible for keeping the controversy before the public outside Liverpool, which for a legal battle that lasted twelve years probably was crucial in preventing Bell Cox from being lost to sight in the interminable jungle of the judiciary. Further, it engineered widespread national support, which in the absence of a similar action on behalf of Dr. Hakes gave the impression that the latter (and therefore Ryle), were extreme Protestants in a sea of High Churchmanship of national proportions. More than that, it gave Bell Cox respectability. And above all it kept public attention to the fact that the argument was essentially over the age old question: What must I do to be saved?'. In 1889, the Fortnightly Review published an article on Ritualism which identified the doctrine relating to the communion service (and therefore the symbolism of various ritual associated with it), as of central importance: 'It is important to remember that this question of the presence of Christ in the Elements or on the Altar as contrasted with His Spiritual Presence in the heart of the faithful believer, has ever been the test question between the two great Christian Systems represented by Rome on the one side, as we had imagined, by the Reformed Church of England on the other'.⁸⁸

In contrast to this support which Bell Cox received, Dr. Hakes had very little outside help. He had been a prominent member of the Liverpool branch of the Church Association, but from start to finish the prosecution was his own. It cost him considerably more than

£3,000.⁸⁹ Indeed, the Church Association was in something of a mess. The twentieth anniversary celebration was marked by division and heated incrimination involving Mr. Girdlestone, Dr. Hakes' solicitor.⁹⁰ The Evangelical Conference of clergy and laity at Exeter Hall in 1889 was dissatisfied with the activity and effectiveness of the Church Association and proposed a new organisation named the Protestant Churchmen's Alliance, aiming specifically to uphold 'the non-sacerdotal character of the ministry of the Church of England', and to seek the abolition of the Bishops' veto and to replace imprisonment in cases of contumacy with deprivation.⁹¹ This emphasised the divided nature of organised Evangelicalism in contrast to the High Church Party and contributed to Dr. Hakes being left to himself. He did, however, receive support from one rather significant person, namely the First Bishop of Liverpool.

Before turning to Ryle's involvement in the Bell Cox controversy, it is necessary to note one further aspect of the dispute. Dr. Hakes prosecuted the minister of St. Margaret's, Prince's Road, on eleven charges:

(1) That when officiating at the communion service he used lighted candles on the altar 'when such candles were not wanted for the purpose of giving light'.

(2) That he elevated the bread 'in a ceremonial manner and in a much greater degree' than the Prayer Book required.

(3) That he mixed water with the sacramental wine.

(4) That he 'knelt and prostrated himself' before the altar while officiating at a communion service.

(5) While officiating in a communion service he 'bowed his head in a ceremonial manner towards a crucifix' that appeared to be part of the altar.

(6) That 'he made the sign of the cross' while giving the elements to the communicants.

(7) That he wore illegal vestments, namely 'an alb, a chasuble, a maniple and a stole'.

(8) That immediately after the Prayer of Consecration, and before the reception of the elements, he 'caused to be sung ... the Agnus

Dei'.

(9) That during the reading of the Epistle and Gospel he stood 'with his back towards the people'.

(10) That he could not be seen clearly while performing the act of breaking the bread.

(11) That he illegally washed the communion cup 'in a ceremonial manner'.⁹²

All of these related to the doctrinal understanding of the communion service as a sacrificial act in which on the altar was 'the Presence of the Son of God in human flesh subsisting'.⁹³ But although this was the ground of Dr. Hakes' complaint and the cause of the prosecution, it was not the actual cause of Bell Cox's imprisonment on 5 May 1887. He was imprisoned for refusing to recognise that the court which judged these issues had any authority to do so, and therefore he simply refused to either attend its sittings or obey any of its injunctions. It is at this point that the second great theological question surfaced: where did authority lie in the Church?

(f) Troubles at St. Margaret's before Ryle's Episcopate

Ryle did not initiate the controversy with St. Margaret's, Prince's Road, he inherited it. St. Margaret's was built in 1869 in the mission district of St. James-the-less (population 10,000). This latter church was a chapel of ease opened under Bishop's licence in 1863 and consecrated after enlargement in 1872. The parish church was St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. The minister of the parish church was Rev. Cecil Wray and of St. James-the-less, Rev. H.S. Bramah with Rev. Charles Parnell as curate. Parnell became the first minister of St. Margaret's, where Rev James Bell Cox joined him as curate.⁹⁴ All four men were distinct High Churchmen and conducted their services after a Ritualist pattern. When the Bishop of Chester consented to preach at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields in 1866, there was rioting in the street outside the church.⁹⁵ People complained about the velvet drapery covering the pulpit, the genuflecting of the clergy and choristers, and the use of lighted candles on the altar.⁹⁶ No fewer than 500 people walked out of the service before it finished and mobbed the Bishop,

Incumbent and curate when they left the church. The police had to clear a way for the Bishop to get into his cab, and had to run with it to protect the Bishop for three quarters of a mile through the public streets.⁹⁷ Subsequently the Bishop was presented with two memorials, one signed by 128 clergy of Liverpool and the neighbourhood and the other by 130 laymen, protesting against the ritual practices.⁹⁸

At St. James-the-less, Bramah and Parnell went further than Wray in two important respects. First, they inaugurated parochial missions in Liverpool. The first, held in November 1864, consisted of daily services at the church and the distribution of leaflets containing the three questions, 'Are you ready to die? Do you wish to go to heaven when you die? Will you begin now to prepare yourself?'. The mission was led by Rev. A.H. Mackonochie, probably the most well-known Ritualist clergyman in England, as a result of his activities at St. Albans, Holborn.⁹⁹ Second, and more controversially, Parnell and Bramah looked for help in the work they were doing outside of the ordained clergy. In March 1863, they produced a pamphlet explaining the difficulties of their job in a district containing 10,000 people: 'We must have the help of lay men and women'¹⁰⁰ they went on to say, and appealed for gifts of £100 to establish a Sisterhood which could be maintained by promises of annual subscriptions to the amount of another £100. Subsequently two sisters from St. Thomas', Oxford, arrived and began visiting, tending the sick and holding classes of instruction in the Christian Faith especially for girls and young women. Within two and a half years Parnell was appealing for money to erect a permanent home and St. Martin's-in-the-Fields had established a second sisterhood.¹⁰¹

At St. Margaret's, Parnell introduced the same style of services as existed both at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields and St. James-the-less with candlesticks, cross, censer, cope and vestments. In March 1870, he created a stir by inviting the Orthodox Archbishop of Syra and Tenos, the Most Rev. Dr. Lycurgus, to join in a service at St. Margaret's, sitting him within the altar rails.¹⁰² The culmination of all this was the prosecution of Parnell in 1876 for illegal ritualist practices. The complainant was not a member of the church and had been

advised to go to the church by the then Bishop of Chester, Dr. W. Jacobson. The Bishop then heard the complaint and sent it on to York for trial and refused to reconsider his position when petitioned to do so by a deputation from the Church.¹⁰³ The congregation raised £1,000 to defend Parnell, but before a judgment was reached he resigned 'in the interests of peace'.¹⁰⁴ It was in this situation that James Bell Cox became the incumbent of St. Margaret's, and he continued the services exactly as they had been under Parnell.

(g) The Chronology of the Dispute

(i) Reasons for its length

Within three weeks of his arrival in Liverpool Ryle was pressed to sanction another prosecution. This he declined to do, although he did refuse to license further curates for Bell Cox.¹⁰⁵ This meant that Bell Cox was attempting to perform the same number of services as Parnell had done, but whereas Parnell had four assistant curates, Bell Cox only had one. This remained the state of affairs until January 1885, when Dr. Hakes wrote to Ryle complaining of the Ritualist practices at St. Margaret's and requesting that the Bishop forward the case to be tried at York. This time Ryle did not veto the proceedings and so unleashed a controversy that was to last for twelve years. There were several reasons for the long duration of the dispute. First and foremost, the reluctance of any courts to reach decisions in any way related to the contentious and vexed issue of the meaning of the Ornaments Rubric in the Book of Common Prayer, an issue in which the conflicting decisions of previous courts enhanced the propensity to delay. When the Archbishop of Canterbury became involved in the prosecution of Dr. Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln, by the Church Association, he too failed to act with any vigour: 'Church Courts in England are proverbially slow. It is fourteen months since the Archbishop of Canterbury decided the preliminary point that he had the right to try a church case. It is six months since he heard the pleadings in the Lincoln case ...' yet he had still reached no decision.¹⁰⁶ The Post observed that the length of the Bell Cox

controversy was due to the reluctance of the courts to reach decisions on ritual: 'only once in a century or so are merits pronounced upon in ecclesiastical causes'.¹⁰⁷ And Dr. Hakes' own opinion on the decision of the House of Lords was that it did not affect the merits of the case.¹⁰⁸

The second main cause of the length of the dispute was the conviction of both the protagonist and the defendant that their cause was 'right' and essential to the life and vitality of the Church of England. Thus after the House of Lords rejected his appeal, Dr. Hakes, in reply to a statement that he ought to drop the prosecution, commented: 'On the contrary, it seems to me that continuous, persistent rebellion and lawlessness, without the smallest sign of repentance and amendment, call rather for more urgent and effectual effort at repression; and, therefore, being still convinced that I was right and obliged to begin the prosecution, I ought more diligently than ever to press it'.¹⁰⁹

The third reason for the longevity of the case was the combination of Bell Cox's unwillingness to have anything to do with the spiritual court of Lord Penzance; the diversion of the lawyers in the dispute from ecclesiastical issues to purely technical legal questions; and the occurrence of some unfortunate mistakes in the actual procedure of the prosecution, as the Courier observed: 'When he (Dr. Hakes) commenced his suit he could not foresee the labyrinth of technicality, involution and conflicting jurisdiction in which the litigation was soon destined to be obscured. In its later developments it has simply become a strife of lawyers' tactics, and the true merits of the case have been utterly lost in the meshes of an intricate and unintelligible contest of technical skill'.¹¹⁰

(ii) 1885: Ryle's Attempts to Prevent a Court Case

Dr. Hakes lodged his formal complaint to the Bishop on 29 January 1885.¹¹¹ Ryle then asked Bell Cox to come and see him and an interview took place on 10 February between the Bishop and incumbent in the presence of Archdeacon Bardsley and John Gamon, the Bishop's legal

secretary. The Bishop requested Bell Cox to give up the disputed ritual 'for the sake of the peace of the diocese'.¹¹² Ryle did not act on his own. He had taken advice from the Archbishop of York and Chancellor Dempson Espin (who had been one of the Royal Commissioners on Ecclesiastical Courts).¹¹³ He then wrote to Bell Cox the same day in order to let him know that he would not answer Dr. Hakes' request until the following Monday. In the meantime, Ryle took advice from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Benson, who recorded in his diary, 'Interview with the Bishop of Liverpool as to his permitting the threatened ritual prosecution of Mr. B. He was very earnest and oppressed by it, seems to have tried honestly his best to avoid it. But these people like B who are so excellent in theory of obedience, never obey a Bishop even when he speaks of his own authority. The Bishop had behaved magnanimously in consecrating a church for them. Without a sense of honour the man immediately adopts all manner of illegal practice'.¹¹⁴ More practically, on the same day that Ryle wrote to Bell Cox, he also wrote to Canon William Lefroy, the rural dean of Liverpool South and probably the most popular clergyman in Liverpool, who was subsequently Archdeacon of Warrington and Dean of Norwich. Ryle knew that Lefroy was on good terms with Bell Cox and regarded him as 'a man of peace'. He requested Lefroy to engage in friendly mediation with Bell Cox. In his letter to Lefroy Ryle pointed out that he was making no request for admission of doing anything 'wrong' indeed, he did not mind if Bell Cox firmly stated his belief in the rightness of his ritual action. Lefroy called on Bell Cox the next day but he was not at home. Lefroy left a request for an interview. Bell Cox replied negatively to that and two further letters from Lefroy.¹¹⁵

(iii) 1885-1887 From Court to Prison: Criticism of Ryle's Failure to use the Veto

Bell Cox also wrote to Ryle on 14 February declining to agree to his request.¹¹⁶ Consequently Ryle forwarded the case to the Chancery Court of the Archbishop of York, of which Lord Penzance was the Official Principal. Almost immediately he was presented with two petitions. One was organised by Canon Bridgeman, Rural Dean of Wigan, and signed by 136 clergymen (out of a possible total of 404),

requesting the Bishop to stay the proceedings. The second was organised by John Prescott (the only individual patron in the deanery of Wigan apart from Bridgeman and the Earl of Bradford), and signed by sixty-two of the leading laity and the churchwardens of thirty-three churches, making the same request. Ryle received these on 3 March and 6 March respectively, and politely replied that they were too late, that every Englishman had the right to take a complaint to the courts of the land and that the onus of staying ecclesiastical litigation rested with Bell Cox, who had persistently disobeyed the law and disregarded the admonitions of his bishop.¹¹⁷ Preaching later in the month at St. Helens parish church, Ryle's irritation with the memorials and complaints spilled over into a condemnation of such activity and laid the blame for division in the diocese squarely on the shoulders of the memorialists:

Memorials here and memorials there; another hard question to solve, another hard knot to untie. Instead of finding fault, people should pray more for those over them. Anybody could criticise and find fault, but could they do things better themselves? If they had less criticism and finding of fault, and more tenderness and judgment, more prayer and intercession for others, people would get on better.¹¹⁸

The first hearing of the case took place in York Minster on 23 April 1885 before Rev. Canon Raine, acting as surrogate for Lord Penzance. Bell Cox did not appear and was not represented.¹¹⁹ After a succession of formal hearings a monition was served on Bell Cox at the St. Margaret's vicarage on 8 September to refrain from the practices. Since he continued his services as before, a writ of suspension for six months was issued on 31 December, to begin with the fixing of the writ on the church door on 3 January 1886. At this point Ryle's position in the controversy was criticised nationally by the Guardian and privately by Dr. Hakes, both drawing public statements from him. The Guardian's main criticism was that the responsibility for breaking the peace of the church lay with Ryle, because he deliberately chose to reject the peace policy of the previous Archbishop of Canterbury, Tait, by not exercising his right of veto over the prosecution.¹²⁰ There had been

some prosecutions of clergymen before which had resulted in four imprisonments: Tooth of Hatcham (22 January - 17 February 1877); Dale of St. Vedast's, London (30 October - 24 December 1880); Enright of Bordesley, Birmingham (27 November 1880 - 17 January 1881); and Green of St. John's, Miles Platting (19 March 1881 - 4 November 1882).¹²¹ But the last of these was three years before the affair with Bell Cox, and it was believed that Tait's express wish was that such prosecutions should cease. Although he publicly denied that the Bishops had agreed to veto, one of his last acts was to persuade Mackonochie of Holborn to resign and to persuade the Bishop of London to veto any prosecution.¹²² Before Ryle's action, of twenty-two presentations under the Public Worship Regulation Act, seventeen had been vetoed by the Bishops involved.¹²³

It was Ryle's failure to use the veto which, more than any other single act of his episcopate, brought him resounding condemnation. 'What is he doing now', asked a correspondent to the Post, 'simply rushing madly in where the other bishops fear to tread ... If our bishop had had any manly courage in him he would have said, "No, Mr. Hakes, I will not sanction this".'¹²⁴ Commenting on the Diocesan Conference in November 1889, the Church Review concluded that Ryle's major fault was his failure to use the veto and this was the major cause of trouble in the diocese and went on, 'it would be despicable to pretend that we should grieve if he resigned his see ... The only thing upon which he may congratulate himself is that he would have made a worse Dean than Bishop'.¹²⁵ At the Wakefield Church Congress, Ryle's attempt to chair one session was disrupted by some members present whose desire was to protest against his allowing the prosecution of Bell Cox.¹²⁶ The Ipswich Journal, after praising Ryle's successful ministry in the Norwich diocese, thought it was a pity that he had not learned 'moderation' from Bishop J.T. Pelham and observed, 'in allowing the prosecution he has committed an error from the consequences of which he cannot hope to escape'.¹²⁷ Another paper, after referring to Tait's opinions and the use of the veto by other Bishops, laid all the blame on Ryle, without whom 'Hakes was powerless ... His (Ryle's) name will stink in history ... it is to be regretted that he was ever

appointed to fill a position in which he has done more mischief than the Liberation Society and all the atheists put together'.¹²⁸ From Aberdeen¹²⁹ to Somerset¹³⁰ and Folkestone¹³¹ Ryle was condemned for not using his right of veto. The Folkestone News equated Ryle with Pontius Pilate: 'When Gregory the Great of Rome was asked why Pontius Pilate alone was gibbeted in the creeds, he said he supposed it was because the Roman governor was the one person in the world who could have prevented the Crucifixion; "therefore", "Dr Ryle will be the one man responsible" for the prosecution of Bell Cox'.

The Bishop of Liverpool defended himself on a number of different grounds in a strongly worded letter to the Guardian: '"The Peace of the Church has been broken by the determination of the Bishop of Liverpool not to use the discretion with which he is invested by law". This is a heavy charge, and I am not disposed to submit to it in silence'.¹³² Ryle outlined his patience with Bell Cox over four years, his friendly admonition and his kind personal dealings with the accused, to all of which Bell Cox testified.¹³³ Ryle declared that in rejecting this admonition, the responsibility for bringing a renewal of ecclesiastical litigation rested with Bell Cox, especially as the things complained of 'are certainly not essential to the administration of the Lord's Supper'.¹³⁴ Further, the Queen's courts had passed judgments on these issues and Ryle was simply upholding the Royal Supremacy, which he had taken an oath to defend. He pointed out that no fewer than eight members of the Royal Commission on the Ecclesiastical Courts had placed on record their objection to the episcopal veto, and that Lord Coleridge's objections had never really been answered. Ryle finally denied that in fact there was a policy of peace existing in the church: 'It is in vain to cry 'Peace, peace', when there is no peace. We are practically in a state of anarchy about ecclesiastical discipline'.¹³⁵ The Archbishop of York, when questioned on the supposed peace policy of Tait, had certainly denied that such a policy existed, whatever personal desire his brother Primate had to solve the problem of Mackonochie.¹³⁶

(iv) 1885-1887 From Court to Prison: Criticism of Ryle's Failure to Suspend Rev. A.H.Paine

The clearest indication of Ryle's lack of personal involvement in the issue above, lies in the second public statement that Bell Cox's suspension in January 1886 drew from him. Dr. Hakes, through his solicitors, reminded Ryle, that in the case of a suspension from office, the responsibility for maintaining the services of the church devolved upon the Bishop. Dr. Hakes therefore requested that Ryle appoint a clergyman who would not only 'lawfully do his own duty' but also take steps to apprehend Bell Cox through his churchwardens or the police, if he attempted to interfere with the services. Such brawling would be liable to a fine or imprisonment. Dr. Hakes informed the Bishop that he intended to pursue the prosecution with a view to a permanent suspension, or degradation of Bell Cox, if he continued to defy the sentence of the court. The Bishop's solicitors replied that he had appointed the curate to take charge during the Incumbent's suspension and repeated that 'the Bishop is no party to the suit' and any further proceedings rested with the plaintiff.

In a series of further letters, James Girdlestone (Dr. Hakes' solicitor), complained that the curate, Rev. A.H.Paine, had been at St. Margaret's for ten years and performed exactly the same ritual as Bell Cox. Being only a curate he held a licence to preach and minister directly from the Bishop, who could revoke it at any time. By choosing not to revoke Paine's licence and appoint a man who would perform the services lawfully, Ryle was abetting the lawbreakers and defying the court. This drew the clearest statement from Ryle as to what he expected the prosecution to achieve and where he thought the limits should be drawn:

Dear Sir,

The Bishop instructs us to inform you, in reply to your letters of 5 and 6 January, that in the present stage of the proceedings against Mr. Cox he considers it would be ungenerous and unfair to entertain proceedings for the revocation of Mr. Paine's licence if he (Mr. Paine) should resolve to be guided by his incumbent's wishes during the suspension of the latter, and that he must decline to force a

stranger upon an unwilling congregation with the aid of the secular magistrates.

His lordship thinks your client may well be content for the present with having obtained a judgment condemning the excess of ritual at St. Margaret's, an excess condemned not only by Lord Penzance, but by the highest court of ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

This judgment, it may be hoped, will of itself inform public opinion upon the subjects for which sentence has been decreed against Mr. Cox, and oblige Mr. Cox to use any means which he may command to obtain a reconsideration of that sentence, in case he is not satisfied that justice has been done, or to submit to the law. If he should not do so, he will, the Bishop cannot but think, be condemned by all loyal churchmen as a breaker of the law, and with this opinion his lordship must decline to be a party to any harsh and impolitic proceedings such as you seem to suggest in a case where it appears to him that some patience and consideration for conscientious feelings should be exercised.

This letter was, in effect, an appeal to Dr. Hakes to stop his prosecution and allow public opinion to condemn Bell Cox, since the latter had made it quite clear that he would not argue his case in any ecclesiastical court that currently existed. Dr. Hakes then bypassed his solicitor and wrote directly to Ryle, dismayed and dumbfounded at the Bishop's attitude. He reaffirmed his belief that the ritual of St. Margaret's implied doctrines 'fatal to the truth'; therefore, 'as an attached member of the Church my conscience has compelled me to interfere by legal proceedings to put down these ceremonies'. He impressed upon the Bishop that one of his presuppositions had been that if at any point Ryle became responsible for the services at St. Margaret's they would be performed legally. In the absence of any action by Ryle, the only way he (Dr. Hakes) could enforce obedience on Bell Cox was through imprisonment, which was not a course of action he had ever intended to pursue. Dr. Hakes appealed to Ryle to act. Ryle replied through his solicitors and declined any further personal communication during the continuance of the suit.¹³⁷

Dr. Hakes felt himself deserted by the Bishop and when he finally stopped the prosecution, the one point he stressed was what he regarded

as Ryle's treachery in not revoking Paine's licence.¹³⁸ Ryle was true to his word and, apart from an appeal to the clergy of the diocese not to be hasty in following the Archbishop of Canterbury's decisions on ritual in the trial of the Bishop of Lincoln, made no further pronouncement on the controversy.¹³⁹

(v) 1885-1887 Bell Cox's Attempts to Avoid Imprisonment

Dr. Hakes wanted to enforce obedience to the suspension issued to Bell Cox by Lord Penzance. There was a technical hitch in that the writ was delivered a day earlier than it was supposed to be delivered i.e. 2 January, not the third.¹⁴⁰ It was therefore necessary to issue a further warning and a second six month suspension. The second writ was affixed to the church door on 13 June 1886. The churchwardens also affixed a document to the church door protesting against the writ of suspension as having no ecclesiastical significance because the court which passed it was 'a tribunal wholly secular'.¹⁴¹ On 30 July Lord Penzance declared Bell Cox guilty of contempt and contumacy and ordered a 'significavit' be drawn up i.e. Bell Cox would be committed to gaol.

Up to this point Bell Cox had refused to have anything to do with the court. Throughout the controversy he held to the view that Lord Penzance had no authority to make judgments on spiritual matters: 'I cannot recognise the spiritual authority of what his lordship calls the Queen's courts of law in ecclesiastical matters'.¹⁴² However, with the prospect of imprisonment looming, Bell Cox appealed to the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court of Justice that the court of Lord Penzance was irregular. Since the law term ended that week he in effect obtained a ruling that proceedings be suspended until a decision was reached on this appeal. This was granted on 5 August.¹⁴³ The appeal was not decided until 11 March 1887 when the decision went against Bell Cox, who promptly took his case to the Supreme Court of Appeal. Bell Cox's main argument was that Lord Penzance never heard the case since he had remained in London, and the judgment was therefore issued by a surrogate but made in London which was outside the Province of York. The Court of Appeal decided against Bell Cox on

the grounds that the judgment was not effective until read in court and therefore the decision was made in the Province of York.¹⁴⁴

The practical result of this decision was that two years after the case was initiated, Bell Cox was arrested and imprisoned in Walton Gaol, not on the grounds of ritual but rather for contempt of court. There was no precise time limit to his imprisonment. The writ for his arrest concluded: 'we command you that you attach the said James Bell Cox by his body until he shall have made satisfaction for the said contempt'.¹⁴⁵ At this point the rights and wrongs of the ritual were submerged in a discussion on the propriety or otherwise of imprisonment as a suitable means of punishment for men in holy orders charged with ecclesiastical offences. It happened that the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury was sitting during Bell Cox's imprisonment and the House of Laymen and both the Lower and Upper Houses of Clergy unanimously passed resolutions declaring imprisonment an inappropriate punishment in these cases.¹⁴⁶ W.H.Smith, First Lord of the Treasury and leader of the House of Commons, was questioned on the subject by the High Church M.P. Samuel Hoare¹⁴⁷, while the strong Evangelical, Lord Grimthorpe was expected to introduce a four line bill to replace imprisonment with deprivation.¹⁴⁸

(vi) 1887-1890: Court debates on the legality of Bell Cox's Release

All this discussion was rendered obsolete by Bell Cox's release after only sixteen days. It was so unexpected that it took everyone by surprise. Telegrams announcing the news arrived at the gaol on Friday evening, 20 May. When no official news came first post on 21 May, the governor suggested to the waiting churchwardens that perhaps the letter had been sent to Kirkdale Gaol by mistake, so they departed. In the meantime a letter officially announcing Bell Cox's release arrived at Walton Gaol, so he simply left by himself and arrived home unannounced and unexpected.¹⁴⁹ The ground of his release was purely technical and was first suggested to his council in London by a hitherto unknown junior lawyer in Liverpool.¹⁵⁰ Put simply, the case was that by the time of his arrest, Bell Cox's six month suspension had run out and

therefore the writ against him had lapsed, and he could not be arrested for contempt of a court order which no longer existed. As such he was illegally imprisoned and ought to be released at once on grounds of habeas corpus.¹⁵¹

The Times confidently proclaimed that that was the end of the matter.¹⁵² Nothing was further from the truth. Dr. Hakes challenged the decision, and in November the Court of Appeal re-heard the case and concluded that Bell Cox ought not to have been released because, notwithstanding the actual length of suspension, his arrest could only be averted by some 'satisfaction' of obedience to the court. At this point Dr. Hakes wrote to Bell Cox to say that he would stop further proceedings if the vicar would cease the illegal practices complained of.¹⁵³ Bell Cox's answer was to appeal to the House of Lords.¹⁵⁴ From December 1887 through to August 1890 the controversy in its original form, that of illegal ritual which the promoter regarded as implying doctrine foreign to the Church of England in its Reformed Tradition, was lost sight of. The issue became one of a question of constitutional law: was there a right of appeal to a release from imprisonment granted by writ of habeas corpus? When a decision was finally reached on 5 August 1890 by a majority of 5-2, the Lord Chancellor opened his remarks by stating that 'no more important or serious question has ever come before your Lordship's House'.¹⁵⁵ It had been discussed by the House of Lords in July 1889, but no decision had been reached before the summer recess and then one of the Law Lords reviewing the case died and the arguments therefore had to be reheard before a reconstituted bench.¹⁵⁶ The case was actually reheard in May 1890.¹⁵⁷ The majority decision was that there was no appeal from habeas corpus.

(vii) 1891: Attempts at Personal Solutions out of Court

Dr. Hakes had toyed with the idea of having Bell Cox rearrested irrespective of the appeal by the latter to the House of Lords. This had caused some debate as to whether the Bishop's consent was needed in order to reopen the case in Lord Penzance's court. A reporter from the Post called at Abercomby Square but only received a formal statement

from Ryle that his permission had not been asked, nor had the case come before him in any way. Until such an eventuality he had nothing whatever to say on the matter.¹⁵⁸ But once the decision of the House of Lords was reached Dr. Hakes was determined to resume the prosecution in the first court on the grounds that none of the subsequent legal decisions actually affected the merits of his case. He simply repeated his first accusations based on the same evidence given in March 1885. However, Bell Cox entered this time into a correspondence with Dr. Hakes to see if they could find a way of settling their dispute rather than simply starting all over again. This exchange took place in March and April 1891. The starting point was the judgment of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the trial of the Bishop of Lincoln.

In seeking to secure judgment on the illegal practices of High Churchmen, the Church Association had taken steps to prosecute Edward King, the Bishop of Lincoln, in 1888. This case immediately overshadowed the Bell Cox controversy, especially as Archbishop Benson decided to try the case himself in the hope of avoiding the issue of the authority of the secular courts to try spiritual cases.¹⁵⁹ The Archbishop pronounced altar lights, the Eastward Position, the Agnus Dei, administration of the mixed chalice and the ablutions (with qualification as to the proper place of performing them), as legal.¹⁶⁰ On the basis of this Bell Cox suggested that he would conform the ritual of St. Margaret's to the ruling of the Archbishop. Dr. Hakes made the observation that not all of the ritual condemned by Lord Penzance was covered in the judgment of Archbishop Benson, in particular, elevating the elements, kneeling at the prayer of consecration, bowing to the crucifix and vestments. If Bell Cox also gave up these, the prosecution would be dropped. Bell Cox claimed that the first three did not happen at St. Margaret's anyway, but regarded vestments as legal. Dr. Hakes was willing to forego this if Bell Cox would abide by the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (to whom the Church Association had appealed against the Archbishop's judgment). This, of course, Bell Cox declined to do. But Dr. Hakes continued the correspondence with a proposal 'to have our case submitted to our own Bishop'. Bell Cox declined this offer

referring Dr. Hakes to Ryle's published opinion that the Archbishop's decisions were being reviewed in court and that anyway the authority of the judgment in the Northern Province was questionable. The Bishop was therefore not a suitable judge. However, Bell Cox was prepared to abide by a decision of the Archbishop of York. Dr. Hakes was not happy with this because he was not sure that the Archbishop of York recognised the authority of the Privy Council in ecclesiastical cases. When this further proposal failed, the correspondence ceased and the court battle recommenced.¹⁶¹

(viii) 1891-1892: Last Attempts at a Court Ruling

From 8 May 1891 to 2 August 1892, the case was adjourned fortnightly, because Lord Penzance ruled that no right decision could be made pending the appeal on the Lincoln Case to be decided in the House of Lords. The House of Lords upheld the decision of the Archbishop of Canterbury except over lighted candles.¹⁶² By this stage public interest in the controversy was slight.¹⁶³ It was over seven and a half years since the case had been presented to Lord Penzance. Lord Penzance regarded this lapse of time as significantly long enough to affect the case presented to him, and he therefore ruled that if Dr. Hakes wanted to prosecute Bell Cox he could not simply continue his original case, but would have to make a fresh complaint, for which of course he would need to obtain another sanction from the Bishop.¹⁶⁴ Dr. Hakes described this judgment as 'unreasonable, unjust, unpatriotic and probably illegal',¹⁶⁵ but being unsure of Ryle's support, he decided in September 1892 not to appeal against Lord Penzance's ruling, nor to proceed with the prosecution. The controversy, therefore, came to an end, with no change in the ritual of St. Margaret's, Prince's Road.

(h) An Assessment of Ryle's Position

Ryle's attitude throughout the controversy has been shown to have been clear and uncompromising, penetratingly accurate as to the state of affairs in the National Church, and yet totally impartial as to personal involvement in the issues. The one objection against him was

not really that it was wrong not to use his right of veto, but whether this particular case was the right case not to use it on. There were two reasons for this criticism. First, Dr. Hakes was not in any way connected to St. Margaret's Church. St. Margaret's did not have a parish and was supported entirely by the giving of the congregation. It was even argued that since the church was built on a plot of royal land it was outside Ryle's jurisdiction. However much Dr. Hakes was respected for his sincere convictions, the most frequent criticism of him was that he did not have to impose those convictions on St. Margaret's: 'the public do not accept honest conviction as an apology for gratuitous meddling in things that do not concern the meddler'.¹⁶⁶ Thus the specific accusations against Bell Cox were made by Mr. Charles Aycliffe of 2 Bethal Villas, Canbury Park, Kingston-on-Thames and Robert Jones of 44 The Green, Stratford, Essex.¹⁶⁷ Dr. Hakes' solicitor, James Girdlestone, had caused a storm of protest in the Liverpool Press when, in the arguments over legal costs, he included the train fare and accommodation of these two 'spies',¹⁶⁸ who had been sent twice.¹⁶⁹ Further evidence of the weakness of Dr. Hakes' involvement with St. Margaret's lay in the fact that as prosecutions for ritual under the Public Worship Regulation Act required three aggrieved parishioners, the prosecution was presented under the Church Discipline Act of 1840.¹⁷⁰ The only answer Ryle had for this, apart from his belief in the right of any individual to bring a complaint to a legally constituted court of the realm, was to agree with Dr. Hakes that he was a member of the Church of England and that was a sufficient association to be concerned with the preservation of its doctrine from whatever place it was attacked.

The second ground for the criticism that this individual case was an unhelpful one in which not to exercise the veto lay in the character and success of Bell Cox's ministry. Bell Cox himself laid stress on the daily performance of the Eucharist, and his one fear of being imprisoned for any length of time was that that daily service would be interrupted.¹⁷¹ One correspondent pointed out that to achieve 9,235 communions in a year, as Bell Cox reported in July 1884, required only eighteen people apart from the staff of the church.¹⁷² Nevertheless,

the variety of organisations attached to St. Margaret's indicated Bell Cox's hard work: the St. Margaret's Club of over 200 members in buildings containing a lecture hall, gymnasium, library and billiard room, provided activities such as smoking concerts on Saturday evenings during the winter months, chess and draught clubs and a swimming club and cricket club.¹⁷³ While this obviously attracted more well-to-do members of the church, Bell Cox was not remiss in providing for the poor, inaugurating 'Pound Parties' whereby people gave one pound weight of goods rather than money. The novelty of this idea resulted in generous giving to the tune of 4,000 lbs., excluding items too heavy to weigh (e.g. coal, flour, bacon, potatoes).¹⁷⁴ At the same time he was running an orphanage and encouraging church members to have the orphans 'to an afternoon's hospitality and amusement'.¹⁷⁵ There were 60-70 orphans in July 1885.¹⁷⁶ St. Margaret's Schools, built by voluntary subscription, saved the Liverpool ratepayers £7,000 per annum, as the cost per head of pupil was only £9 compared to £13 for the School Board Schools.¹⁷⁷ It is not surprising that Bell Cox was described as 'one of the most hardworking clergymen in the city. His parochial machinery is perhaps the most perfect of its kind in the diocese'.¹⁷⁸ At the start of the prosecution, one interviewer on the Post observed, 'I was informed by everyone without exception, that there was no more hardworking or self-denying clergyman in the Church of England'.¹⁷⁹ The same description plagued the whole of Dr. Hakes' prosecution and, by association, Ryle's non-use of the veto: 'It is not the merits of the question of Ritualism, but the merits of the incumbent of St. Margaret's, which fill the minds of his fellow citizens'.¹⁸⁰ From as far away as Plymouth, many newspapers and individual observers concluded that 'the Bishop of Liverpool should distinguish between cases'.¹⁸¹

Ryle's defence was simply that there had never been any question of the merits of Bell Cox in his role as pastor. But that did not alter the question-mark over his doctrine. It has been shown that none of the three principal figures regarded the controversy in anything other than a theological light. That Ryle was not in any way partial or vindictive can be seen in his request to Dr. Hakes to be content

with Lord Penzance's first judgment; in his refusal to revoke Paine's licence; in his repeated attempts at the start of the controversy to get Bell Cox to change his ritual without any loss of honour; and perhaps above all in immediately granting Bell Cox additional curates once the prosecution ended with the decision of the Archbishop of Canterbury in favour of the Ritualists upheld by the House of Lords.¹⁸² All of this led Dr. Hakes and the Protestant Standard Evangelicals to accuse Ryle of deserting his Reformed Faith, a suspicion compounded by Ryle's silence in the Press apart from the two main instances outlined above. Nothing could be further from the truth. The only place where Dr. Hakes and Ryle separated was over the method of defending their understanding of salvation and the Church. Dr. Hakes elected to pursue his defence in the courts. Ryle was not prepared to stand in his way through the use of the episcopal veto, but he did try to discourage this method, mainly because the Ecclesiastical Courts were in a state of disarray. This did not mean he was sympathetic to anything that Bell Cox believed. But the place to fight was neither the Courts nor the Press, but rather in the pulpit and at Church Councils. What Ryle did do was preach against the doctrines implied in the ritual at St. Margaret's. And he did so unceasingly throughout the controversy. But his attempts to curtail Ritualism through the collective voice of the Church were a complete failure.

(2) CURBING RITUALISM: WHAT NEXT?

(a) The Problem Identified

Ryle was at his most positive throughout the 1880s. During this decade he stressed the positive side of his strategy for evangelism. In the 1890s he put more emphasis on obstructions to evangelism. One of these was the problem of indistinct doctrine. The other main obstruction was an inadequate definition of the boundaries of the Anglican Church and the lack of an effective Church Discipline Measure to deal with those outside the boundary, i.e. Ritualists. In short, the Church needed a mechanism for throwing people out. Ryle had outlined his boundaries of Anglicanism at the 1878 Sheffield Congress. His paper was entitled The Just Limits of the Comprehensiveness of the

National Church. His boundaries were determined by the Articles, the Creeds and the Book of Common Prayer.¹⁸³ A clergyman did not fall within these limits if he denied the Divinity of Christ or if he taught the distinctive doctrines of the Church of Rome.¹⁸⁴ What Ryle stressed was that these limits must be 'maintained' as 'order is heaven's first law'.¹⁸⁵ If they were not then the Church became ineffective in its evangelism. Ryle quoted with favour the disdain of Lord Macaulay returning to England from India: 'I find Christians wrangling about ceremonies and forms, while millions of heathen in India are bowing down to sacred monkeys and crocodiles and cows'.¹⁸⁶

After the Bell Cox controversy Ryle's problem was not in saying who should be thrown out, but rather how to get them out.¹⁸⁷ The problem was that Romanist clergy would not pay any attention to the Law Courts.¹⁸⁸ They also ignored the admonitions of their bishop.¹⁸⁹ Ryle himself disbelieved in the option of clerical courts with no lay members.¹⁹⁰ If nothing was done to change 'the management of the ship' he predicted the breakup of the Church of England.¹⁹¹ He himself saw the only course as obedience to the Courts:

I cannot forget, that as a chief officer of the Church, I am specially bound to set an example of obedience to the powers that be, and to acknowledge the Queen's authority in things ecclesiastical as well as temporal.¹⁹²

Anyone who stood outside the limits was in 'the wrong place in a Protestant communion'.¹⁹³ It was not easy, however, to persuade the Romanising clergy in the Anglican Church to accept they were in the wrong place. In his Third Charge of 1887 Ryle spent twenty pages outlining 'good' features of the Church of England in the late nineteenth century.¹⁹⁴ But this good progress was undermined by a 'state of things which I call dangerous in the highest degree'.¹⁹⁵ This was the 'utter paralysis of discipline'.¹⁹⁶ Ryle could only hope that Parliament would step in and do something.¹⁹⁷ Six years later nothing had happened except that the divisions had become more pronounced.¹⁹⁸ The Lincoln Judgment was no real help.¹⁹⁹ After 15 years in the diocese

Ryle saw not 'the slightest symptom of their abatement'.²⁰⁰ At the Diocesan Conference of 1896 Ryle re-outlined his doctrinal differences with the Ritualists and re-stated his limits of the comprehensive nature of the Church.²⁰¹ He predicted that if church discipline was not enforced,

our candlestick will be removed, and the Church will die forwant of Churchmen. In short, there is no alternative. The question is one of life or death. The English Church must either have doctrinal 'limits', or cease to exist.²⁰²

Ryle's last public address to his clergy, at the Diocesan Conference of 1898, contained nothing about positive evangelism and concentrated on the problem of disunity caused by extreme Ritualists.²⁰³ He did not expect the Church of England to survive for long the chaotic state of unlimited inclusion.²⁰⁴ Occasionally glimpses of despair creep through his addresses. In 1893 he remarked that the failure to establish effective discipline had created an army of discordant forces which was a problem he could not solve.²⁰⁵

I cannot square the circle, or produce perpetual motion, and I cannot undertake to untie the huge knot I have tried to describe and set before you.²⁰⁶

(b) The Public Voice of the Church

It was precisely at this point that Ryle gave up any attempts to impose discipline by legislation.²⁰⁷ Without the Bishop's support Hakes declined to pursue his case against Bell Cox. George Wise began to be active in the last few years of Ryle's life but he too received no support from the Bishop. When Wise staged a demonstration at St. Catherine's, Abercromby Square, Ryle approved of special arrangements by the churchwardens to let in people six at a time by a side gate. The church was packed, but only a quarter of the attenders were 'regulars' and only six received communion. Wise called on the Bishop at his

nearby palace, but Ryle declined to see him.²⁰⁸ Wise then wrote to the Bishop urging him to revoke the licences of 'traitorous priests', but Ryle declined to comply with that course of action either.²⁰⁹ The Bishop, further, refused to prevent the distributing of Palm crosses or to stop the service known as 'the Way of the Cross' on Good Friday.²¹⁰ Although Wise went ahead to organise protests at St. John's, Tuebrook; St. James-the-less; St. Thomas', Warwick Street; St. Anne's, Cazneau Street and St. Catherine's, Abercromby Square, the Ritualist controversies of 1898-1900 remained primarily a London affair.²¹¹ Ryle was not against Wise's complaints, but he had come to see that protests resulting in litigation were ineffective in checking the spread of Ritualism.

From 1893 Ryle in fact offered five possible responses to the problem of an ill-defined church. First, he made a direct appeal to Evangelicals to put up with the spread of Ritualism in other parishes provided they were allowed to work on the 'old lines' in their own. Provided Evangelicals were not 'forced' to adopt the 'sadly increasing' ritual practices, they ought to stay within the Church of England.²¹² Second, Ryle made a direct appeal to the Ritualists to 'be satisfied with the advantages you have obtained in late years'.²¹³ This was a vast change in Ryle's outlook. Instead of fighting against Ritualism and seeking to promote Evangelicalism within the Church of England, he was urging the old policy of get on with the work in one's own parish and let the rest alone. Third, he urged on both groups 'charity, good temper, consideration and kindness of language in communication' with each other.²¹⁴ If Evangelicals and Ritualists had to differ then at least they should 'agree to differ pleasantly'.²¹⁵ This was a renewed stress on an old appeal. He had already admitted that neither Evangelicals nor Ritualists had a monopoly of theological light and knowledge.²¹⁶ It ought to be a principle that they should make the best use of one another and work together as much as possible.²¹⁷

This did not mean that Ryle had given up fighting against false doctrine. Rather he sought to re-establish the limits in other ways. The above three responses were designed to enable the Church to get on

with the work of evangelism as much as possible in the circumstances of disunity. But Ryle still pressed for a 'purer' Church.²¹⁸ The first way to do this was to encourage the spread of private reading of the Bible which gave a grounding in the distinctive doctrines of the gospel.²¹⁹ It prevented the acceptance of false teaching. It stopped drifts to Rome.²²⁰ Ritualism was strong amongst the upper class because it was the young men of the English Aristocracy who 'seldom read their Bibles'.²²¹

The second way to check the ill discipline of the Church was through the public pronouncements of a suitably authoritative body of clergy. Before 1880 Ryle saw the Church Congresses as performing this role. After 1880 he turned to the Convocation of the Province of York. However, this was not an effective forum for three reasons. First, the relationship between the Upper and Lower Houses was not good. When Ryle entered Convocation the Houses debated together but voted separately. This had been the case since 1864.²²² But the Archbishop of York was incensed at a supposed meeting of the Lower House by itself before he had formerly called it. He therefore ruled that from 1885 the Houses would meet separately.²²³ Relations were further strained in 1886 when the Lower House did not deal with the Archbishop's business first. The Upper House voted that the Lower House had contravened standing orders.²²⁴ In 1887 the situation reached a deadlock when the Lower House failed to reply to a request from the Archbishop of York to a joint debate on the possibility of the York and Canterbury Convocations uniting.²²⁵ In his presidential address the following year the Archbishop condemned the Lower House. The prolocutor, the Dean of York, subsequently resigned.²²⁶ In 1889 the bad relations continued when the Lower House wanted to agree to various resolutions relating to Lay Readers and also set up a committee to investigate the issue. The Archbishop argued that they were acting against all procedures. They should either reject the resolutions and appoint a committee or accept them without a committee.²²⁷ All of this gave the image of a troublesome group of clerics unable even to organise themselves to debate issues together.

The second problem for Ryle was that he did not throw himself wholeheartedly into synodical activity. Much of the business of Convocation was done through committee work. Before 1885, when the committees were joint, he was only appointed to two committees. He sat on a committee looking at the diaconate, but he failed to attend the consultation meeting with representatives from the Canterbury Convocation.²²⁸ He was also appointed to the joint committee on Spiritual Needs of the Masses.²²⁹ This committee never met. A separate committee of the Lower House was appointed in 1885 and 1886, but there was no meeting until November 1889. Then the convenor died. In practice no information was collected until six years after the original committee had been established.²³⁰ After 1885 committees tended to be separate and mainly Lower House ones. In 1886 there were nine Lower House Committees and only one in the Upper House.²³¹ In 1888 the figures were ten and none.²³² Even when the Upper House appointed committees Ryle was not on them unless they were committees of the whole House. He was the only Bishop not on a committee to investigate the incomes of the clergy.²³³ In 1893, when six joint committees were set up, Ryle was not on any of them.²³⁴ The only committee he was appointed to was one on the Burial Service.²³⁵ Nor was Ryle a particularly good attender. He was absent on the last day in 1885, for part of the debates in 1888, 1892 (February), 1893 (February and March), 1896 (April) and 1897 (June).²³⁶ He missed the Convocation completely in 1894 (March), 1895 and 1899 (May).²³⁷

The major problem with using the York Convocation as an expression of the voice of the Church was that it required Ryle to persuade the other members of the Houses to see issues from his point of view. But the York Journals of Convocation show clearly that, whatever Ryle's gifts as a preacher and platform speaker, he was not a skilled debater. He often did not speak at all in important debates on issues where elsewhere he had expressed decided opinions. He said nothing on the ministry of women, housing for the poor or the evangelisation of the people in 1884.²³⁸ He surprisingly said nothing on the paternal authority of the Bishop over his clergy in 1885.²³⁹ He was absent for the discussion of reform of the Ecclesiastical Courts in 1888. Nor did

he press for action on the report on Spiritual Needs of the Masses of the People.²⁴⁰ He had nothing to say on secondary education in 1896.²⁴¹ His relationship with the Lower House was poor. He spoke against its resolution in support of a national sustentation fund and persuaded his fellow Bishops not to commend it to the laity.²⁴² He spoke against the setting up of a committee to investigate Insanitary Dwellings. The Lower House were so unhappy with this rejection that they persuaded the Archbishop to reconsider the decision.²⁴³ Above all, he was the only Bishop to vote against the Lower House's proposal to create a canon to help keep ecclesiastical disputes out of the courts. His vote killed the motion.²⁴⁴

Most significantly Ryle failed to pass his own motions even in the House of Bishops. He did not introduce any motions at all in the 1880s. He spoke in support of a protest against the new Burials Bill and in support of a motion for a clearer Ornaments Rubric. The Bishops were unanimous in support of these motions.²⁴⁵ He seconded a motion in favour of Lay Readers which failed, but it failed on the very issue Ryle himself was hesitant about, and an amended version was accepted.²⁴⁶ In the 1890s, he spoke in favour of Boards of Conciliation and of a Commission of Inquiry into Intemperance. There was only one objection to the former and none to the latter.²⁴⁷ In none of these cases did Ryle have to persuade other Bishops to agree with him, and in none of them was he the main speaker. When he was in opposition to the majority view he had no persuasive impact. He failed to prevent the Upper House forming a committee to investigate the incomes of the clergy, and did not prevent another committee to promote the Exchange of Benefices.²⁴⁸

Ryle personally introduced three motions. In 1896 he wanted to allow a minister to alter the words of the Burial Service when a cremation took place. He was challenged by the Bishop of Manchester who pressed for a committee. The other Bishops supported Bishop Moorhouse.²⁴⁹ The proposals of this committee, again introduced by Ryle, were rejected.²⁵⁰ In 1898 he introduced a proposal calling on Bishops to be more active against the increasing lawlessness in the church. He drew attention especially to the increasing use of incense,

Mariolatry, prayers for the dead, fasting communion, auricular confession and non-communicant attendance.²⁵¹ He had publicly denounced the Lambeth Conference for being silent on this last issue, and was keen that the voice of the Church should be heard on this matter.²⁵²

Ryle was supported by the Bishops of Manchester (Moorhouse), Durham (Wescott) and Sodor and Man (Bardsley). The last gave detailed figures of the spread of Ritualism:

	<u>1882</u>	<u>1898</u> ²⁵³
Vestments	336	2,026 (no.of churches)
Incense	9	381
Lights	581	4,334
Mixed Chalice	0	4,030
Hidden Manual Acts	1,662	7,044

But Ryle's hopes for a positive expression were dashed. The Bishop of Wakefield (Eden), the most junior member of the House, making his first speech, proposed an amendment containing the phrase 'due regard being had ... to modern needs and the reasonable liberty which has always obtained in the Church of England'.²⁵⁴ The Archbishop of York (MacLagen) then asked both Ryle and Eden to withdraw their motions and be content with the expression of the discussion. The Bishop of Manchester, however, insisted on a vote and the amendment was carried 5-2. The Archbishop of York had described some of Ryle's statements as extreme - 'the dream of a moment of excitement'.²⁵⁵ This had probably swung opinion. There was then pressure for a re-vote in order to secure a unanimous expression of opinion, but Ryle refused to vote.²⁵⁶ Instead of securing a strong voice against Ritualism he had merely succeeded in isolating himself from everyone else. Ryle's inability to gauge the mood of the House and channel it in the direction he wanted was confirmed in his last attendance when he introduced a motion to set up a committee on the subject of private confession. The Bishop of Manchester rejected Ryle's proposal because it was not worded strongly

enough against confession! The amended version was carried unanimously.²⁵⁷

Other Bishops do not appear to have paid much attention to Ryle. W.B.Carpenter described Ryle as saying 'if the Bible told me that Jonah swallowed the whale, I would have believed it', prompting his own reflection 'how readily a man might reach a position of authority and responsibility without having greatly exercised his brain'.²⁵⁸ Ryle appears to have been equally isolated on the issue of what to do about Ritualist priests amongst the Bishops in London. Peter Marsh makes much of Archbishop Tait's success in securing the unanimous support of the Bishops for a Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Courts, but in fact Ryle opposed this proposal.²⁵⁹ It was only the intervention of his friend Bishop Magee which persuaded him to acquiesce temporarily.²⁶⁰

Ryle's isolation from his fellow Bishops and his own weak debating skills inevitably meant that his attempts to obtain a united Church voice against Ritualism failed. The public voice of the Church, in the form of collective Bishops' pronouncements, remained non-committal and divisive. Ryle failed to check the growth of Ritualism either through plain authoritative statements or through an effective legal procedure. The resulting continuation of public bickering amongst the clergy throughout his episcopate was the single most effective obstruction to successful evangelism. But Ryle himself could not simply stand aside and embrace a Noah's ark comprehensiveness. The age-old question, 'What must I do to be saved?', divided Ritualists and Evangelicals. To Ryle the former were 'dumb dogs', 'drones' and 'formalists' whose concept of ministry would never evangelise the unchurched of Liverpool. What he needed, wanted and would divide the Church of England for, were

men whose hearts were on fire, whose souls were alive, who really knew what the truth in Jesus was, and who desired to tell it to other people.²⁶¹

Without such men evangelism in Liverpool was simply a dream.

CONCLUSION

[Dr. Ryle] is simply about the most disastrous episcopal failure ever inflicted upon a long-suffering diocese ... he is nothing better than a political fossil, who has been very unwisely unearthed from his rural obscurity for no better purpose apparently than to make the episcopacy ridiculous.¹

Bishop W.B.Carpenter asserted that there was nothing to chronicle in the routine life of a bishop.² In contrast, Archbishop Tait described the bishops of his time as being 'in a chronic state of perspiration'.³ Recent scholarship has moved away from the statistical-depressing image of the Church of England with its emphasis on the percentage of the population not attending church, towards an affirmation of the Church's tremendous activity in the late nineteenth century, a move assisted by the recognition that there has not been a church-going age in post-Reformation England.⁴ Stephen Yeo has emphasised the 'vast' numbers of organisations attached to the Church.⁵ Jeffrey Cox has drawn attention to a society which 'swarms with religious activity'.⁶ He also emphasises the 'vast' size of the Church of England.⁷ Nigel Yates has highlighted the success of the Church in reaching the town populations.⁸ The four principal Evangelical Churches in Portsmouth attracted congregations ranging between 1,400 and 2,700.⁹ These are far larger than any church in England today. George Machin concludes that churches remained 'prosperous, popular and very influential until at least the 1920s'.¹⁰

This study has also shown that Tait's implication of activity and life is a more accurate description of church affairs in Liverpool and the work of Bishop Ryle than Carpenter's analysis. In 1898 there were no fewer than twenty-seven Anglican churches whose two principal Sunday services drew a combined congregation of up to, or over, 1,000 people.¹¹ Much of Ryle's activity has been shown to have centred around the problem of money. A great deal of his time and energy went

into raising finances, whether for purposes of charity, church plant or evangelism. Some historians have criticised this delusion that there was a bottomless purse if only the right appeal was made and urged that church leaders should have seen that the Establishment 'was a constant inducement to invest in white elephants'.¹² The general conclusion has been made that church building in the later nineteenth century was almost entirely due to individuals.¹³ This was certainly the case in Liverpool. It has been shown that Ryle's perpetual appeals for money failed to evoke a response even in needy cases such as hospitals and orphaned children. Again Ryle was bound by his time in failing to see the changing needs of society and maintaining that the answer to poverty was almsgiving. This was of little real help to the myriads who made up 'squalid Liverpool'. There was a vast array of groups of people providing alms in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Most of this work was unnoticed, yet paradoxically, perhaps because of the scale of the problem of poverty, what was noticed was the decline of generous giving.¹⁴

Although Ryle was very much a man of his time in his emphasis on building and almsgiving, in three important ways his episcopate reveals a mature Evangelicalism alive to the changing world and not fossilised in the conceptions of his predecessors. First, Evangelicalism has been criticised for preaching 'a Gospel without the Church'.¹⁵ This is not a fair criticism of Ryle. While maintaining a firm belief in the reality of the invisible church and guarding against an undue emphasis on visible rites of passage, he nevertheless sought all his life to proclaim the rightness of the visible church. This thesis has shown that he was not a Nonconformist masquerading in Anglican guise. He was firmly persuaded of the value of the Church of England and sought to see its future secure against the threat of disestablishment. Far from being a 'rugged conservative', he carefully outlined a comprehensive programme of reform from structures of government to detailed liturgical change, all designed to modernise, and consequently preserve and establish, the Church. In some areas, such as his emphasis on church education and the rights of incumbents, he did not have the same

visionary insight. But it cannot be doubted that his Evangelicalism encompassed a heart-felt concern for the visible Church.

Second, the criticism has been made that Evangelicals remained 'individualists at heart'.¹⁶ Ryle, however, after acknowledging a wrong isolationism in his early years, sought constantly to work with other churchmen within the bounds of the Church of England formularies. It is wide of the mark to describe him as prejudiced and partisan. He became actively involved in the Church Congresses in the 1870s and his episcopate was marked by a concern to see the Church of England acting corporately to promote the Christian Faith, rather than in party cliques. He deliberately rejected becoming involved in anti-Catholic debates.¹⁷ He discouraged confrontational disputes between Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals. Nevertheless he believed there should be some distinct 'shape' to the Church of England, and sought to get the Church to make a clear public pronouncement to clarify the boundaries. He was not, unfortunately, personally equipped to effect such a united voice in the Convocation of York. Above all, it is unfair to blame him for the imprisonment of Bell Cox. He behaved both honourably and magnanimously throughout the controversy. If any martyrdom occurred, it was self-inflicted.¹⁸

Third, Evangelical theology has been summarised as 'a puritanical creed, life denying rather than life affirming and stressing the negative values of abstinence and self-control rather than the positive values of generosity and altruism'.¹⁹ This thesis has shown that Ryle's theology does not fit this narrow description. His Evangelicalism was much more than a coercive judgmentalism.²⁰ He stressed the need for warm, sympathetic relationships and sensitive evangelisation rather than brash Bible-bashing. He identified joy, thankfulness and generosity as basic Christian characteristics that ought to be more evident than they were in 'grumbling' Britain. Life was to be lived as a joyous response to the goodness of God. This Gospel Ryle delineated in his tracts, published and re-published throughout his life. Earlier tracts have been assessed as 'far from satisfactory, being little more than propaganda pieces, often written

by people of little talent' with 'no attempt to be engaging to the reader'.²¹ But Ryle's tracts provide a comprehensive Evangelical theology in an easy-to-read style, one of the main features of which is the affirmation of life.

The practical expression of this more positive Evangelicalism did not come easily to Ryle himself. He was only tentatively in favour of a greater freedom of life for women, his support being largely actuated by the example of his third wife. He struggled with the conflict of relaxation and 'holiness' in the right way to deal with Sunday Observance. His belief in the Sovereignty of God in the affairs of nations was more narrowly interpreted as His Sovereignty in the affairs of Christian England, allowing her extension of control over the affairs of other nations. But it is difficult to be hard on Ryle for his hesitations when these three areas (the position of women in society, Sunday legislation, military nationalism) remain divisive amongst Christians in contemporary society.

J.C.Ryle's theology and episcopate reveal an Evangelicalism neither puritanical, nor individualist, nor non-ecclesiastical. He was committed to modernising Anglicanism, working with other Churchmen and proclaiming a Gospel of joyful life. These were advanced positions. But his strategy of mission to the masses in the inner city, though incorporating these features, was not notably successful, even if such 'success' is hard to quantify.²² His strategy was impeded partly by the poor image of the Church in Liverpool (an image caused by misbehaving clergy and acrimonious congregations), and by the opposition of incumbents to the introduction of roving Evangelists. Primarily, however, it was Ryle's 'old paths' which were rejected, and it was on these that his missionary work depended: a belief in Hell, in the reality of the Second Coming and a conviction that the prime role of a minister was to preach the Cross of Christ. Ryle's Evangelicalism was a combination of both old and new. His predecessors confined themselves to the old, while his twentieth century counterparts have confined themselves to the new. Geoffrey Rowell has observed how eschatology is embarrassing to contemporary divines.²³

Mel Scult has observed 'Millennial expectations are, at the present time, almost completely absent from mainstream Christianity'.²⁴ Trevor Lloyd sees the growing Parish Eucharist movement as leading to the Eucharist becoming the single Sunday service of the Church of England.²⁵ Ryle would have opposed this predominant role of the Sacrament.

Ryle saw the three 'old path' beliefs in Hell, the Second Coming and the Cross as central to his Evangelicalism and lying at the heart of mission work. They were central because they were fundamental doctrines revealed in Scripture. The joyful life was a response of thanksgiving to the work which Jesus Christ did on the Cross to save Man from Hell, a work which would be completed on His return. The purpose of modernising the Church and working with other Churchmen was to proclaim more effectively this Good News. In assessing the successful churches in Lambeth at the turn of the century, Jeffrey Cox concludes that in the general belief of the masses 'Jesus Christ seems to have played a minor role'.²⁶ Bishop Ryle, in forging an Evangelicalism in the late nineteenth century composed of both 'old paths' and new directions, sought to make the Church of England portray Jesus Christ as the beginning and the end of the Christian faith, the same yesterday, today and forever.

This was the heart of his message in his self-conceived role as an Episcopal Evangelist and in the last decades of the nineteenth century, as much as the middle years, Ryle still appealed to the old three groups of the non-committed, the almost committed and the totally committed.²⁷ There was the same emphasis on sin as the grand defect that had to be remedied.²⁸ There was the same criticism of materialism²⁹; the same sense of small numbers of real believers in any one place³⁰; the same description of the invisible church as the real church³¹; the same call to leave the world³²; the same emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit³³; the same personal appeal to come to Christ³⁴; the same exhortation that every true Christian desires to draw others into the Kingdom³⁵; the same emphasis on the blood of Christ.³⁶ Ryle's first sermon in Liverpool, at St Philip's, Hardman

Street, was on 'the precious blood of Christ'.³⁷ He affirmed that this was the cornerstone of all his preaching and he dare not preach anything but the great truths of Christ.³⁸ In his first sermon at the pro-Cathedral he chose as his text, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel, it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith'.³⁹ He intended to take Latimer's advice and be a preaching Bishop.⁴⁰

Ryle was also concerned to be an example in visiting by getting to know all the clergy of the diocese:

There was nothing he could truly say he desired more than the personal acquaintances of the clergy of the diocese - to know every man's face, and to grasp every man by the hand, as much to say that 'I know you, I know your parish, and the work you have to do'.⁴¹

But Ryle's example both in preaching and pastoral work was not always appreciated. The Albion criticised Ryle's dictum that it was only necessary to preach the Gospel and a church would be full. The paper cited the case of Dr. Lowe at St. Jude's.⁴² It criticised too many sermons as being 'colourless conventionality'.⁴³ The Church Times regarded Ryle's strategy of evangelism as 'ignorant, foolish, unconditional'.⁴⁴ The Guardian searched 'in vain for any indications of originality of idea, of thorough grasp of the necessities of the time, or of thoughtful guidance in respect either of principle or policy through the dangers ... he [Ryle] is not the man to whom should have been entrusted the task of creating organisation, and of inspiring fresh energy in a new diocese'.⁴⁵ Other papers made similar criticisms.⁴⁶ When Ryle preached at the Chapel Royal, including an outline of his emphasis on the blood of Christ to save man from his sin, the only positive response was that he looked 'the very beau ideal of a cavalry officer'. Of the sermon all that was noted was that 'he far exceeded the ordinary length of discourses', and the content was dismissed as 'antiquated theology'.⁴⁷

Ryle stuck to his belief in right preaching and house-to-house visiting.⁴⁸ The Archbishop of York supported the latter aspect, saying that ten minutes with an uneducated man by his fireside was worth more than twenty sermons.⁴⁹ Others also agreed that Anglican sermons were usually poor and had caused the middle classes to leave the church. But the problem was how to find better preachers and pastors, both of which were gifts.⁵⁰ One suggestion was to have a separate order of preachers and pastors.⁵¹ But Ryle continued to press for both attributes to be in one man.⁵² However, he recognised that even his own examination of candidates for ordination revealed that not one in twenty had any idea of how to preach.⁵³ He thought better communication would come, not from learning oratorical skills, but from 'closer living with God'.⁵⁴ John Diggle summarised this view as 'no half persuaded preacher has a fully persuaded congregation'.⁵⁵ One vicar argued that preaching had nothing to do with his church being empty. The problem was the poverty of the parish. Of fifty visited families, thirty-five 'had no bonnets, shawls, boots or coats'. Their lack of clothes prevented them coming to church.⁵⁶ But Ryle pressed for 'a revival among ministers', and that what was needed was more preaching, i.e. 'telling in simple language the things of the Gospel'.⁵⁷ His belief in this and visiting never wavered.⁵⁸ Both the Courier and the Post supported his plea for more and better preaching. The latter named Gladstone, Guthrie, Magee, Fraser, Spurgeon and Moody as examples of men who preached long sermons and to whom people flocked.⁵⁹ A letter from T.R. Russell succinctly pinpointed Ryle's problem. He remarked that no-one doubted the genius of the men given as examples - but the diocese needed 200 such men.⁶⁰

Despite the decline of church building in the 1890s, the continued prevalence of ill-discipline in the church, the progress of 'liberal' theology, the failure to adopt the strategy of itinerant Evangelists and insufficient men to engage in house-to-house visiting, Ryle believed in 'spiritual miracles'. By this he meant that it was still possible for the worst cases of opposition to Christianity to become converted.⁶¹ The agent of this conversion was the preaching of the Cross. However much his strategy of evangelism hardly got off the

ground, Ryle personally engaged in evangelism wherever he went. His ministry could be summed up as telling the story of the Cross from the Bible in the pulpit. When he was appointed Bishop, Rouge Croix suggested a seal of staves and keys with a Latin inscription. Ryle rejected this and chose a ship and an open Bible with the text 'thy Word is truth'.⁶² He warned that if anyone gave him a staff as a gift he would lock it away; what he wanted was the Bible.⁶³ When a deputation of prominent Norwich clergy arrived in Liverpool they presented Ryle with a lectern and Bible for use in the pro-Cathedral, observing 'we are sure that you will attach a special value to our gift since it seems to embody the aim of your life - namely the reading and preaching of God's Holy Word'.⁶⁴ In a special service in the pro-Cathedral Ryle chose, and read, the account of the reading of the Law in Jerusalem on the return from exile and the meeting of Philip with the Ethiopian Eunuch, as an example of a man's life changed by the expounding of Scripture, to point to 'the good news of Jesus'.⁶⁵ When St. Andrew's, Renshaw Street, was resited in Aigburth in 1893, Ryle presented the church with an exact copy of his pulpit in Stradbroke, which had been inscribed with the text 'Woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel'.⁶⁶ When the largest ever crowd at Childwall departed after Ryle's burial beside his wife, the item accompanying him in his grave was the Bible he had used for the previous fifty years.⁶⁷

Ryle's funeral was the largest ever attended at Childwall. His coffin (actually three, each inside the other) was laid in the chancel the evening before although no service was held. Three special trains were laid on from the city centre. The hymns were 'Rock of Ages' and 'Come let us join our friends above' and Ryle was buried next to his third wife.⁶⁸ The burial of his bible with him may well symbolise his failure as an Episcopal Evangelist, except for the indeterminate impact of his own sermons on the listeners. His strategy for evangelism never really got off the ground against the difficulties of misbehaving clerics, Ritualist controversies and the daily grind of pressing demands for money. He inherited a diocese already lumbered with the dead weight of massive non-church attendance. The Church of England ministers also had a poor reputation in pastoral care compared to their

Roman Catholic counterparts.⁶⁹ Whatever Ryle may have contributed to modernising Evangelicalism has been lost sight of in the failure to reach the masses of inner-city Liverpool.

This lack of success may not have been Ryle's own fault, but nevertheless failure it was. His emphasis on expository Puritan preaching has been almost forgotten, pertinently symbolised in his memorial in Liverpool Cathedral where his effigy reclines in pietistic prayer rather than depicting him erect in preaching posture. His episcopate is shrouded in an image of drab ineffectiveness in a perpetual battle against overwhelming odds. His model of evangelism went off at half-cock, fittingly illustrated by events at the start and close of his ministry in Liverpool. The train bringing people from Liverpool to York for his consecration was too small for the crowds that turned up. Six extra carriages were coupled up, but the resultant delay meant that they arrived an hour late and missed more than half of the service.⁷⁰ So also at his funeral there were no prayers at the graveside - thanks to the persistent heavy rain.⁷¹ Although Canon Christopher of St. Aldate's, Oxford, used a thousand of Ryle's tracts in an evangelistic campaign in 1911 this was really a hangover from a past era.⁷² The most recent assessment of Evangelical spirituality concludes that contemporary Evangelicals have lost their Puritan-Biblical roots.⁷³ Ryle's bible remains buried.

APPENDIX: ORIGIN OF CHAPTERS IN RYLE'S MAIN BOOKS

1. Knots Untied 1874

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Sermon</u>	
1. Evangelical Religion	Evangelical Religion	1867
2. Only one way	Only one way	1850
3. Private judgment	Prove all things	1851
4. 39 Articles	Who is the true Churchman?	1872
5. Baptism	Baptism	1865
6. Regeneration	Regeneration	1850
7. Prayer Book statements about Regeneration	Regeneration	1850
8. The Lord's Supper	The sacrament of the Lord's Supper	1866
9. The Real Presence	His presence: where is it?	1873
10. The Church	What is the Church?	1852
11. The Priest	Have you a priest?	1871
12. Confession	Do you confess?	1859
13. Worship	How do you worship?	1867
14. The Sabbath	Keep it holy	1856
15. Pharisees and Sadducees	Beware	1857
16. Divers and strange doctrines	Be not carried about	1869
17. The fallibility of ministers	St Peter at Antioch	1856
18. Apostolic Fears		
19. Idolatry	Idolatry	1851

2. Old Paths 1877

<u>1. Chapter</u>	<u>Sermon</u>	
1. Inspiration	Bible Inspiration	1877
2. Our souls	Your Soul	1857
3. Few saved	Shall you be saved?	1852
4. Our hope	What is your hope?	1856
5. Alive or dead	Living or Dead?	1848
6. Our sins	Where are your sins?	1858
7. Forgiveness	Are you Forgiven?	1849
8. Justification	Have you Peace?	1854
9. The Cross of Christ	The Cross	1852
10. The Holy Ghost	Have you the Spirit?	1854
11. Having the Spirit	None of His	1857
12. Conversion		
13. The heart	Is thy Heart right?	1860
14. Christ's Invitation	Come	1859
15. Faith	Do you Believe?	1860
16. Repentance	Repentance:its nature and necessity	1858
17. Christ's power to save	Able to Save	1859
18. Election	Your Election	1868
19. Perseverance	Never Perish	1857

3. Holiness 1877 (Enlarged 1879)

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Sermon</u>	
1. Sin		
2. Sanctification	Are we sanctified?	1874
3. Holiness	Are you holy?	1848
4. The fight	Are you fighting?	1870
5. The cost		
6. Growth		
7. Assurance	Assurance	1849
8. Moses: an example		
9. Lot: a beacon	Remember Lot	1849
10. A woman to be remembered	Lot's wife	1855
11. Christ's greatest trophy	Christ and the two thieves	1849
12. The ruler of the waves	Peace. Be still	1853
13. The church which Christ builds	The True Church	1858
14. Visible churches warned	The Spirit's Message to the Churches	1853
15. Lovest thou me?		
16. Without Christ	Without Christ	1865
17. Thirst relieved		
18. Unsearchable riches		
19. Wants of the times		
20. Christ is all	All in all	1853
21. Extracts from old writers		

4. Practical Religion 1878

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Sermon</u>	
1. Self-inquiry	How do you do?	1875
2. Self-exertion	Strive	1854
3. Reality	Is it real?	1862
4. Prayer	Do you pray?	1852
5. Bible reading	How readest thou?	1852
6. Going to the table		
7. Charity	Have you charity?	1864
8. Zeal	Be zealous	1852
9. Happiness	Are you happy?	1856
10. Formality		
11. The World	Come out	1877
12. Riches and poverty	Rich and poor	1853
13. The best friend	Do you want a friend?	1855
14. Sickness	He whom thou lovest is sick	1859
15. The family of God	The whole family	1864
16. Heirs of God	Are you an heir?	1852
17. The great gathering	Our gathering together	1868
18. The great separation	Wheat or chaff?	1851
19. Eternity	Eternity	1877

5. A New Birth 1892

<u>Chapter</u>		<u>Sermon</u>	
1.	1	The Cross	1852
2.	2	Where art thou?	1852
3.	3.	Do you pray?	1852
4.	4.	Are you an heir?	1852
5.	5.	Be zealous	1852
6.	6.	George Whitfield	1852
7.	7.	Are you regenerate?	1851
8.	8.	Wheat or Chaff?	1851

NOTES

The following abbreviations are used in the notes:

Albion	<u>Liverpool Daily Albion</u>
C.C.R.	<u>Church Congress Reports</u>
Courier	<u>Liverpool Daily Courier</u>
C.R.P.	<u>Church Reform Papers</u>
C.R.S.	<u>Liverpool Central Relief Society Reports</u>
D.R.	<u>Liverpool Diocesan Record</u>
E.H.R.	<u>English Historical Review</u>
J.E.H.	<u>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</u>
L.S.O.R	<u>Liverpool Seamen's Orphanage Reports</u>
Mercury	<u>Liverpool Mercury and Lancashire, Cheshire and general advertiser</u>
Post	<u>Liverpool Daily Post</u>
S.C.H.	<u>Studies in Church History</u>
T.H.S.L.C.	<u>Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire</u>
Y.C.R.	<u>Journals of the Convocation of York</u>

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56. His sermon notes were so full that other people could produce books indistinguishable from his own. See T.Madden (ed), The Christian Race (1900).
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170. J.C.Ryle, Shall you be saved? (1852), p. 8.
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175. This is seen especially in his lukewarm support for a cathedral and his enthusiasm for mission rooms.
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209. J.C.Ryle, How do you do? (1875), p. 6.
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230. J.C.Ryle, Are we sanctified? (1874), p. 15.
231. J.C.Ryle, What is your hope? (1856), p. 52.
232. Ibid., p. 52.
233. J.C.Ryle, Are we sanctified? (1874), p. 24.
234. Ibid., p. 25.
235. J.C.Ryle, Is it real? (1862), p. 115.
236. J.C.Ryle, Are you holy? (1852), pp. 6,7,9.
237. Ibid., p. 5.
238. J.C.Ryle, What is your hope? (1856), p. 53; Repent or Perish (1858), p. 81.
239. J.C.Ryle, What is your hope? (1856), p. 53; Repent or Perish (1858), p. 53.
240. J.C.Ryle, What is your hope? (1856), p. 53; Repent or Perish (1858), p. 81.

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241. J.C.Ryle, Keep it Holy (1856), in Home Truths (1857), pp. 182-220; How do you worship? (1867); A word for Sunday (1880); Thoughts about Sunday (1893) was a reprint of Keep it Holy, but with an additional section on the connection between Sabbath observance and vital religion.
242. J.C.Ryle, Are we sanctified? (1874), p. 12.
243. J.C.Ryle, Is it Real? (1862), p. 116.
244. J.C.Ryle, Be not slothful, but followers (1846), p. 50.
245. J.C.Ryle, I have somewhat to say unto thee (1845), pp. 14-15.
246. J.C.Ryle, Where art thou?(1852), p. 66.
247. J.C.Ryle, Do you pray? (1852), p. 3.
248. Ibid., p. 7.
249. Ibid., pp. 17-18.
250. Ibid., p. 32.
251. J.C.Ryle, Wheat or Chaff? (1851), p. 31; Have you the Spirit? (1854), p. 164; Is thy heart right? (1860),p. 58.
252. J.C.Ryle, St. Peter at Antioch (1856), in Home Truths (1857), p. 252.
253. J.C.Ryle, The Unexpected Delay of the Kingdom of God (1853),p. 14.
254. J.C.Ryle, Occupy Till I Come (1853), title page quotation from Luke 19.13.
255. J.C.Ryle, Are we overcoming? (1879), p. 11.
256. J.C.Ryle, Watch (1851), p. 27.
257. Ibid., p. 28.
258. J.C.Ryle, Eternity (1877),p. 44.
259. J.C.Ryle, The Unexpected Delay of the Kingdom of God (1853),p. 5.
260. Ibid., p. 25.
261. J.C.Ryle, Come Out (1878).
262. Ibid., p. 12.
263. Ibid., p. 10.
264. Ibid., pp. 9-11.
265. See above, pp. 21-24.
266. J.C.Ryle, Come Out (1878), p.17.
267. Ibid., p. 16.
268. Ibid., p. 16.
269. Ibid., pp. 18-19.

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- 270. Ibid., p. 22.
- 271. Ibid., p. 23.
- 272. Ibid., p. 30.
- 273. Ibid., p. 31. Ryle thus shows himself both bound by his time in the sense of assuming servants are more likely to 'sin', whereas masters will resist temptation, and yet ahead of his time, as far as Evangelicalism was concerned, in not simply condemning such activities.
- 274. Ibid., p. 19.
- 275. Ibid., p. 5.
- 276. Ibid., p. 20.
- 277. Ibid., p. 19.
- 278. J.C.Ryle, Never Perish, n.d., p. 175.
- 279. Ibid., p. 161.
- 280. Ibid., p. 165.
- 281. J.C.Ryle, Able to Save (1859), pp. 185-90; Are you looking? (1869), p. 9.
- 282. J.C.Ryle, Rich and Poor (1853), pp. 16-17.
- 283. Ibid., p. 26. Ryle was particularly concerned about feelings in religious experience. This is explored in the next chapter.
- 284. J.C.Ryle, Are we sanctified? (1874), p. 11.
- 285. Ibid., p. 29.
- 286. J.C.Ryle, Is thy heart right? (1860), p. 58.
- 287. J.C.Ryle, Justified (1895), p. 28.
- 288. J.C.Ryle, Able to Save (1859), p. 191.
- 289. J.C.Ryle, Our Home (1867), p. 10.
- 290. Ibid., p. 11.
- 291. J.C.Ryle, Peace Be Still (1853), p. 24.
- 292. Ibid., p. 25.
- 293. Ibid., p. 26.
- 294. Ibid., p. 27.
- 295. J.C.Ryle, What shall a man give? (1857), p. 19.
- 296. J.C.Ryle, Only One Way (1858), pp. 21-22.
- 297. J.C.Ryle, Come (1859), p. 20.
- 298. J.C.Ryle, A pastor's address to his flock (1846), p. 91.
- 299. J.C.Ryle, Strive (1854), p. 91.
- 300. Ibid., p. 92.

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302. J.C.Ryle, How do you do? (1875), p. 21.
303. J.C.Ryle, Christ and the Two Thieves (1849), p. 8.
304. J.C.Ryle, Strive (1854), pp. 92-93.
305. J.C.Ryle, Only One Way (1858), p. 22.
306. J.C.Ryle, Be not slothful, but followers (1846), p. 38.
307. J.C.Ryle, Come (1859), p. 20.
308. J.C.Ryle, Strive (1854), p. 93; Come Out (1878), p. 26.
309. J.C.Ryle, Tell Them (1867), p. 11.
310. Ibid., p. 13.
311. J.C.Ryle, If any man (1878), p. 20.
312. Ibid., p. 22.
313. J.C.Ryle, Be not slothful, but followers (1846), p. 43.
314. J.C.Ryle, Merry and Happy (1863), pp.4-5.
315. J.C.Ryle, Are we not in Perilous Times? (1868), p. 14; Are you free? (1866), in Home Truths, n.d., p. 7.
316. J.C.Ryle, If any man (1878), p. 14.
317. J.C.Ryle, Are you happy? (1856), pp. 54-55.
318. Ibid., p. 49.
319. Ibid., pp. 52-53.
320. Ibid., p. 50.
321. J.C.Ryle, Work to be done (1866), p. 4.
322. J.C.Ryle, Are we not in Perilous Times? (1868), p. 14; If any man (1878), p. 14.
323. J.C.Ryle, Be not slothful but followers (1846), p. 44; Are you an heir? (1852), p. 31; Do you want a friend? (1855), p. 16; What is your hope? (1856), p. 66.
324. J.C.Ryle, Are you free? (1866), p. 21.
325. J.C.Ryle, Merry and Happy (1863), p. 6.
326. Ibid., p. 15.
327. Ibid., p. 16.
328. J.C.Ryle, A pastor's address to his flock (1846), p. 23.
329. J.C.Ryle, I have something to say unto you (1843),p. 13.
330. J.C.Ryle, Shall we know one another? (1870), p. 94.
331. Ibid., p. 98.
332. J.C.Ryle, The work of the Holy Ghost (1857),p. 142.

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- 333. J.C.Ryle, A Pastor's Address to his Flock (1846), p. 28.
- 334. J.C.Ryle, Unsearchable Riches (1879), preface.
- 335. J.C.Ryle, Simplicity in Preaching (1882), p. 7.
- 336. Ibid., p. 41.
- 337. Ibid., p. 36.
- 338. Ibid., p. 37.
- 339. Ibid., p. 26.
- 340. Ibid., p. 27.
- 341. J.C.Ryle, Where are your sins? (1858), p. 10.
- 342. Ibid., p. 10.
- 343. Ibid., p. 14.
- 344. Ibid., p. 18.
- 345. Ibid., p. 36.
- 346. Ibid., p. 39.
- 347. J.C.Ryle, The Work of the Holy Ghost (1857),p. 136.
- 348. Ibid., p. 141.
- 349. J.C.Ryle, Eternity (1877),p. 39.
- 350. J.C.Ryle, Do you want a friend? (1855), p. 13.
- 351. J.C.Ryle, Eternity (1877),p. 47.
- 352. J.C.Ryle, What shall a man give? (1857), p. 27.
- 353. J.C.Ryle, Simplicity in Preaching (1882), pp. 28-29.
- 354. J.C.Ryle, Are you happy? (1856),pp.39-40.
- 355. J.C.Ryle, Do you pray? (1852), p. 28.
- 356. J.C.Ryle, Are we overcoming? (1879), p. 7.
- 357. J.C.Ryle, Come Out (1878), p. 15.
- 358. J.C.Ryle, Wheat or Chaff? (1851), p. 31.
- 359. J.C.Ryle, Work to be done (1866), p. 16.
- 360. J.C.Ryle, Are you fighting? (1870), p. 12.
- 361. J.C.Ryle, Are you an heir? (1852), p. 21.
- 362. J.C.Ryle, Our Home (1867), p. 5.
- 363. J.C.Ryle, Assurance (1849), p. 28.
- 364. J.C.Ryle, How do you do? (1875), p. 2.
- 365. J.C.Ryle, None of His (1857), p. 12.
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- 367. Ibid., p. 23.
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370. J.C.Ryle, Only One Way (1858), p 10; A pastor's address to his flock (1846), p. 18.
371. J.C.Ryle, Repent or Perish (1858), pp. 76-78.
372. J.C.Ryle, Are we overcoming? (1879), pp. 21-22.
373. J.C.Ryle, Shall you be saved? (1852), p. 28; Repent or Perish (1858), p. 46.
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376. J.C.Ryle, Only One Way (1858), p. 13.
377. J.C.Ryle, All in All (1853), p. 250.
378. J.C.Ryle, The Revelation and its Blessing (1855),p. 30.
379. J.C.Ryle, Are we overcoming? (1879), p. 20.
380. J.C.Ryle, Are you happy? (1856), p. 56.
381. J.C.Ryle, Justified (1895), p. 9.
382. J.C.Ryle, Wheat or Chaff (1851), p. 19.
383. J.C.Ryle, Are we sanctified? (1874), p. 16.
384. J.C.Ryle, Is thy heart right? (1860), p. 40.
385. J.C.Ryle, Watch (1851), p. 8.
386. J.C.Ryle, Able to Save (1859),p. 185.
387. J.C.Ryle, Where are your sins? (1858), pp. 26-27.
388. J.C.Ryle, Do you confess? (1859), pp. 15-16.
389. J.C.Ryle, Simplicity in Preaching (1882), p. 35.
390. Ibid., pp. 39-40, 46.
391. Ibid., p. 41.
392. See, J.C.Ryle, Repent or Perish (1858); Have you Charity (1864); Come (1859); Are you forgiven? (1849); Give thyself wholly to them (1859).
393. J.C.Ryle, Repent or Perish (1858), p. 80.
394. J.C.Ryle, Are you happy? (1856), pp. 52-3.
395. J.C.Ryle, Repent or Perish (1858), p. 71.
396. J.C.Ryle, Come (1859), p. 21.
397. J.C.Ryle, Have you Charity? (1864), p. 141.
398. J.C.Ryle, Repent or Perish (1858), pp. 72-3.
399. J.C.Ryle, Are you forgiven? (1849), p. 30.
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401. Unlike other Evangelicals Ryle did not keep a journal agonising over his feelings. Compare T.R.Birks, A Memoir of the Rev. Edward Bickersteth (1852) 2 vols.

402. J.C.Ryle, Give thyself wholly to them (1859), pp. 246-7.

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1. C.C.R. (1879), p.385.
2. J.C.Ryle, Church Principles and Church Comprehensiveness, p. VII.
3. Ibid., p.VIII.
4. For good summaries of the Oxford Movement see Y.Brilioth, The Anglican Revival (1925) and O.Chadwick, The Mind of the Oxford Movement (1960).
5. See Chapter Six.
6. Ryle was dubbed a 'pseudo-Evangelical'.
7. J.C.Ryle, Can a greater amount of Unity be obtained among zealous and pious Churchmen of different schools of Thought? (1872), pp. 28-32.
8. J.C.Ryle, Shall we go? (1878), p .15.
9. C.C.R.(1865), pp. 236-7.
10. C.C.R. (1868), p. 300.
11. M.L.Loane, John Charles Ryle 1816-1900 (1983), pp.63-4, is inaccurate factually and based on secondary evidence. He produces no evidence to support his contention that the Norwich Church Congress was the start of Ryle's involvement in the Congresses.
12. J.C.Ryle, Strike: but hear! (1868).
13. Ibid., p. 4.
14. Ibid., p. 3.
15. Ibid., p. 4.
16. Ibid., p. 8.
17. Ibid., pp. 5-10.
18. Ibid., p. 14.
19. J.C.Ryle, What is our Position? (1858), in Home Truths (1859), p. 258.
20. Ibid., pp. 258-9.
21. Ibid., p. 260.
22. Ibid., p. 266.
23. Ibid., pp. 261-5.
24. J.C.Ryle, Strike: but hear! (1868), pp. 13-14.
25. Ibid., p. 16.
26. J.C.Ryle, We must unite! (1868), p. 7, footnote.

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27. Ibid., p. 8.
28. Ibid., pp. 7-11.
29. Ibid., p. 19.
30. Ibid., p. 26; J.C.Ryle, Our Diocesan Conference (1879), p. 9.
31. J.C.Ryle, Shall we go? (1878), p. 28.
32. Ibid., p. 23.
33. Ibid., p. 24.
34. Ibid., p. 25.
35. J.C.Ryle, We must unite! (1868), p. 20.
36. Ibid., p. 21.
37. Ibid., p. 22.
38. Ibid., pp. 31-2, postscript.
39. C.C.R. (1879), p. 383.
40. J.C.Ryle, We must unite! (1868), p. 23.
41. J.C.Ryle, Shall we go? (1878), p. 4.
42. Ibid., p. 26.
43. Ibid., p. 27.
44. J.C.Ryle, A Churchmen's duty about Diocesan Conferences (1871), p. 4.
45. J.C.Ryle, We must unite! (1868), pp. 24-25.
46. C.C.R. (1871), p. 146.
47. When buried Ryle's outer coffin measured seven feet three inches - Post, 14 June 1900, p.8.
48. M.H.Fitzgerald, A Memoir of H.E.Ryle (1928), pp. 11-12.
49. Ibid., p. 24.
50. Ibid., p. 39.
51. J.C.Ryle, Autobiography, p. 51.
52. Ibid., p. 55.
53. Ibid., p. 54.
54. Ibid., p. 57.
55. Ibid., p. 65.
56. Ibid., p. 81.
57. Ryle based much of his ministry on his studies of the Reformation Divines and of English Church History.
58. See J.C.Ryle, An example in Word (1852); Give thyself wholly unto them (1859); What is our position? (1858).

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59. See J.C.Ryle, The Cross (1852); What think ye of Christ? (1863); Unsearchable Riches (1879); C.C.R. (1871), p. 455.
60. C.C.R. (1878), p. 542.
61. C.C.R. (1871), p. 134; (1872), p. 231; (1874), p. 196 where Canon Trevor observed, 'Canon Ryle and I have each a pretty clear idea of our own meaning and we use a certain Macedonian simplicity in expressing it, which is disturbing to those who think it good sense to keep their heads in a fog'; (1879), p. 397.
62. M.H.Fitzgerald, A Memoir of H.E.Ryle (1928), p. 132.
63. J.C.Ryle, Autobiography, p. 72.
64. J.C.Ryle, Can a greater amount of Unity? (1872), p. 10.
65. Ibid., pp. 11-13.
66. Christ Church, Macclesfield, built by Charles Roe specifically for the Evangelical David Simpson.
67. St Margaret's Collection, Vol.14, unidentified cutting.
68. J.C.Ryle, Autobiography, p. 46.
69. Ryle was severely criticised for this when he continued the practice as Bishop.
70. For McCheyne see A.Bonar, Memoir and Remains of the Rev.R.M.McCheyne(1866).
71. C.C.R. (1877), p. 497.
72. C.C.R. (1879), p. 104; J.C.Ryle, Church and Dissent (1870), p. 9.
73. I. Murray, The Forgotten Spurgeon (1966), p. 143.
74. C.C.R. (1877), p. 497.
75. J.C.Ryle, What is the Church? (1852).
76. Ibid., p. 3, footnote.
77. Ibid., p. 5.
78. Ibid., with quotations from Dean Howell, Bishop Ridley, Thomas Becon, Bishop Coverdale, Bishop Dovenant, Bishop Jeremy Taylor and Hooker.
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80. Ibid., p. 17.
81. Ibid., pp. 12, 20.
82. Ibid., pp. 24-29.
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84. J.C.Ryle, What is the Church? (1852), p. 21.

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85. C.C.R. (1879), p. 385.
86. J.C.Ryle, How do you Worship? (1867), p. 17.
87. J.C.Ryle, What is the Church? (1852), p. 34.
88. C.C.R. (1871), pp. 214-218, 227-228; (1879), pp. 93-4, 100-101, 104-106; (1868), pp. 308-10.
89. C.C.R. (1871), 'The Promotion of a Deeper Unity within the Church and among Christians Generally'; C.C.R. (1877), 'The Mutual Relations of the Church and Nonconformity at Various Periods of the Nineteenth Century'; C.C.R. (1879), 'The Causes of, and Remedy for, Dissent: Home Reunion'.
90. C.C.R. (1871), p. 237; (1877), p. 497; (1879), p. 104.
91. C.C.R. (1877), p. 497.
92. C.C.R. (1879), p. 104.
93. Ibid., p. 103.
94. C.C.R. (1877), p. 498; (1879), p. 104.
95. C.C.R. (1879), p. 104.
96. J.C.Ryle, What is the Church? (1852), p. 26.
97. J.C.Ryle, Church and Dissent (1870).
98. Ibid., pp. 5-7.
99. Ibid., pp. 14-15.
100. C.C.R. (1865), p. 237.
101. J.C.Ryle, Church and Dissent (1870), p. 10; Shall we surrender? (1877), pp 10-11; What good will it do? (1872), pp. 32-33.
102. C.C.R. (1877), p. 478.
103. J.C.Ryle, Strike: but hear! (1868), pp. 9-10, 13.
104. C.C.R. (1877), p. 490.
105. Ibid..
106. Ibid., p. 491.
107. J.C.Ryle, What good will it do? (1872), pp. 4-5.
108. Ibid., pp. 6,8.
109. Ibid., pp. 18-19.
110. Ibid., p. 20.
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112. J.C.Ryle, Shall we surrender? (1877), p. 3.
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121. C.C.R.(1879), p. 388.
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130. Ibid., pp. 15-16.
131. Ibid., p. 15.
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133. C.C.R. (1877), p. 138.
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136. C.C.R. (1871), p. 238; (1877), p. 138.
137. The quotation at the head of this chapter.
138. C.C.R. (1871), p. 237.
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140. J.S.Casson, 'John Charles Ryle and the Evangelical Party in the Nineteenth Century' (unpublished Nottingham M.Phil. 1969), p. 195; C.C.R. (1874), p. 278; J.C.Ryle, Shall we go? (1878), p 12.
141. C.C.R. (1877), p. 104.
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143. Ibid., pp. 15-16.
144. Ibid., p. 18.

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145. C.C.R. (1868), p. 302; (1871), p. 129; (1872), pp. 209-217; (1874), pp. 204-208; (1877), pp. 283-286; (1878), pp. 541-542.
146. C.C.R.(1871), p. 126.
147. Ibid., p. 128.
148. Ibid., p. 129.
149. C.C.R. (1872), p. 217.
150. Ibid., pp. 209-210.
151. C.R.P. No. II (1870), p. 5, footnote.
152. C.C.R. (1871), p. 129.
153. C.C.R. (1872), pp. 211-215.
154. Ibid., pp. 225-238.
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156. Ibid., pp. 226-227.
157. Ibid., p. 232.
158. Ibid., p. 238.
159. C.C.R. (1874), p. 206.
160. Ibid., pp. 206-207.
161. C.R.P., No. II (1870), p. 12.
162. C.C.R. (1874), p. 207.
163. Ibid..
164. Ibid., pp. 197-199.
165. Ibid., p. 197.
166. Ibid., pp. 208, 211.
167. Ibid., p. 217.
168. Ibid., pp. 195-196, 200-201, 209.
169. C.C.R. (1877), p. 283.
170. Ibid..
171. Ibid., p. 284.
172. Ibid., p. 306-308.
173. The first was called by Bishop Wilberforce of Oxford in November 1850 to discuss the Papal aggression. The second was called by Bishop Philpotts of Exeter in 1851 on the topic of Baptismal regeneration. C.C.R. (1874), p. 257.
174. This was Bishop Selwyn. The Conference was held in June 1868. Ibid., p. 258.
175. Ibid., p. 249.

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176. Ibid., p. 253.
177. Ibid., p. 259.
178. Ibid., p. 271.
179. Ibid., p. 270.
180. J.C.Ryle, A Churchman's Duty about Diocesan Conferences (1871); C.C.R. (1874), pp. 277-278.
181. J.C., Ryle, A Churchman's Duty about Diocesan Conferences (1871), p. 7.
182. Ibid.; C.C.R. (1874), pp. 277-278.
183. J.C.Ryle, A Churchman's Duty about Diocesan Conferences (1871), pp. 6, 10.
184. C.C.R. (1874), pp. 251, 264, 267.
185. Ibid., p. 277.
186. Ibid..
187. J.C.Ryle, Our Diocesan Conference (1879), p. 4.
188. In particular he simply ignored the issue of leaving Evangelicals out in the cold and his suspicion that only the Aristocracy would be returned as the lay element. Similarly, he now thought that both the collection of information and the setting up of small specialised committees to tackle individual topics were good activities; previously he had condemned them. Ibid., pp. 5-6, 9-10, 12. Compare A Churchman's Duty about Diocesan Conferences (1871), pp. 6-7, 12.
189. J.C.Ryle, Our Diocesan Conference (1879), p. 11.
190. Ibid., p. 10.
191. C.R.P. No. I (1870), pp. 8, 15.
192. Ibid., p. 9.
193. Ibid., pp. 9-10.
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196. Ibid., pp. 13-14.
197. C.R.P., No. III (1870), p. 2.
198. Ibid., pp. 8-9.
199. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
200. Ibid., p. 11.
201. C.C.R. (1872), pp. 217-225, 228-231.
202. C.R.P., No. I (1870), p. 10.

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203. C.R.P., No. VI (1870), p. 9.
204. Ibid., pp. 10-11, 13.
205. Ibid., p. 20.
206. C.C.R. (1872), p. 227.
207. C.R.P., No. VII (1870), p. 11.
208. C.R.P., No. V (1870), p. 7.
209. C.R.P., No. VI (1870), p. 9.
210. C.R.P., No. V (1870), pp. 3,9.
211. Ibid., p. 8.
212. Ibid., pp. 3-4.
213. Ibid., p. 8.
214. Ibid., p. 12.
215. Ibid..
216. Ibid., pp. 9-12.
217. C.C.R. (1872), pp. 204-209.
218. Although Ryle's attendance at Church Congresses was much less in the 1880s and 1890s once he had taken on the responsibilities of a bishop, he spoke strongly against the concept of 'Brotherhoods', as a means of increasing numbers in the ministry, at the Church Congress in 1890. C.C.R. (1890), pp. 344-378.
219. C.R.P., No. VII (1870), p. 17.
220. Ibid., pp. 6,20; C.R.P., No. I (1870), pp. 1-5; C.C.R. (1871), p 125; (1874), pp. 207-208; (1878), p. 133; J.C.Ryle, We must unite! (1868), pp. 13-14, 28-31; What is our position? (1858), pp. 255-260. These are really simply prominent examples. Scattered throughout his sermons, from the early 1850s, through his Charges and Conference Addresses in the 1890s, Ryle perpetuated his cry of 'the Church in Danger!'.
221. C.R.P., No. VII (1870), p. 6.
222. Ibid., p. 19.
223. D.Holloway, The Church of England Where is it Going? (1985), p. 77. A puzzling description of the controversy since the author's main thesis is that doctrinal confusion inhibits church growth, which was precisely Ryle's thesis a hundred years ago.
224. J.C.Ryle, What Time is it? (1855), p. 74.
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262. J.C.Ryle, Evangelical Religion (1867), p. 12.
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266. J.C.Ryle, Regeneration (1850) and Baptism (1865).
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268. J.C.Ryle, Baptism (1865), pp. 17-18.
269. Ibid., pp. 5,6,footnote.
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271. Ibid., pp. 6-8; J.C.Ryle, Regeneration (1850), pp. 34-41, with extensive quotations in the footnotes.
272. J.C.Ryle, Regeneration (1850), p. 46.
273. Ibid., p 31; J.C.Ryle, Baptism (1865), p. 30.
274. J.C.Ryle, Regeneration (1850), pp. 22-30.
275. Ibid., p. 100.
276. The words were 'seeing now ... that this child is by Baptism regenerate' and 'we yield thee most hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit...'. See The Book of Common Prayer, the ministration of publick baptism of Infants.
277. It was 101 pages. Ryle's usual length was about 32 pages. When Regeneration was reprinted, it was done so in separate parts.
278. J.C.Ryle, Thoughts on the Prayer Book (1887), p. 15; C.R.P., No. 4 (1870), p 4.
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280. J.C.Ryle, Regeneration (1850), p. 69.
281. J.C.Ryle Thoughts on the Prayer Book (1887), p. 24.
282. Ibid., p. 25.
283. J.C.Ryle, Regeneration (1850), pp. 73-78.
284. Ibid., p. 78.
285. Ibid., p. 79.
286. Ibid., p. 80. He referred in particular to Articles six, eight, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-eight and thirty-four.

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287. Ibid., p. 40. Ryle's biblical references were Acts 8:21, 23; Acts 10:47; 1 Cor. 1:14-17; and Luke 23:43.
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289. J.C.Ryle, Regeneration (1850), pp. 84-85. He believed that a proper understanding of Article seventeen was the surest way of overturning the theory of Baptismal Regeneration. See Never Perish, n.d., p. 181.
290. J.C.Ryle, Regeneration, pp. 86-91.
291. Ibid., p. 92.
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293. Ibid., p. 93.
294. Ibid., pp. 93-94. The supposed Calvinism of the English Reformers was a disputed point.
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298. Ibid., p. 25.
299. J.C.Ryle, The Lord's Supper (1866), in Home Truths (1866), pp. 168-169; Why and Why Not? (1869), p. 3. The text was Dean Goode, On the Lord's Supper (1856). Ryle thought this work was 'unanswerable'.
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40. Ibid., 9 October 1888, p.6; 10 October 1893, p.3; 16 October 1894, p.7.
41. Ibid., 12 October 1897, p.3.
42. About 100. See Post, 10 October 1893, p.3; 12 May 1891, p.6.
43. Ibid., 12 October 1886, p.7; Albion, 12 October 1880, p.3.
44. Post, 12 October 1886, p.7.
45. Ibid., 6 October 1888, p.3; 5 October 1889, p.3; 4 October 1890, p.3; and see St Peter's Service Register, Vol. 2.
46. Post, 11 October 1884, p.7.
47. Ibid., 15 October 1895, p.6.
48. Albion, 27 October 1880, p.3. The secretary was E.Forbes who had been chaplain in Paris for 21 years.
49. Ibid.
50. Post, 24 March 1885, p.6.
51. Ibid., 16 March 1886, p.7.
52. Courier, 13 March 1888, p.7.
53. See Courier, 17 March 1893, p.6; 10 October 1893, p.7; 12 March 1895, p.3; Colonial and Continental Church Society Reports, 1888-9, pp.48-51; 1889-90, pp.47-49; 1890-91, pp.4-9.
54. Courier, 12 March 1895, p.3.
55. Colonial and Continental Church Society Report, 1888-9, p.2.

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56. Ibid., p.12.
57. Ibid., 1889-90, pp.47-49.
58. Ibid., 1873, p.154.
59. Ibid., 1888-9, p.III.
60. Ibid., p.XIX; 1889-90, pp.18ff; 1890-91, pp.19ff, and see English Church Services in connection with the Colonial and Continental Church Society(1896).
61. Albion, 27 October 1880, p.3; Post, 24 March 1885, p.6.
62. B.L.Benas, 'Records of the Jews in Liverpool', T.H.S.L.C., Vol. LI(1899), pp.3-6.
63. Ibid., pp.9-11.
64. Ibid., p.12.
65. Ibid., p.19.
66. Ibid., pp.23-30.
67. Ibid., p.31.
68. Ibid., pp.31-2.
69. Ibid., p.31.
70. Ibid., pp.36-37.
71. Ibid., pp.37-39. The main ghetto was on Brownlow Hill.
72. Ibid., p.38.
73. Liberal Review, 16 April 1881, p.10.
74. Ibid., W.Gidney has pointed out that most of the work of the society was on the Continent and in Palestine rather than in England. The Liverpool branch of the society was set up in 1812 and was the first place outside London to have a full time worker (1838). Interestingly, the work in Liverpool was built up by a converted German Jew, D.J.Hirsch. For a general review of the work of the Society see W.T.Gidney, History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews(1908).
75. Liberal Review, 16 April 1881, p.10.
76. Albion, 17 March 1881, p.4.
77. Albion, 17 January 1882, p.2; 21 January 1882, p.2.
78. Liverpool Wasp, 28 January 1882, n.p.
79. Ibid.

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80. Post, 14 April 1891, p.7; 12 April 1881, p.7; 18 April 1899, p.7. On the revival of Millennialism and interest in the Jews in the Nineteenth Century see M.Scult, Millennial Expectations and Jewish Liberties(1978). He points out that 'one has to search reports diligently to find statistics' and estimates the cost of each convert as £500. He concludes that such missionary activity was 'a fantastic exercise in futility'.(p.142).
81. Albion, 12 April 1881, p.3; Post, 18 April 1899, p.7.
82. Liberal Review, 16 April 1881, p.10; Courier, 19 April 1898, p.3.
83. Courier, 14 April 1896, p.6.
84. Ibid.
85. Post, 18 April 1899, p.7.
86. Albion, 30 November 1883, p.7; Mercury, 1 December 1883, p.5.
87. Post, 17 November 1884, p.6; Mercury, 4 December 1895, p.3.
88. Albion, 13 March 1882, p.4.
89. Ibid.
90. Post, 19 March 1895, p.7; Courier, 19 March 1895, p.6.
91. He was there in 1863 and 1868. See The Bird's Nest(1863) and C.C.R.,1868.
92. See W.Lefroy, The Question of a Bishop for Liverpool (1876)
93. A.Hume, A Detailed Account of How Liverpool became a Diocese (1880), n.p.
94. Ibid.
95. All the figures in this paragraph are taken from A.Hume, The Question of a Bishop for Liverpool (1876), n.p.
96. D.R., 1881, pp.116-132.
97. Ibid.
98. D.R., 1886, attached map.
99. D.R., 1883, pp.92-117.
100. D.R., 1881, p.102.
101. Ibid., p.85.
102. Ibid., p.91.
103. Ibid.
104. E.R.Wickham, Church and People in an Industrial City(1958); K.S.Inglis, Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England(1964).

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105. N.Yates, 'Urban Church Attendance and the Use of Statistical Evidence 1850-1900', S.C.H., Vol. 16(1979), pp.389-400.
106. Ibid., pp.398-9.
107. H.Mcleod, Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth Century Britain(1984), p.9.
108. Ibid., pp.24,50.
109. N.Yates, The Anglican Revival in Portsmouth(1983); S.Yeo, Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis(1976); J.Cox, The English Churches in a Secular Society(1982).
110. W.S.F.Pickering (ed), A Social History of the Diocese of Newcastle 1882-1982(1981), pp.88-123.
111. S.Yeo, Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis(1976), p.120.
112. R.B.Walker, 'Religious Changes in Liverpool in the Nineteenth Century', J.E.H., Vol.19 (1968), pp.195-211.
113. Ibid., p.208.
114. Ibid., p.210.
115. N.Yates, 'Urban Church Attendance and the Use of Statistical Evidence 1850-1900', S.C.H., Vol.16 (1979), p.390.
116. Report of the Select Committee on the means of Divine Worship in Populous Districts(1858), Appendix K; Liverpool Daily Post, October and November 1881, 1891 and 1898.
117. Report of the Select Committee on the means of Divine Worship in Populous Districts (1858), Appendix K.
118. Post, 3 November 1898.
119. Ibid., 24 November 1891.
120. See correspondence in all the local newspapers November 1881, 1891, 1898. This is the conclusion J.Cox reaches in his study of churches in Lambeth. J.Cox, The English Churches in a Secular Society(1982), p.42.
121. Liverpool Review, 12 November 1898, p.3.
122. Post, 12 June 1880.
123. Ibid.
124. Mercury, 2 July 1880, p.6.
125. Ibid.
126. He delivered the second half the following day at the Parish

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- Church of All Saints, Wigan. He dropped this scheme immediately and delivered all his subsequent charges complete in one go in Liverpool. He argued that the small size of the diocese in terms of geography and the multiplicity of railway lines made it easy for the clergy to congregate in the city. J.C.Ryle, Second Charge(1884), p.3.
127. J.C.Ryle, First Charge(1881), p.3.
128. Ibid., p.5.
129. Ibid., p.7.
130. Ibid.
131. Ibid., p.8.
132. Ibid., p.13.
133. D.R., 1881, pp.116-132.
134. J.C.Ryle, First Charge(1881), p.14.
135. Ibid., p.15.
136. Ibid.
137. Ibid.
138. Ibid., p.16.
139. Ibid., p.18.
140. Ibid., p.20. The same theology is propounded today by D.Shakarian in The Happiest People on Earth(1977).
141. J.C.Ryle, First Charge(1881), pp.21-22.
142. Ibid., p.25. The 'theory' was a straight reprint of part of his Church Reform Papers.
143. Ibid., p.26.
144. J.C.Ryle, First Charge Part Two(1881), p.11.
145. Ibid.
146. J.C.Ryle, Seest Thou these Great Buildings?(1889), p.15.
147. Ibid.
148. D.R., 1892, p.156; Post, 2 March 1886, p.3; 27 January 1894, p.3.
149. J.C.Ryle, Address to the Diocesan Conference(1895), pp.16-17.
150. Ibid., p.18.
151. Ibid.
152. Ibid., p.21.
153. Ibid.
154. Post, 2 May 1888, p.7.
155. J.C.Ryle, Address to the Diocesan Conference(1895), p.22.

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156. Ibid. (1896), pp.16-19; (1897), pp.21-24; (1898), pp.4-8.
157. Albion, 19 January 1883, p.4; Post, 19 January 1883, p.7.
158. Post, 22 February 1884, p.6.
159. Ibid., 2 March 1886, p.3.
160. Ibid., 8 March 1887, p.3.
161. Ibid., 23 June 1887, p.3.
162. Ibid., 10 February 1888, p.3.
163. Ibid., 12 February 1889, p.3.
164. Ibid., 4 February 1890, p.3.
165. Ibid., 27 January 1894, p.3.
166. Ibid., 12 February 1897, p.3.
167. Courier, 24 January 1896, p.3; Post, 17 February 1899, p.3.
168. Post, 8 November 1882, p.7.
169. Ibid., 14 December 1883, p.6.
170. York Convocation Report, 1889, pp.23-27.
171. Mercury, 22 December 1884, p.5; Courier, 31 October 1885, p.7; 19 November 1886, p.6.
172. Post, 30 October 1888, p.3.
173. Ibid., 5 November 1884, p.3; 28 October 1893, p.3; Mercury, 22 December 1884, p.5.
174. C.C.R., 1890, pp.344-378.
175. Ibid., p.344.
176. Ibid., p.345.
177. Ibid., p.348.
178. Ibid.
179. Ibid., p.345.
180. Ibid., p.349.
181. Ibid., pp.360-1.
182. Ibid., pp.361-2.
183. Ibid., p.363.
184. Ibid., p.376.
185. Ibid., p.377.
186. Ibid., p.378.
187. Ibid., p.350.
188. Ibid., p.351.
189. Ibid., p.352.

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190. Ibid.
191. Ibid., pp.353-355.
192. J.C.Ryle, Address to the Diocesan Conference(1889), p.18.
193. York Convocation Report, 1883, pp.47-59, 65-73.
194. Ibid., p.67.
195. Ibid., pp.67-70.
196. Ibid., 1884, pp.30-35.
197. J.C.Ryle, 'Real Church Work' in Principles for Churchmen(1884), p.283.
198. Ibid., p.282.
199. J.C.Ryle, First Charge Part Two(1881), p.43.
200. Ibid., p.31.
201. Ibid., p.44.
202. Ibid., p.46.
203. Ibid., p.12.
204. J.C.Ryle, Seest Thou these Great Buildings?(1889), p.14; 'Can the Church reach the Masses?', in Principles for Churchmen(1884), pp.415-416. This is the only occasion when Ryle quotes Gladstone as rightly assessing the real needs of British society. This paper was an elaboration of Can they be brought in?(1883), which in turn was an extended version of his paper at the 1882 Church Congress in Derby under the theme title 'Evangelistic Work at Home' (C.C.R.,1882, pp.77-83). These three articles explain the heart of Ryle's Evangelism. Fraser also 'craved for a preaching clergy'. J.W.Diggle, The Lancashire Life of Bishop Fraser(1889), pp.70,191-2. Similarly Bishop Robert Bickersteth of Ripon stressed the role of preaching. M.C.Bickersteth, A Sketch of the Life and Episcopate of the Right Reverend Robert Bickersteth(1887), pp.39,45-67, 98,106.
205. J.C.Ryle, 'Real Church Work', in Principles for Churchmen(1884), pp.285-288.
206. Ibid., p.283.
207. J.C.Ryle, Fourth Charge(1890), p.4.
208. Ibid.
209. Ibid., pp.4-7.
210. Ibid., pp.7-11.
211. Ibid., pp.11-13.

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212. Ibid., pp.14-16.
213. Ibid., pp.16-21.
214. Ibid., pp.21-26.
215. Ibid., pp.26-29
216. J.C.Ryle, 'Can the Church reach the Masses?', in Principles for Churchmen(1884), p.410.
217. Ibid., p.412.
218. Ibid., p.413.
219. Ibid.
220. J.C.Ryle, Third Charge(1887), pp.57-61.
221. J.C.Ryle, Second Charge(1884), p.67.
222. Ibid.
223. Post, 22 November 1883, p.5.
224. Ibid., 17 November 1894, p.3.
225. Albion, 12 April 1881, p.2.
226. Post, 10 January 1882, p.7.
227. J.C.Ryle, Spiritual Songs(1849); Hymns for the Church on Earth(1860); Special Hymns for Special Occasions(1872); The Additional Hymnbook(1875).
228. Post, 14 March 1888, p.3; Mercury, 17 April 1880, p.8.
229. J.C.Ryle, The Additional Hymnbook(1875), preface.
230. R.Lawton and C.G.Pooley, 'David Brindley's Liverpool: An aspect of Urban Society in the 1880s', T.H.S.L.C., Vol.125(1974)p.160; Albion, 22 October 1880, p.4.
231. Albion, 17 September 1880, p.2.
232. J.C.Ryle, Second Charge(1884), p.68; Post, 4 November 1887, p.7.
233. J.C.Ryle, Second Charge(1884), p.68.
234. J.C.Ryle, Address to the Diocesan Conference(1889), p.27.
235. Ibid., pp.28-30.
236. Ibid., 1892, pp.18-45; Fifth Charge(1893), pp.14-20.
237. J.C.Ryle, Address to the Diocesan Conference(1892), p.22.
238. Ibid.
239. Ibid., pp.22-23.
240. Ibid., pp.23-25.
241. Ibid., pp.26-28.
242. Ibid., pp.28-34.

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243. Ibid., pp.35-39.
244. Ibid., pp.39-41.
245. Ibid., p.41.
246. Ibid., pp.42-45.
247. W.B.Carpenter, My Bible(1884), pp.20-26.
248. Ibid., pp.28-31, 36-47.
249. Ibid., p.27.
250. H.D.Rack, 'Domestic Visitation: a chapter in Early Nineteenth Century Evangelism', J.E.H., Vol.24 (1973), pp.359-363.
251. J.W.Diggle, The Lancashire Life of Bishop Fraser(1889), pp.157,221; See W.B.Carpenter's handbook on visiting, The District Visitor's Companion(1882); F.D.How, Bishop Walsham How: A Memoir(1898), pp.48,166-8; J.Moorhouse, Church Work: its Means and Methods(1894), pp.7,92-3; W.H.Hutton, William Stubbs Bishop of Oxford 1825-1901(1906), pp.30,156; J.B.Lancelot, Francis James Chavasse(1929), p.127.
252. B.Heeney, A Different Kind of Gentleman(1976), pp.52-63.
253. Ibid., p.6.
254. Ibid., 1898, p.10.
255. J.C.Ryle, Seest Thou these Great Buildings(1889), p.14.
256. J.C.Ryle, First Charge(1881),Part Two, p.14.
257. J.C.Ryle, Ibid., p.70.
258. Ibid., p.71.
259. Ibid.
260. Ibid., p.73.
261. Ibid.
262. Ibid.
263. Ibid., p.72. As a contrast a current day curate was required by his vicar to visit 300 families in one year. Blomfield wanted even smaller parishes than Ryle aiming to establish parishes of only 1,000. D.E.H.Mole, 'The Victorian Town Parish: Rural Vision and Urban Mission', S.C.H., Vol.16(1979), p.362.
264. J.C.Ryle, Second Charge(1884), p.72; Address to the Diocesan Conference(1898), pp.10-12.
265. J.C.Ryle, 'Can the Church reach the Masses?', in Principles for Churchmen(1884), p.417.
266. Ibid.

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267. Ibid., p.416. My emphasis.
268. D.R., 1882, pp.96-119; 'St Margaret's Collection', Vol. 14. Seven unnumbered articles on Liverpool Churches. These examples are only from the city, other churches elsewhere were, no doubt, also effective.
269. 'St Nathaniel's Windsor, Service Registers', Vols.2-4. These bear Ryle's signature on no fewer than 47 occasions. On the last of his visits, Christmas Day 1899, Hobson has written in the margin 'the Lord Bishop - J.Ryle - though extremely weak - with his family partook of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at this service'.
270. C.C.R., 1882, pp.82-83; J.C.Ryle, Can they be brought in?(1883), pp.44-46; 'Can the Church reach the Masses?', in Principles for Churchmen(1884), pp.419-20.
271. J.C.Ryle, Can they be brought in?(1883), p.45.
272. Ibid.
273. D.R., 1890, pp.203-208.
274. C.R.P., No. V, 1870, pp.9-17.
275. J.C.Ryle, Can they be brought in?(1883), p.20-1.
276. Ibid., pp.21-22.
277. Ibid., p.22.
278. Ibid., pp.22-23.
279. Ibid., p.24.
280. Ibid., pp.24,25.
281. Ibid., pp.26-27.
282. Ibid., p.28 (Ryle's emphasis).
283. Ibid.
284. Ibid., p.29.
285. Ibid., p.30.
286. Ibid., pp.30-32 footnote.
287. Ibid., p.5.
288. Ibid., p.6.
289. Ibid.
290. Ibid., p.7.
291. J.C.Ryle, Second Charge(1884), pp.29-37.
292. Ibid., p.34.
293. Ibid., p.36.
294. Ibid., p.31.

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295. Ibid.
296. Ibid.
297. Ibid., p.35.
298. J.C.Ryle, First Words(1881), p.19.
299. Ibid., p.4.
300. Ibid., p.9.
301. Ibid., p.17.
302. Ibid., p.26.
303. Post, 8 November 1882, p.7.
304. Ibid.; Courier, 8 November 1882, p.7. They objected, for example, to the Bishop's power under this scheme to dismiss a curate in three months, whereas the current minimum legal limit was six months.
305. Post, 11 May 1888, p.5; J.C.Ryle, Third Charge(1887), p.17.
306. J.C.Ryle, Second Charge(1884), pp.15-16.
307. Ibid.
308. J.C.Ryle, Address to the Diocesan Conference(1885), p.11.
309. Ibid.
310. Ibid.(1886), p.7.
311. Ibid., p.8.
312. See, for example, J.C.Ryle, Address to the Diocesan Conference(1889), pp.7-8; (1892), p.3; (1895), pp.5-6.
313. D.R., 1900, pp.174,177.
314. Ibid., pp.197-198.
315. Ibid., pp.212-213.
316. Albion, 5 October 1880, p.2; 9 October 1880, p.3.
317. Post, 20 February 1886, p.7 (12 October 1887, p.6 gives name as Macrea).
318. Ibid., 22 June 1886, p.3; 7 November 1889, p.7.
319. Ibid., 23 June 1886, p.4; 2 July 1887, p.3.
320. Ibid., 28 April 1890, p.3.
321. Ibid., 18 April 1898, p.6.
322. Ibid., 21 November 1888, p.3; 2 November 1894, p.6.
323. Ibid., 27 April 1885, p.6.

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324. Ibid., 16 May 1889, p.3; Courier, 12 June 1882, n.p. in 'St Margaret's Collection', Vol. 14; English Churchman, 18 February 1886, n.p. in 'St Margaret's Collection', Vol. 14.
325. Post, 6 November 1886, p.6.
326. Courier, 25 May 1886, p.7. Groves gave, in total, £250,000 towards church building. Courier, 15 November 1886, p.8.
327. Post, 6 February 1890, p.3; 7 February 1890, p.3; Courier, 7 February 1890, p.3.
328. J.C.Ryle, Address to the Diocesan Conference(1895), p.5.
329. Post, 6 November 1886, p.6.
330. D.R., 1881, p.88.
331. Ibid.
332. J.C.Ryle, Third Charge(1887), pp.22-3 (my emphasis); Post, 30 October 1888, p.3.
333. J.C.Ryle, Address to the Diocesan Conference(1885), p.10.
334. Ibid.(1886), p.9.
335. Ibid.(1889), p.9.
336. Ibid.
337. Ibid.(1886), p.8.
338. J.C.Ryle, Seest Thou these Great Buildings?(1889), p.23.
339. Ibid., p.24; Address to the Diocesan Conference(1892), p.3.
340. J.C.Ryle, Address to the Diocesan Conference(1895), p.4.
341. Post, 24 August 1885, p.7.
342. Ibid.
343. Ibid., 16 November 1892, p.6.
344. Ibid.
345. Ibid., 17 March 1893, p.7.
346. Ibid., 1 November 1894, p.2.
347. Courier, 6 July 1889, p.5.
348. Post, 22 June 1889, p.3.
349. Ibid., 14 November 1893, p.7.
350. E.Gaskell, Lancashire Leaders, n.d., n.p., private circulation.
351. Albion, 28 March 1881, p.3; Post, 26 March 1884, p.10; 1 March 1886, p.5.

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352. Courier, 19 January 1886, p.6; Post, 6 December 1886, p.6. He remarked to the police on the opportunities for prayer which the night watch provided!
353. Post, 15 November 1886, p.8.
354. Albion, 9 November 1881, p.3; 27 January 1882, p.3.
355. Ibid., 2 December 1881, p.4; Post, 6 May 1895, p.3; 20 April 1899, p.3. This was one of Ryle's last addresses.
356. York Convocation Report, 1885, pp.22-25.
357. Post, 20 June 1882, p.7.
358. Ibid., 2 February 1884, p.7.
359. Ibid.
360. See S.Johnson, Edward Sumners(1886); T.W.M.Lund, The Moral of E.Sumners' Funeral(1886).
361. S.Johnson, Edward Sumners(1886), pp.4-5.
362. Ibid., p.6.
363. Ibid., pp.6-9.
364. Ibid., p.10.
365. Ibid., p.11.
366. Ibid., p.14.
367. Ibid., p.16; Liverpool Review, 23 October 1886, p.15.
368. Post, 1 November 1886, p.7.
369. S.Johnson, Edward Sumners(1886), p.20.
370. Ibid., p.30.
371. Ibid., p.33.
372. Ibid., p.34.
373. Ibid., pp.35-38.
374. Ibid., p.47.
375. Post, 1 November 1886, p.7.
376. S.Johnson, Edward Sumners(1886), pp.49-56.
377. Albion, 10 March 1881, p.3.
378. S.Johnson, Edward Sumners(1886), p.53.
379. Ibid., p.67.
380. Liverpool Review, 23 October 1886, p.15.
381. Post, 1 November 1886, p.7; Courier, 26 October 1886, p.6.

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382. P.B.Morgan, 'A study of the work of American Revivalists in Britain from 1870-1914, (unpublished Ph.D.1961), pp.76,81,449,468; J.W.White, 'The influence of North American Evangelism in Great Britain 1830-1914 on the origin and development of the ecumenical movement', (unpub. Ph.D.1963), p.51.
383. P.B.Morgan, pp.115-116.
384. Ibid., p.493;p.56.
385. P.B.Morgan, pp.127-129.
386. Post, 29 March 1883, p.5.
387. Liverpool Review, 29 October 1887, p.7.
388. Post, 23 June 1886, p.7.
389. Albion, 26 March 1883, p.4; Post, 27 April 1883, p.7.
390. Post, 5 April 1883, p.6.
391. Albion, 7 April 1883, p.4.
392. Post, 17 April 1883, p.7.
393. Ibid., 27 April 1883, p.7; Albion, 27 April 1883, p.3.
394. P.B.Morgan, p.134.
395. Ibid., p.216. When Moody was in Cambridge H.E.Ryle attended most nights, Ibid., p.248.
396. Albion, 25 November 1882, p.4; Post, 5 November 1884, p.3; 25 October 1893, p.7.
397. The precise origin of such parish missions is a subject of scholarly debate. Dieter Voll has described the Wednesbury School and the work of George Wilkinson and others to identify Catholic Evangelicalism as the origin of Parish Missions. A.M.(Donald) Allchin has concentrated on the emergence of Anglican religious Orders, while Conrad Charles has focussed on Cardinal Wiseman and the work of the Passionists, Redemptionists and Rosminians. David Mole has drawn attention to almost forgotten city clergy such as John Miller in Birmingham, whereas the work of more prominent clergy such as Bishop How is more well known. Richard Carwardine has traced the influence of American Evangelists, but John Kent rejects both this influence and that of Catholic Evangelicalism and centres on the Anglo-Catholic twelve-day London Mission of 1869 and attempts to trace its origins back to the work of Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans, 1849-1878. Lawrence Nemer has also drawn attention to a revived missionary Catholicism in

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- France after 1815. See D.Voll Catholic Evangelicalism(1963); A.M.Allchin, The Silent Rebellion(1958); C.Charles, 'The Origins of the Parish Mission in England and the Early Passionist Apostolate 1840-1850', J.E.H., Vol.15(1964), pp.60-75; D.E.H.Mole, 'John Cale Miller: a Victorian Rector of Birmingham', J.E.H., Vol.17(1966), pp.95-103; F.D.How, Bishop Walsham How: A Memoir(1898); R.Carwardine, Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America 1790-1865(1978); J.Kent, Holding a Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism(1978); L.Nemer, Anglican and Roman Catholic Attitudes on Missions: An Historical Study of Two English Missionary Societies in the Late Nineteenth Century(1981).
398. J.C.Ryle, Thoughts about a Mission(1890), p.1.
399. Ibid., p.2.
400. Ibid.
401. Ibid., pp.2-3.
402. Post, 25 January 1893, p.3. J.Bell Cox made the proposal.
403. Courier, 11 May 1893, p.7.
404. Post, 29 January 1894, pp.4,5; 6 February 1894, p.3; Courier, 29 January 1894, p.6.
405. Post, 6 February 1894, p.3.
406. J.B.Lancelot and J.W.Tyrer, 'A history of the Diocese 1880-1930', Liverpool Review, Vol. V, No. 7 (July 1930), p.243.
407. Post, 6 November 1889, pp.4,6.
408. J.C.Ryle, First Charge(1881), p.27.
409. J.C.Ryle, Second Charge(1884), p.15.
410. Albion, 26 April 1882, p.3.
411. Post, 2 January 1885, p.6.
412. Archdeacon Jones who performed the enthronement service was eighty-nine, making Ryle look positively young.
413. M.H.Fitzgerald, Herbert Edward Ryle(1928), p.36; M.L.Loane, John Charles Ryle 1816-1900(1983), p.83.
414. Post, 16 July 1894, p.3.
415. He was unhelpfully ill immediately after returning from his first holiday, Albion, 13 September 1880, p.2. For other illnesses, Albion, 29 September 181, p.3; 31 March 1883, p.3; Post, 25 July 1890, p.3.
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418. Ibid., 10 October 1891, p.6; 24 October 1891, p.3.
419. D.R., 1892, p.155.
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421. D.R., 1889, p.181.
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423. Ibid., 12 March 1892, p.3; 26 March 1892, p.3; 2 April 1892, p.3; 9 April 1892, p.3; 23 April 1892, p.3; 30 April 1892, p.3; 7 May 1892, p.3; 14 May 1892, p.3; 21 May 1892, p.3; 13 June 1892, p.7; 18 June 1892, p.3.
424. Ibid., 1 October 1892, p.3; 15 October 1892, p.3; 22 October 1892, p.3; 5 November 1892, p.3; 10 December 1892, p.3; 13 December 1892, p.7; 14 December 1892, p.7; 17 December 1892, p.7; 12 January 1893, p.6.
425. Ibid., 28 January 1893, p.3; 7 March 1896, p.3; 7 April 1896, p.7.
426. Ibid., 28 January 1899, p.7; 11 February 1899, p.3; 25 February 1899, p.7; 20 March 1899, p.3; 25 March 1899, p.3; 8 April 1899, p.3; 15 April 1899, p.3; 6 May 1899, p.7.
427. Ibid., 6 May 1899, p.7; 16 May 1899, p.9.
428. Ibid., 27 May 1899, p.3.
429. Ibid., 9 September 1899, p.3.
430. Post, 16 October 1899, p.3; 18 October 1899, p.7. Margoliouth's father, Ezekiel, was a missionary for the S.P.C.J. for forty-two years. David Margoliouth won a succession of prizes at Oxford and became Laudian Professor of Arabic. He chose to be ordained by Ryle because he saw himself as continuing the defence of the Bible against Higher Criticism prevalent in the University. See, New College Oxford, Register of Graduates 1854-1902.
431. Ibid., 19 October 1899, p.8. One prominent attender was Archimandrite Nichiforos Zervos of the Greek Church.
432. Ibid.
433. Ibid., 15 November 1899, p.8.
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- 439. Ibid., 11 May 1896, p.5.
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265. Mainly in February and March 1886, e.g. Post, 13 February 1886, p.4; 13 March 1886, p.7. There were strong defenders of such games.
266. Courier, 18 October 1892, p.3.
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273. Jeffrey Cox has identified uniformed youth organisations as the only growth point of the Church of England in Lambeth after 1870. The English Churches in a Secular Society(1982), p.214.
274. Albion, 11 October 1880, p.4; Post, 6 December 1893, p.7; 14 June 1892, p.3; Albion, 13 June 1881, p.3.
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293. J.C.Ryle, Train up a Child in the Way he should go(1846), p.10.
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295. Revelation 21:4; Proverbs 30:24-28; 2 Kings 2:23,24.
296. J.C.Ryle, Little and Wise(1851), p.165; Children Walking in Truth, pp.306-10,314,316; No More Crying(1859), pp.7,12-13; The Bird's Nest(1863), p.18.
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298. J.C.Ryle, Little and Wise(1851), pp.161-164; Children Walking in Truth, p.303; No More Crying(1859), p.2; The Two Bears(1866), pp.7-8.
299. J.C.Ryle, Little and Wise(1851), p.161 footnote.
300. J.C.Ryle, Seeking the Lord Early(1845), pp.36-38; No More Crying(1859), pp.8,14-16.
301. C.C.R., (1878), pp.179-206. This took place in 1878. All of this section falls outside of the scope of the major work on the topic Drink and the Victorians, which covers the period 1815-1872 and is mainly concerned with political aspects of the question. Harrison does suggest that in fact improvidence may have been the cause of poverty but concludes in the end the social environment was a more significant cause of drunkenness. This part of the thesis is a response to his call for more local studies. See B.Harrison, Drink and the Victorians(1971).
302. C.C.R., (1978), p.179.
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- 357. Ibid. In Lambeth the Police Court Mission was responsible for juvenile probation up to the 1920s. See J.Cox, p.109.
- 358. Post, 15 October 1895, p.3.
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381. Ibid., pp.168,170.
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388. Ibid., 28 January 1890, p.6.
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390. Albion, 6 December 1881, p.2; Post, 22 February 1884, p.6; 20 February 1886, p.7; 28 January 1882, p.3; 21 April 1883, p.3.
391. Post, 29 January 1889, p.6.
392. Ibid., 6 April 1887, p.7.
393. Ibid., 29 January 1895, p.2.
394. See C.C.R., (1878), pp.203-6 where the debate was reviewed.
395. Courier, 5 November 1891, p.4.
396. Albion, 8 July 1881, p.2.
397. Post, 31 January 1885, p.7.
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399. Ibid., 28 January 1896, p.7.
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403. Church of England Temperance Society pamphlet, A Cloud of Witness against Grocers' Licenses, the fruitful source of Female Intemperance. Figures quoted in Post, 1 May 1894, p.7.
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- 409. J.C.Ryle, How Do you Worship?(1867), p.7.
- 410. J.C.Ryle, Thoughts about Sunday(1893), p.41.
- 411. J.C.Ryle, A word for Sunday(1880).
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- 418. Ibid.
- 419. Ibid., pp.194-5.
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- 421. Ibid., p.196.
- 422. Ibid., pp.199-200.
- 423. Ibid., p.200.
- 424. Ibid.
- 425. Ibid., pp.201-202.
- 426. Ibid., p.202.
- 427. Ibid., p.205.
- 428. Ibid.
- 429. Ibid., p.206.
- 430. Ibid., p.209. In contrast Fraser saw no harm in the Sunday opening of museums provided they were not open during divine service. But he would not publicly advocate Sunday opening. J.W.Diggle, pp.246-7.
- 431. J.C.Ryle, Keep it Holy(1856),p.213.
- 432. Ibid., p.214.
- 433. Ibid., p.201.
- 434. J.C.Ryle, A Word for Sunday(1880), p.24.
- 435. Ibid., pp.30-32.
- 436. Ibid., pp.33-35.

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- 437. Ibid., p.35 and footnote.
- 438. Albion, 23 February 1881, p.2; Post, 25 July 1881, p.6.
- 439. Courier, 5 November 1885, p.3.
- 440. Ibid.
- 441. Post, 6 June 1885, p.6.
- 442. Albion, 15 January 1881, p.2.
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- 444. Ibid.
- 445. Mercury, 24 October 1890, p.5; 5 November 1890, p.5. Historians too have been critical of Ryle's positions. Brian Harrison has argued that societies such as the Lord's Day Observance Society did not merely put the working class off Christianity because of their negativism, but were positively harmful in diverting attention from central issues of exploitation. See B.Harrison, 'Religion and Recreation in Nineteenth Century England', Past and Present, Vol.38 (December 1967), pp.98-125.
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- 493. Ibid.
- 494. Ibid.
- 495. J.C.Ryle, Our Position and Our Dangers(1885), pp.14-15.
- 496. Ibid., p.16.
- 497. Ibid.
- 498. Ibid., p.17.
- 499. Ibid., p.15.
- 500. Ibid., p.18.
- 501. Ibid., p.19.
- 502. Ibid.

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- 503. Ibid.
- 504. Ibid., pp.19-20.
- 505. Ibid., pp.20,28.
- 506. Ibid., p.22.
- 507. Ibid., p.23.
- 508. Ibid., pp.25-35.
- 509. Courier, 4 November 1885, p.4; Mercury, 4 November 1885, p.5.
- 510. Courier, 13 April 1893, pp.4,6.
- 511. Post, 16 November 1885, p.5. This was Canon Freemantle.
- 512. J.C.Ryle, Our Position and Our Dangers(1885), pp.36-40.
- 513. Ibid., p.36.
- 514. Ibid., p.38.
- 515. Ibid., p.40.
- 516. Ibid., pp.39-40 and see below pp.
- 517. Post, 10 January 1885, p.7; 6 February 1886, p.3.
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- 519. Post, 15 February 1899, p.3.
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533. O.Anderson, 'The Growth of Christian Militarism in mid-Victorian Britain', E.H.R., Vol.86(1971), pp.46-72; B.Stanley, 'Christian Responses to the Indian Mutiny of 1857', S.C.H., Vol. 20(1983), pp.277-289; O.Anderson, 'The Reactions of Church and Dissent towards the Crimean War', J.E.H., Vol.16(1965), pp.209-220; I.Bradley, The Call to Seriousness(1976), p.164. In Ryle's case patriotism was much more than simply part of a natural conservatism. H.McLeod's analysis is superficial on this point. H.McLeod, Class and Religion in the late Victorian City(1974), p.179.
534. W.B.Carpenter, Some Pages of My Life(1911), p.147.
535. Albion, 4 February 1881, p.4.
536. Courier, 18 October 1887, p.4.
537. Ibid., 16 May 1888, p.7.
538. Post, 19 December 1884, p.7.
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541. Post, 22 October 1886, p.3.
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547. Mercury, 16 March 1886, p.6.
548. Post, 15 February 1887, p.7.
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553. Ibid.
554. Mercury, 11 February 1885, p.5.
555. Post, 22 June 1887, p.6.
556. J.C.Ryle, For Kings, 1887, p.11.
557. Ibid., pp.11-15.
558. Ibid., p.16. All the figures were supplied to Ryle by Sir J.A.Picton, the Liverpool antiquary.

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560. Ibid., p.20.

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2. Post, 9 August 1884, p. 7; 14 May 1887, p. 3.
3. Ibid., 16 December 1884, p. 3.
4. Ibid., 5 December 1884, p. 7. See A.H.Grey-Edwards, A Great Heart(1906).
5. Post, 6 July 1889, pp. 4,7.
6. Mercury, 27 March 1893, p. 5; Post, 26 January 1894, p. 4; Courier, 6 July 1889, p. 4; 26 January 1894, p. 6.
7. Courier, 8 December 1887, p. 7.
8. Post, 13 November 1893, p. 7.
9. Ibid., 17 December 1885, p. 6.
10. Courier, 20 February 1886, p. 6.
11. Post, 12 December 1885, p. 3.
12. Ibid., 14 December 1885, p. 7.
13. Ibid., 19 December 1885, p. 6. The votes were Carr 56, Warr 49, Diggle 26, Penhryn 19.
14. Ibid., 23 December 1885, p. 5. The votes were Clarke 55, Jones 50, A.Stewart 34.
15. Ibid., 17 July 1886, p. 8.
16. Courier, 13 July 1886, p. 6; 14 July 1886, p. 6.
17. Ibid., 13 July 1886, p. 6.
18. Post, 17 July 1886, p. 8.
19. Ibid., 21 July 1886, p. 7. The votes were Warr 48, Lefroy 44, A.Stewart 38.
20. Ibid., 16 July 1885, p. 3.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 15 July 18885, p. 4.
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30. See also T.Park, St Bees College 1816-1895(1982), p. 89.
31. F.B.Heiser, The Story of St Aidan's College Birkenhead 1847-1947(1947), p. 19.
32. Ibid., p. 20.
33. Ibid., pp. 34-5, 42,49.
34. Ibid., p. 49.
35. Ryle therefore stands under Heaney's criticism of Bishops who did not support non-graduate theology colleges. See B.Heaney, A Different Kind of Gentleman(1976), p. 107. The table on page 199 identifies the training places of all the men ordained by Ryle.
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66. Post, 18 April 1882, p. 7; 14 April 1882, p. 3.
67. Ibid., 3 November 1882, p. 4.
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73. Ibid., 23 July 1883, p. 5.
74. Mercury, 26 July 1883, p. 5.
75. Post, 22 September 1883, p. 7.
76. Mercury, 29 September 1883, p. 6.
77. Ibid., 8 October 1883, p. 5.
78. Post, 1 December 1883, p. 7.
79. Ibid., and 13 November 1883, p. 7.
80. Post, 4 February 1884, p. 6.
81. Ibid., 9 May 1884, p. 3; 26 May 1884, p. 6.
82. D.R., 1888, p. 94.
83. Courier, 31 January 1887, p. 6.
84. Ibid., 18 April 1887, p. 4; 23 April 1887, p. 7.
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86. Ibid., 6 April 1889, p. 3.
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97. This was still the case in 1901. See Report on the State of the Diocese(1901), p. B174.
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100. Post, 18 October 1886, p. 6.
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123. Ibid., 9 March 1887, p. 3.
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140. D.R., 1897, pp. 58-59, compare with D.R., 1898, pp. 58-59.
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142. Ibid.
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144. Post, 24 April 1897, p. 7.
145. Ibid., 15 May 1897, p. 3.
146. Ibid., 8 November 1898, p. 7.
147. Liverpool Review, 4 November 1899, n.p.; Post, 22 October 1898, p. 4; Courier, 24 October 1898, p. 6.
148. 'St. Margaret's Collection', Vol. 14, n.d. (about March 1885).
149. Ibid.
150. Post, 16 November 1893, p. 6.
151. Ibid., 26 November 1886, p. 3; 29 November 1886, p. 3.
152. See Chapter Five.
153. Mercury, 6 April 1886, p. 6. This dispute resulted in a flurry of letters.
154. Post, 11 April 1892, p. 7.
155. Ibid., 11 April 1896, p. 7; 7 May 1896, p. 3.
156. Ibid., 23 January 1899, p. 7.
157. Ibid.
158. Ibid. They turned the offer down because they were too 'strained'. See Post, 26 January 1899, p. 8.
159. Ibid., 9 December 1896, p. 2.
160. Seven articles in 'St. Margaret's Collection', Vol 14, but article six is missing.

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161. 'St. Margaret's Collection', Vol 14, first article, 3 September 1881.
162. Ibid.
163. Ibid., second article, 10 September 1881.
164. Ibid., fourth article, n.d.
165. Ibid., fifth and seventh articles, n.d.
166. See Table, p.217.
167. See Table, p.217. The churches were St. Paul's, St. David's, St. John's.
168. See Table, p.217. The amount dropped 1887-1889 and drastically so in 1897.
169. See Tables, p.212-217. Each church's average bill was quite low.
170. See Tables, p.212-217.
171. Post, 24 October 1893, p. 4; 30 November 1893, p. 7; 16 December 1893, p. 3.
172. Ibid., 28 December 1893, p. 7; 7 November 1893, p. 7.
173. Ibid., 16 December 1893, p. 3.
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192. Liverpool Argus, April 1880, n.p.; Post, 15 January 1884, p. 5; Courier, 22 October 1886, p. 4.
193. Post, 22 July 1885, p. 3.
194. Ibid., 25 July 1885, p. 8.
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196. Ibid., 31 January 1881, p.3.
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198. Albion, 23 April 1881, p.3.
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202. Ibid., 28 January 1882, p.2.
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205. Albion, 2 February 1881, p.3.
206. Ibid., 7 February 1881, p.3.
207. Ibid., 18 October 1881, p.3.
208. Post, 26 January 1884, p.7.
209. Ibid.
210. Ibid., 30 January 1884, p.3.
211. Ibid.
212. For the University, founding the Bishopric, the new Royal Infirmary.
213. Post, 30 January 1884, p.3.
214. Ibid., 8 March 1884, p.7. Seventy-six made no collections.
215. Ibid., 27 January 1885, p 7.
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- 220. Ibid., 23 January 1886, p.7.
- 221. Ibid., 3 February 1886, p.7. Eighty-one made no collections.
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- 223. Ibid., 18 May 1886, p.3.
- 224. Ibid., 20 January 1887, p.3.
- 225. Ibid., 3 February 1888, p.7.
- 226. Ibid.
- 227. Ibid., 15 October 1888, p.7.
- 228. Ibid., 21 November 1888, p.3; 13 February 1889, p.3; 6 July 1889, p.5.
- 229. Ibid., 22 January 18889, p.7.
- 230. Ibid., 7 October 1889, p.3; He thought Skelmersdale was the worse.
- 231. Ibid., 6 February 1890, p.3; 5 February 1891, p.3.
- 232. Ibid., 24 January 1895, p.7.
- 233. Ibid., 22 January 1896, p.3.
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- 235. Courier, 3 March 1900, p.3.
- 236. Report on the State of the Diocese, 1902, p.9.
- 237. Ibid., 17 February 1891, p.3.
- 238. Ibid.
- 239. Ibid., 16 February 1892, p.3.
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- 245. Ibid., 6 February 1895, p.2.
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- 248. Mercury, 18 March 1881, p.5. Blundellsands was the one exemption.
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- 253. Liverpool Review, November 1884, p.10. (no day given)
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- 257. Ibid.
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- 259. St Nicholas Service Registers, 2 vols., 1880-1907.
- 260. Post, 26 May 1897, p.3.
- 261. Ibid.
- 262. Ibid., 15 June 1897, p.6; 16 June 1897, p.5.
- 263. Ibid., 26 May 1897, p.5.
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- 266. Ibid., 17 April 1883, p.4.
- 267. Post, 17 July 1880, p.7.
- 268. Mercury, 12 June 1884, p.6.
- 269. Ibid., 30 June 1883, p.6; Post, 12 October 1883, p.5; 12 April 1888, p.4.
- 270. Post, 12 April 1888, p.4.
- 271. St James' Cemetery is where the present Anglican Cathedral is sited. See Mercury, 24 July 1883, p.5.
- 272. St John's Churchyard is where the landscaped gardens back to St George's Hall.
- 273. The voting took place in March 1884. See Post, 21 March 1884, p.7.
- 274. Mercury, 6 March 1884, p.5.
- 275. Ibid., 12 June 1884, p.6.
- 276. Ibid.
- 277. T.W.Christie, A Letter to Bishop Ryle and his Cathedral Site Committee(1884), pp.3,6,7.
- 278. Ibid., pp.4-5.
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- 280. Ibid.
- 281. Ibid., p.8.
- 282. Ibid., pp.10-12.
- 283. Post, 7 March 1884, p.7.
- 284. Mercury, 21 March 1884, p.5.
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- 286. Mercury, 21 March 1884, p.5; Post, 21 March 1884, p.7.

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289. Ibid.
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292. Ibid.
293. Ibid., 11 June 1885, p.6.
294. Mercury, 20 June 1885, p.5.
295. Ibid., 27 February 1885, p.5.
296. Ibid.
297. Ibid.
298. Courier, 14 October 1896, p.4.
299. Post, 8 July 1884, p.7.
300. Ibid., 8 August 1884, p.7; 14 August 1884, p.6. The date fixed was 1 May 1885.
301. Ibid., 5 January 1886, p.5.
302. Ibid.
303. Ibid.
304. Mercury, 10 February 1886, p.6.
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306. Ibid., 6 May 1886, p.6; 17 July 1886, p.6; Post, 26 October 1886, p.6; 8 December 1886, p.7; 25 December 1886, p.6.
307. Post, 18 March 1887, p.6.
308. Ibid., 15 February 1888, p.3.
309. Ibid., 2 February 1887, p.4.
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443. Albion, 14 January 1881, p.3. He did once suggest legislation should be introduced to compel landlords to provide healthier dwellings. See Post, 21 April 1883, p.7. For Fraser's attitude to such social questions see J.W.Diggle, pp.21-23; for E.R.Wilberforce see M.C.Bickersteth, pp.61-64.
444. Post, 4 February 1898, p.2. A previous Bishop, Sumner, also saw the answer to the juxtaposition of rich and poor as lying in the generous giving of the wealthy. See R.S.Dell, 'Social and Economic Theories and Pastoral Concerns of a Victorian Archbishop', J.E.H., Vol.16(1965), pp.196-208; E.R.Norman, Church and Society in England 1770-1970(1976), p.164.
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St. Margaret's Collection

A set of unordered eighteen volumes of newspaper cuttings mainly related to the Bell Cox controversy. Twelve volumes have numbered items. I have classified them as follows:

Vol.(sequential)	Date
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(2) 313-516	August 1885-January 1886
(3) 562-774	January-March 1886
(4) 775-1152	March 1886-January 1887
(5) 1153-1460	February-May 1887
(6) 1461-1733	May 1887
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- (13)1860s mainly related to St. James-the-less
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