

The De-Christianisation of England: Anglo-Catholic Perspectives in the Early Circle of G. K. Chesterton and in the Late Twentieth Century.¹

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The nature and duration of Chesterton's Anglo-Catholic allegiance in the early years of the twentieth century has come under close scrutiny recently. While William Oddie has claimed that his Anglicanism was underpinned by a theological commitment born of close acquaintance with some of the leading lights of the Anglo-Catholic Church, Sheridan Gilley has maintained that it was at best superficial, masking a wider commitment to Christianity in general.² This article seeks to contribute further to the understanding of Chesterton's thought in what might be termed his Anglican phase by considering it as part of a more general response in the twentieth century to the de-Christianisation of England, a process that began in the previous century. It does so by capturing some of the different voices within a strand of radical Liberalism that was built on Christian foundations but against what was perhaps the dominant expression of Liberalism's connection with Christian belief in these years: the Nonconformist hold on the Liberal Party in Britain. This strand centred on the circle inhabited by Chesterton in his *Daily News* period (1901-1913), a circle that was distinct from, although overlapped with the secular form of liberal progressivism associated with other journalist networks, *The Nation* in particular.³ The tightness of the connection that members of this circle drew between the beliefs inspired by Anglo-Catholicism, England's identity as a Christian nation, and political Liberalism varied considerably. But as a refuge – both temporary and permanent – from scepticism, pessimism, and agnosticism, and in strengthening Liberal identities of a radical kind, the influence of Anglo-Catholicism in this milieu was substantial. Indeed, it invites comparison with the analogous role of Anglican thought in the work of the historian Maurice Cowling (1926–2005) towards the end of the twentieth century. Like Chesterton and his circle in earlier decades, Cowling marshalled the resources of Anglo-Catholicism to counter the “assault” on Christian belief and its marginalisation in public life that had been taking place since the middle of the nineteenth century. Cowling was a conservative who was also sometimes a Conservative in politics. Nevertheless, the parallels between his thought and that of Chesterton and certain members of his circle are striking; grounded in a strong antipathy towards *intellectual* liberalism, they are certainly greater than that between Chesterton and many of his Liberal contemporaries. The comparison will serve to emphasize the development of Anglo-Catholicism as a distinctive stream of thought and the role it has played in sharpening the instruments of political and religious critique in Britain.

The Christian Social Union and Lux Mundi.

It is well known that Chesterton's early years as a journalist were passed in close association with the Christian Social Union (CSU), a movement that was founded in 1889 and sustained by the Anglo-Catholicism of Charles Gore, Bishop of Birmingham and Oxford (1853–1932), and Henry Scott Holland (1847-1918), Canon of Truro, St. Pauls, and Christ Church, Oxford.

What was it about this movement that attracted young Liberals of Chesterton's generation to it, if only – as in his case – as a contributor to its journal *The Commonwealth* and as an occasional speaker on its platforms? At its heart was the book of essays entitled *Lux Mundi* – “Light of the World” – edited by Gore in 1889 and with contributions by Anglican High Churchmen who were associated with Keble College. Gore's concern was to liberalise the Catholicism of the Oxford movement in order to ensure its consistency with broad church ideals. At the same time he sought to resist the trend towards latitudinarianism by retaining the basis of Christianity in creeds and patristic sources, albeit shorn of biblical literalism. The logos, he maintained in a key essay of *Lux Mundi*, did not stop short at the secular trends of modern thought but embraced them fully; it was an insight that owed much to the influence of the Idealist philosophy of T.H. Green while Gore was an undergraduate at Oxford. He was also at pains to stress that Jesus's knowledge was limited by the Incarnation, thus emphasising his humanity in renouncing divine omniscience.⁴ In fashioning a new liberal Catholic wing of high churchmanship centred on the Incarnation, Gore drew on the work of Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–72). This had come down to him through Brooke Foss Westcott (1825–1901) who had taught him at Harrow. One of the leading Anglican theologians of the nineteenth century, Westcott brought method and rigour to biblical exegesis; at the same time he sought to expose Anglicanism to the challenge of social and political reform that Maurice – along with Charles Kingsley and John Ludlow – had highlighted as a priority for the Church as much as the state following the Chartist riots of 1848.

C. F. G. Masterman and F. D. Maurice.

The influence of Maurice on the Anglo-Catholicism of the late-nineteenth century as illustrated by one of Chesterton's friends in the Christian Social Union, Charles Frederick Gurney Masterman (1873–1927), is especially interesting. Masterman's association with Anglo-Catholicism began during his later years at Christ's College, Cambridge; through the invitation of J. Armitage Robinson, then Dean of the College, he joined a group of young men who moved to Dean's Yard Westminster when Robinson became Rector of St. Margaret's Church next to Westminster Abbey in 1899. They lived in close proximity to a similar group that clustered around Gore. Masterman experienced serious doubts concerning Church doctrine at this time, particularly belief in the Virgin Birth and the uniqueness of Christ, the necessity of which Gore had attempted to persuade him. Unconvinced, he seems to have turned his face against the ordination that he had been contemplating recently.⁵ But Maurice's social and cultural vision of an Anglo-Catholic Church as it had come down to him through Gore and those close to him remained a powerful influence. With Reginald Bray – a Cambridge friend then working at the University settlement in London – he went on to rent a workman's flat in Camberwell; in the south of the metropolis, he sought to understand the conditions of working-class life at first hand. It was out of this experience that he wrote his first two books: *The Heart of the Empire* (1901) and *The Abyss* (1902).

Masterman published a book on Maurice in 1907 – appropriately dedicated to Robinson in remembrance of the year he had spent with him in Westminster. It had been several years in the making and even now was written under the pressure of his burgeoning

professional commitments, including that of his election to Parliament in the previous year. Nevertheless, he did not allow the project to stall. Not least, in writing about Maurice he was writing about his own movement away from evangelicalism, Unitarian in Maurice's case, Wesleyan in his own. Common to the upbringing of both men had been a narrow focus on the Bible and lack of contact with the wider traditions of the Church, on the one hand, and literature, on the other. Masterman wrote sympathetically of Maurice's move from a sect to a Church, one that did not refer to the Bible alone but was in touch with a "historic creed"; in this way, Masterman stressed, Maurice was no "Broad Churchman" as he was often taken to be, setting his face emphatically against "that vague and diffused undogmatic religion which is so dear to the heart of the man of the world" – the mainspring of (philosophical) Liberalism (although not Christian freedom).⁶ Masterman was also sympathetic to Maurice's insistence that the Kingdom of Christ and associated law of Christ belonged to all, regardless of their beliefs and regardless of their sins. Against evangelical Christians, this entailed an embrace of Maurice's heretical view that unbelievers as much as the devout were members of the Church; also, that the avoidance of eternal punishment did not exhaust religious motivation, an assertion that cost him his Chair of Theology at King's College London in 1853.⁷ Most of all, perhaps, Masterman was receptive to Maurice's conception of a Universal Church composed of national bodies, as set out in his early work, *The Kingdom of Christ* (1838). Maurice meant by this a Church that was rooted in creeds and ordinances, with its local branches charged with reaching the hearts of the multitude through their affirmation of a "kingdom"; they were not, as in the existing form of the Anglican Church simply to minister to the needs of an aristocracy and maintain an ecclesiastical "system".⁸ It was on this basis that Maurice advocated a leading role for the Church in unifying the nation, going well beyond the teaching of dogma.⁹ It was also the basis on which he broke with the Oxford Movement, concerned primarily, it seemed to him, with "theory and ancient controversies."¹⁰

For Masterman, it was important to emphasize Maurice's belief that the road back to faith for the English lay in politics rather than German metaphysics – the latter being the route taken by Carlyle. To this end Church and State were to be regarded as an indissoluble unity.¹¹ Maurice – Masterman recorded – expressed his horror at the "atheism of the religious world," an atheism that was rooted in the conviction that "GOD has nothing to do with nations and politics, 'which should be left to such men as Metternich and Louis Napoleon'"; from this anathema "nothing", exclaimed Maurice in Masterman's account, "but a baptism of fire can deliver us."¹²

Christianity, Liberalism and Reform.

Masterman was fully alive to the conservative slant that Maurice gave to this view, namely that the Church should use the existing structures of the state rather than seek to transform them; as Edward Norman has remarked, it was the counterpart of Maurice's insistence on the Kingdom of God existing in society as it was, not as society might become in some more perfect future.¹³ Masterman certainly highlighted Maurice's rejection of popular sovereignty as problematic, in contrast to his laudable condemnation of the laws of competition and the principles of Utilitarianism. He emphasized the naivety of Maurice's view that faith should be placed in a "united company of the good visibly warring against the evil" as the principal

instrument of change: “Nothing is more certain than that, were such conditions attained, the good would be found as visibly and bitterly fighting against the good, as the evil against the evil.”¹⁴ Masterman became a campaigning Liberal on the “condition of the people” question in response to his sense of the limitations of Maurice’s approach. This is despite the fact that his association with the Liberal Party and Liberalism more generally lacked the elemental quality of Chesterton’s at this time (as will be seen later in this article). He confessed to the Liberal Party grandees who sought his candidature in what was to become his first parliamentary contest in 1903 that he was not even sure whether he was a Liberal. They persisted all the same.¹⁵ What he did share with Chesterton was a concern to shift the focus of progressive politics away from the terrain of “the little ‘A’s, the Atheists, Abolitionists, Anti-Vaccinationists” and towards “ordinary activity and feeling”.¹⁶ In his view, this “ordinary activity and feeling” was strongly national in focus. For Masterman, the claim of the people to an “English inheritance” – hitherto a monopoly of a “small and privileged class” – had to be made central to the Liberal agenda; it was the counterpart in politics of his sense of the need to retrieve for the people a Church that had become a bastion of respectability and complacency, just as it had in Newman’s time.¹⁷ The influence of Maurice on Masterman’s concern to forge a “spiritual democracy” in England is evident here, and is of some significance. As Stuart Jones has shown, the spiritual ideal of the nation associated with Maurice and Liberal Anglicans such as Thomas Arnold before him became the chief expression of English national identity, occupying the space that political nationalism filled in Continental Europe.¹⁸ What Masterman did was to apply this nineteenth-century legacy to new social conditions at the turn of the twentieth century, through the auspices of an Anglo-Catholic movement that had been reconstituted around Gore.

In the book that sealed Masterman’s reputation as a major commentator on the “condition of England” question – a work he edited as *The Heart of the Empire* in 1901 – he wrote of the new city race that the English had essentially become; but while, for the most part, they had kept up an astonishingly high standard of decency and morality in the process, religion had “vanished, and the curtain of the horizon has descended round the material things and the pitiful duration of human life.” This was a serious problem for “the future of the Anglo-Saxon” race as much as for the individuals whose lives had been left desolate by the rise of a new “street-bred people.”¹⁹ While Masterman was not impervious to Social Darwinist concerns, he was driven as much, if not more, by a sense of shame at the conditions of England’s new, predominantly urban environment, as the inefficiency of its human stock. Writing three years later in a collection of essays on English patriotism to which Chesterton (and Bray, now a London County Councillor) also contributed, he pitched his argument for remedial legislation squarely at the level of national self-esteem. The reforming impulse with which he clearly identified the most was held by those who were “resentful of acquiescence in the passing of so many lives in gray shadow” and who questioned the justice of a social order “which proclaims, as the best that it can make of its working peoples, the restless, uninspired toil of England’s great cities, as the finest flower of its civilization the tenement dwelling, the workhouse, or the gaol.”²⁰

The Re-Christianisation of England: Masterman and Chesterton.

Reversing the slide towards de-Christianisation in England was part and parcel of the task of confronting urban despoliation and the eclipse of the nation it had brought in its train. This is apparent in Masterman's work as a reviewer for a number of newspapers and journals at the beginning of the twentieth century, including the main organ of the CSU – *The Commonwealth*.²¹ For example, in reviewing the recent novel, *Luke Delmege*, of the Irish priest Patrick Sheehan in 1902, he praised the author's skill in evoking the "intimate blend" of religion and patriotism in Ireland, for all his recognition of the faults of his country. Masterman also admired the contrasting portrait that Sheehan drew of South London through the eyes of his eponymous character, a portrait that underlined the glaring absence of both religion and patriotism in England; the city appeared as a "huge dead carcass, swarming with clotted masses of maggots ... a tenth circle of the *citta dolente*."²² Through the pages of *The Daily News* from 1902 onwards (he became literary editor of the newspaper in 1903, a position he retained until 1907 following his election to Parliament in the previous year), he went on the offensive against the forces of unbelief that were responsible for the abject spiritual state of London's inhabitants. One of his most telling reviews was of a book by the rationalist thinker G. Lowes Dickinson in March 1905. In the course of dismissing the author's demand that religious belief stands or falls on the basis of irrefutable evidence that neither revelation nor individual experience can supply, Masterman maintained that this position was rooted in a fallacy, that of:

the solitary mind locked up within its own barriers; the consensus of humanity elaborating some universal "Reason" – the experience of the race seems to be something negligible. It is this keen, detached, cold intelligence which is the new instrument by which man is to arrive at truth. The will here counts for nothing at all, nor the response to the demand of a desire beyond that instrument's control. Religions have not in the past owned such origins. They have been beaten out of the experience of humanity in an age-long contest with the forces which make for destruction – those seven deadly sins which scarcely enter within the intellectual horizon, but which inevitably bring all Paradises of intellectual construction into dust and ashes.

Rationalism, in other words, was the intellectual counterpart of the evangelicalism on which Masterman – and Maurice before him – had turned their backs, seeking a religion that was grounded firmly in society. Society was national in character, and demanded a national church for its expression, linked to, but not absorbed by the universal church. He ended the review with a quotation from Newman's *Grammar of Assent* concerning the roots of religion in belief rather than knowledge – belief that has ever been a "message, or a history, or a vision."

Significantly, a variation of Masterman's theme was echoed in a somewhat different context by Chesterton later that year in opening the Kensington branch of the Christian Social Union. As recorded in *The Commonwealth*, he took as his theme the debasement of certain words in modern society: orthodoxy, respectability (which, unlike Masterman, he regarded as full of subversive potential), and society. The debasement of the word society, in particular, provided a fitting theme for the occasion, since the organisation he was addressing existed to overcome that sense of "spiritual isolation, that perfectly placid moral security which in 99

cases out of 100 represents the members of the more comfortable classes in the modern world.” He maintained that along with respectability, society for these classes was a term of reproach, something to be avoided as liable to offend the finer feelings of mankind. By referring to “the poet in the garret,” he clearly saw a prime example of such unhealthy distancing from society in the *fin de siècle* movement, with its catchphrase of “art for art’s sake.” It was analogous to the Jingo who, in rejecting the ethic of respectability, imagined that “the more other countries hate us, the more it shows how splendid we are”.²³ Anglo-Catholicism, then, CSU style, was for Chesterton an extension of his reaction against the political and aesthetic currents of the 1890s, of the cult of strength and success, on the one hand, and artistic purity, on the other.

Anglo-Catholicism in this form was also linked to Chesterton’s notion that a programme for change was futile without the backing of what he called the “historic church.” This can be seen in his early attacks in *The Commonwealth* upon Robert Blatchford, the journalist who crafted the case for socialism on the basis of agnosticism. In one of his articles he castigated Blatchford’s socialist ideal for lacking any basis in existing society, unlike Christianity which went down to its very roots. While this made Christianity much the more impeachable of the two systems of thought, at the same time it meant that “our word was made flesh.” Similarly, Chesterton was at pains to point out that – far from emerging out of the dark ages of superstition as Blatchford and other freethinkers claimed – Christianity was the product of what he called “an extraordinary intellectual civilisation, a civilisation that had exhausted all the scepticisms that there are.” He continued, “the Christianising of a man, say, like Augustine of Hippo, was precisely like the conversion of Mr. John Morley to Christian Science. It may have been morbidity, it may have been hypocrisy, it may have been madness. But certainly it was not ignorance”.²⁴

Subverting the Subversive: Literature and Christian Renewal.

To Chesterton, the parallels between the era of Christian conversion and early twentieth century Britain seemed too obvious to labour. They were especially apparent in the vibrant literary culture of his time. As one historian has maintained, this was the fruit of the abolition of religious tests three-quarters of a century earlier; liberal values rose to ascendancy with the downfall of the confessional state, harnessed to literary activity as the new marker of social worth in place of “birth ... property, patriotism and the law.” This development had the effect of blurring the line that divided the material from the spiritual, belief from unbelief, and history from natural history. Quite literally, “words became flesh,” giving new authority to writers that was at once stabilising and subversive.²⁵

Chesterton, Masterman and others in his circle can be seen as representing a new subversive twist within this movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, subjecting the intellectual and spiritual trends of the previous century to close scrutiny. They used their literary powers to correct what they regarded as the errors of scepticism, on the one hand, and heterodoxy, on the other.

In relation to scepticism, for example, they targeted the Victorian rejection of an immortality that went beyond the mere perpetuation of the race in earthly life. On this account, in separate and searching reviews, both Chesterton and Masterman reviewed critically the poem “Apollo and the Seaman” by the Irish poet and playwright Herbert Trench in a new book of poems published in 1907. The essence of Trench’s vision was the conception of the earth itself as a ship, replacing the “ship of immortality” that had apparently now sunk from view, with the active encouragement of Apollo representing God and all the gods. In his response, Masterman appealed to Robert Browning’s vision of an earth made inhabitable only by the prospect of a larger life beyond earthly life in his poem “Easter Day.”²⁶ Chesterton played with the metaphor of the earth as a ship and recognised that it had some basis in the earth. “The earth,” he maintained, “has certainly the accidents of a ship; it carries people in safety through dangers of infinity; it passes abysses of horror, yet always keeps its course.” But, he continued,

these are not the essence. The essence of a ship is that it was made by somebody to go somewhere for some imaginable human good. Does Apollo, does Mr. Trench believe that the earth was meant to go somewhere by somebody? If he does, he has conceded the essential miracle of orthodox religion; and he need not be worried about such a trifling thing as Immortality. If he does not believe it was designed for anything, then he may call the world a ship or a cannon ball, or a boomerang, or anything he pleases. He will not comfort us with metaphors.²⁷

In relation to heterodoxy, they both attacked “The New Theology” associated with the charismatic Congregationalist minister R. J. Campbell, previously an Anglo-Catholic who was much influenced by Maurice.²⁸ Campbell was a keen follower of Maurice, although he misused considerably Maurice’s conception of the all-inclusive nature of the Kingdom of Christ on earth in support of an ideal of a new, earthly heaven. The New Theology was a bid to conflate God and man in response to nineteenth-century criticism of the historical authenticity of the gospels. At the same time, Campbell sought to strengthen the cause of social reform by dispensing with the notion of human sin as inimical to the creation of a new heaven on earth. In 1908 Masterman wrote a hostile review of Campbell’s book *The New Theology*, emphasising its radical departure – once again – from “historic Christendom.” He emphasized the liberties that Campbell had taken with the gospels, reading back into them what he thought Jesus ought to have said as an apostle of social justice rather than what he was actually reported to have said.²⁹

Similarly, Chesterton took aim – in characteristically friendly style – against Campbell and other New Theologians who had dispensed with dogmatic religion as an obstacle to the attainment of religious unanimity, on the one hand, and social reform, on the other. He maintained that the venture was unlikely to succeed on both accounts. First, it was only through dogma that answers could be provided to the most important questions of life, those, that is, of a theological and moral – as opposed to a scientific – nature; while science could reach indisputable conclusions freely, this was because its area of inquiry was closely circumscribed. Second, in denying the transcendence of God, the New Theology lacked any external standard of justice and goodness outside of the individual; the search for God

“within” could only lead to the justification of evil as the product of a search that was at worst misguided. It was passive in the face of wrong, as – thought Chesterton – was the religion of the East, by which he meant chiefly Buddhism. The weapons against social injustice were to be found in the old Christian creeds rather than the new, a claim he was to make central to his book *Orthodoxy*.³⁰

Chesterton and the Influence of Anglo-Catholicism.

How is Chesterton’s attachment to dogmas and creeds – especially those of a certain antiquity – best understood? For William Oddie, it reflected the influence of Gore in seeking to maintain creedal orthodoxy within Anglicanism at the beginning of the twentieth century, not least following the opening he had given to pantheism in *Lux Mundi*. He quotes two sermons that Gore delivered in 1905 as having particular significance in shifting Chesterton further towards an embrace of orthodoxy in religion.³¹ But one can argue that the source of Chesterton’s concern at the development of creedless forms of both Christianity and agnosticism lay in a strong disposition towards boundaries and separations; and these were rooted in his English identity, on the one hand, and his sympathy with Ireland, on the other. Both arose from an allegiance to the Liberal Party that he once described as having been formed a little while before he was even born.³² In 1901 he chided an American follower of Walt Whitman, Charles Ferguson, whose work he otherwise commended, for associating Liberalism with cosmopolitanism; in doing so, Ferguson had failed to recognise that to “love humanity while despising patriotism is to love the bodies of the peoples and to despise their souls.”³³ This concern with boundaries might have been strengthened by his association in the early 1900s with Anglo-Catholics such as Conrad Noel – the son of a mid-Victorian poet, Roden Noel, much praised by Chesterton for holding the line against an encroaching aestheticism in literature and poetry.³⁴ However, to maintain, as Oddie does, that Noel was a major influence in shaping Chesterton’s spiritual concept of the nation is to underestimate a deep-rooted sensibility that might have been equally responsible, at least.³⁵

What is interesting is the debt that Noel owed to Maurice as an Anglo-Catholic and Christian socialist. Like Campbell, Noel took from Maurice a belief in the universality of Christ’s kingdom as one Commonwealth; within the Church this was expressed in extravagant ritual, music, decoration and liturgy that celebrated the sense of “wonder, justice, love and worship” God had created in mankind.³⁶ The corporate, democratic style of worship practised in his parish at Thaxted was strongly national in flavour, joining forces with Percy Dearmer’s parallel interests in producing hymns and ceremonial in the Anglican communion that were close to popular traditions in England. Like Chesterton, Noel was open in his avowal of revolution; but he was quicker than Chesterton to recruit modern critics of Christianity like Nietzsche to his cause. Nietzsche was quite the opposite of a “brutalitarian,” Noel maintained in a review of a biography of Nietzsche in 1911, one of many literary essays he contributed to the *Daily News* at this time; the philosopher of the superman was also much less the advocate of an “aristocracy of weak nerves” as suggested by Chesterton in *Heretics*. On the contrary, Nietzsche provided a welcome antidote to the “exaltation of a sickly and

spurious pity popularised in this country, a pity which excludes pride in self or race, and has no place for wrath.” Against Parsifal, Nietzsche recognised that there was no “Salvation by proxy”; instead, “man must be saved by virtue of something in his own essence.” Was this, Noel concluded, “so very far gone from a certain essential aspect of the doctrine of the Incarnation? At least, such dogma supplies a healthy corrective for a slack and feeble society of pseudo-Christians and sentimentalists.”³⁷

As this review suggests, Noel and Chesterton were sharply divided by the pantheism on which Noel’s view of the sacramental character of the whole world bordered, as developed from Maurice’s Incarnational theology. Certainly, in the essay he contributed to the volume *England: A Nation* in 1904, Chesterton was at pains to emphasize that national boundaries were a psychological necessity on account of a wider ability of the human mind to enjoy and admire things only when they are defined and limited.³⁸ This echoed the protest he had made the previous year in the course of his running polemic against Blatchford’s supporters against the shapelessness of a universe without a transcendent God.³⁹ But such differences were well submerged at this time beneath the more prominent thread running throughout his essay and that of Noel, and also that of Masterman in the same volume: a concern for the neglect of England in an imperialist age, and the importance of harnessing patriotic sentiment to social and political change at home. The hostility towards empire expressed by these writers – particularly Chesterton – was not shared by Henry Scott Holland in his critical review of the book for the *Commonwealth*.⁴⁰

Anglo-Catholicism and Radical Liberalism in the early twentieth century.

One may venture to suggest that Anglo-Catholicism – certainly in its CSU form – was a convenient peg on which Chesterton and like-minded contemporaries were able to hang a variety of political and theological beliefs as they matured in the early years of the twentieth century. It was an important peg nonetheless. Not least, it enriched the contemporary springs of patriotism – hitherto limited to Jingoism – through a new association with historic Christendom and the sacraments dispensed by the universal church. This was against the Roman Catholic Church that for Noel, at least, was a force for weakening national ties.⁴¹ At the same time, the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church offered a solid front from which to mount campaigns against the effect of scepticism in undermining patriotism as much as religion.⁴² Then again, the Catholic conception of Christendom nurtured by the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church seemed better equipped to confront the social evils of the present than the New Theology and other sects.

However, this activity did not always redound to the advantage of Anglo-Catholicism in the long-term. Chesterton, as Sheridan Gilley has remarked, found the CSU’s brand of activism ineffectual.⁴³ Indeed, there are good grounds for regarding Cardinal Manning as being of earlier and more lasting influence on Chesterton, both as a religious figure and a social reformer; not least, he was a nationalist – particularly in relation to Ireland – and a critic of empire, unlike Henry Scott Holland.⁴⁴

Noel remained on the fringes of the Church, doing more for “Catholic socialism”⁴⁵ than the Catholic Anglicanism of the *Lux Mundi* movement. In 1912 he speculated on how the Church would appear in 2000 in “the Great State”. This was for a volume of essays of that title, “the Great State” being defined by H.G Wells in the opening chapter as “the ideal of a social system no longer localised, no longer immediately tied to and conditioned by the cultivation of the land, world-wide in its interests and outlook and catholic in its tolerance and sympathy, a system of great individual freedom with a universal understanding among its citizens of a collective thought and purpose.”⁴⁶ The only writer “at once interested and impartial” that the editors could find to contribute on the perspective of the Church in “the Great State” – significant in itself – was Noel. He anticipated the institutional separation of Church and State, the Church becoming the expression of a rejuvenated national spirit that had overcome the religious doubts of the previous two centuries and was popular in all its many aspects: art, ritual, and government. Thus far, his affinity with Chesterton’s political thought is evident; but equally evident is the distance he was travelling from his friend – and Anglo-Catholicism generally – in accepting the international character of “the Great State” which the Church would serve, for all its new-found institutional independence. This was despite his confidence that, “by each generous advance towards World-fellowship, by every casting-off of insularities and parochialisms,” the individuality of nations would be enhanced.⁴⁷ His embrace of pantheism, indeed polytheism, as essential elements of the religion of the Great State in a final flourish to the essay must have raised a good deal of concern about his orthodoxy among friends and fellow churchmen.

Of all three writers, Masterman was perhaps most faithful to the Anglo-Catholic vision of recent years. Reflecting in his book of 1905, *In Peril of Change*, on the findings of a major survey of the religious life of London that George Haw had undertaken the *Daily News* two years earlier, he singled out for praise the work of a “certain section of the High Church party”. Among the myriad sects and missions jostling for influence in the metropolis, this section alone identified with the needs and concerns of Labour at the level of justice rather than mere charity; it alone, also, had proclaimed the “social gospel of a visible kingdom of God,” earning “the respect and friendship of the leaders of labour and the devotion of the poor” to a degree that many opponents of its doctrines found baffling. The purity of its motives was evident in the habit of its servants of “go[ing] down and liv[ing] amongst the people.”⁴⁸ One of the exemplars of the Anglo-Catholic movement in this mould was Father Robert Dolling, whose work among the poor in Portsmouth and then Poplar was legendary. Masterman praised Dolling further for bringing spiritual depth to the lives of his parishioners in seeking to change their conditions. While averse to ceremony and ritualism as an aesthetic cultivation among attendees of “‘Cathedral’ service,” Dolling, he made clear, embraced Catholic discipline as a positive social good. He recognised that “the dreary condition of minds vacant and dulled with an entirely material outlook and little power of resistance to the forces of evil – the condition in which he found great masses of the neglected poor – could only be broken up and restored to a living faith by the full inheritance of Sacramental worship.”⁴⁹

Most apparent both here and in all Masterman's religious writing was what Maurice Cowling has described as a concern to free Anglicanism of the vice of conventional respectability, especially in the suburbs, to say nothing of the stiff resistance to any kind of social engagement to be found in the churches of the West End: there, Anglicanism existed merely to prop up the existing order rather than to question its basis. This antipathy towards the Anglicanism of the establishment was linked to hostility to the kind of latitudinarianism in which Christian apologists had recently engaged, a hostility that Masterman shared with Gore as well as J. N. Figgis of his own generation and later on, C. S. Lewis.⁵⁰

However, a bias against latitudinarianism did not mean – as in Chesterton's case – a sympathy with orthodoxy. In common with Frederick Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1896–1902, Masterman emphasised the importance of questioning the Church's doctrinal foundations, even if he did not always agree with the results, as in the case of R. J. Campbell and the "New Theology". In *In Peril of Change*, he praised Temple – a contributor to the infamous *Essays and Reviews* – as a campaigner for the "right of free inquiry, [and] the acceptance of knowledge," his "indifference to accusations of dishonesty" and "hostility of all that is comfortable and orthodox." These were qualities that were "never more needed than now." In a review of Lord Acton's essays a few years earlier, Masterman had been more critical of a similar mindset, rebuking the great historian for unsettling belief in the process.⁵¹ But Temple had the virtue of being typically English; no great scholar or orator, he was "practical, not visionary, hating humbug and cant, sturdily pursuing his own business." Masterman's message was clear: Temple's effect on the church in ensuring that it made a sharp public impact was worth more than the clear-cut, dogmatic nature of the Oxford Movement that had provided the starting-point of his theological journey. The same held true for Westcott in embracing mysticism, alienating the Broad Church movement as well as the Tractarians in the process. Masterman hailed Temple, Westcott, Dolling and Mandell Creighton as centrepieces of the Victorian Church; they had not flinched from addressing the problem of "faith disturbed and uncertain guidance which broods over the future of England".⁵²

The contrast here with Chesterton's perspective on the efficacy of the Anglican Church in his interpretation of Newman's conversion is marked. Reflecting on Newman's legacy in 1933, he emphasized that here too (like Temple for Masterman) was an example of an Anglican who could not have been more English if he tried, a quality that Chesterton captured beautifully in his further characterisation of Newman's "seclusion and sensibility, and some of the inhibitions and inherited hesitations of that insular culture". Yet, unlike those in the Church he left behind, Newman possessed "the wider vision and conviction" and the realisation that the bulk of the Anglican Church was in ignorance of the Anglo-Catholic theory of the Church of England. In referring to Newman's view that "whatever graces and good traditions might remain in Anglicanism, it would in a corporate sense continue to stand for a vague Protestantism," Chesterton could well have been describing his own conclusion about the Anglican Church, arrived at independently.⁵³

Maurice Cowling, Anglo-Catholicism, and Public Doctrine.

For all their differences, the writers considered in this essay exemplify an aspect of Christianity that Maurice Cowling highlighted in *Religion and Public Doctrine in Modern England*: its inclusion of a “structure of public action” – as with all religions – in addition to its concern to minister to the spiritual needs of individuals.⁵⁴ Cowling’s idiosyncratic but magisterial three volume work – now the subject of a comprehensive re-evaluation⁵⁵ – explored the systematic erosion of the public dimension of Christianity in Britain since the mid-nineteenth century. In Volume Three, he focused on the “meanings” that had emerged from a welter of “subjective crises” on the part of “thinkers, generations, and institutions” in response to the new uncertainties and external events that were transforming England.⁵⁶ The uncertainties were grounded in three competing bodies of thought: that which stemmed from the latitudinarian belief that Christianity should be accommodated to modern thought and knowledge; the Christian belief that latitudinarianism “gives away too much”; and the “post-Christian” thought that rejects Christianity entirely. The first two had been advanced as part of a calculated “assault” on “normal Christianity”⁵⁷ across a wide range of English professional life, the result of the all-pervasive and unthinking liberalism of the “secular, professional academic intelligence”. At the root of this assault was a response to the question “what should the English believe? Should they believe in Christianity? what role should religion play in the public realm”?⁵⁸

Such questions had been raised following the discarding of the confessional state in 1828, accompanied by Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and the Great Reform Act of 1832; for Cowling, the reconstitution of politics and religion went hand in hand with the downfall of the *ancien régime* consequent upon these events.⁵⁹ They were raised, he insisted, on the basis of a “doctrine about England, whether the subjects they have written or talked about have been English or not.” In this vein, he pointed to the way in which Chesterton justified Christianity before the publication of *Orthodoxy* in 1908 not in terms of its truth but as a form of “public activity,” and a highly successful one at that.⁶⁰

Cowling’s interest in Masterman, Chesterton, and a host of other writers who formed part of the counter-offensive against the movement of “de-Christianisation” merits close if brief attention at the conclusion of this article. Not least, this is because the interest developed from a revival of Anglo-Catholic thought in the second quarter of the twentieth century associated with his teachers at Cambridge in 1943, Charles Smyth and E. C. Hoskyns, in particular. They were the successors to Westcott, Gore and other Anglo-Catholics of the later nineteenth century who sought to “modernise” Christianity while retaining its supernatural core. Contact with this second wave of Anglo-Catholic reformers sharpened Cowling’s opposition to the hold of secular liberal rationalism on contemporary English thought. Smyth’s reference to the “hoary superstitions” of the Rationalist⁶¹ particularly appealed to his disposition towards “religion and reaction” when he went up to Cambridge. In a wide-ranging essay, Ian Harris has well brought out the importance for Cowling of Hoskyns’s emphasis on the fourth gospel as uniquely embodying a conception of reality and authority that lay outside human experience; this pointed to a notion not only of God’s transcendence but – against natural religion – of the necessity of a church to salvation.⁶² A theology that restored the Incarnation and the Resurrection to the centre of Christianity had the effect of

dislodging humanity from the prior place it had been accorded in the cosmos by what Cowling termed “‘liberalism’ in its widest sense.”⁶³ Harris goes on to explore how Cowling’s interest in history – political and intellectual – developed out of this recognition of liberalism’s supremacy in English national life. Beginning with his essay on *Mill and Liberalism* in 1963, Cowling set out to test the adequacy of liberalism for achieving national ends in politics and religion now that Christianity had ceased to provide “the assumptions of public action”. It was a test that liberalism failed comprehensively, resting as it did, on “arbitrary certainties” and “presuppositions” that – unlike those of Christianity – lacked a “church, a special revelation or any particular God.”⁶⁴ Therefore the “post-Christian” religion of liberalism could offer nothing more than a shadow of the “genuine ecclesiasticity” of the historic Church it challenged.⁶⁵ The Augustinianism that underlay Cowling’s “assumptions” about the truth of Christianity extended to their implications for a model of church-state relations that worked downwards to the governed in order to produce agreement in society; it was on this basis that Cowling undertook his three major studies of British politics over three momentous periods.⁶⁶

Although Chesterton – unlike Cowling – was no Erastian in politics,⁶⁷ he shared Cowling’s distrust of modern elites and their hold on what Cowling termed “the democratic public” in what was effectively an ecclesiastical vacuum; at the height of his Anglican phase, in 1904, he denounced Balfour’s Education Act (1902) as the triumph of a ruling class in Parliament who cared little for religion and in some cases morality too.⁶⁸ Common to the two men also was a belief that politics could not displace religion in answering the spiritual needs of humanity.⁶⁹ This view helps to explain Chesterton’s distance from Nonconformist attempts to reverse the 1902 Education Act by imposing denominational religious education on all maintained schools and excluding voluntary schools from rate support. In favouring a “secular solution,” Chesterton sought to protect religion from political control.⁷⁰ Masterman did likewise, voting against the Liberal Government in the debate in the House of Commons on the Education Bill of 1906, despite his recent election as a Liberal MP.⁷¹

Anglo-Catholic sensibility and its Twentieth-Century Fate.

These interventions in the education debate reflect a clear Anglo-Catholic sensibility established over the last century and a half: the importance of keeping religion and politics in close proximity while recognising the autonomy of both and within the context of a clear and overarching nation. Sensibility was one thing, however; ensuring its ascendancy within the Church was quite another. Some exponents of Anglo-Catholicism – like Masterman – believed that through its nineteenth-century leaders the Church of England had achieved some success in this endeavour. But he died just as the Prayer Book crisis of 1927 was unfolding, one of his last acts before his early death being the dictation of an article to his wife on the crisis in the Church.⁷²

The crisis proved the death-knell of Anglo-Catholicism as far as Chesterton was concerned. In the words of the historian Keith Robbins, the Church, in seeking a revision of the Prayer Book, had attempted to “keep abreast of modern needs” while remaining loyal to “ancient order.”⁷³ This was by producing, effectively, two alternative Prayer-Books. But the

proposal – particularly the authorisation of the Reservation of the Sacrament – was rejected by Parliament, confirming Chesterton in his view that he had been right to give up on the Anglican Church. The Church had proved to be no more than a vehicle of the Protestant establishment rather than a religious organisation with its own ends and purposes. It could not have been otherwise, it now seemed clear to him; for the beauty of the Book of Common Prayer was wholly the result of “apostate Catholics,” the last act of Catholic England. It had been devised it at a time when,

even amid the treachery and panic of Cranmer, and in the very moment of men rending themselves from Rome and Christendom, they could lift in such sublime language so authentic a cry of Christian men: “By Thy precious death and burial; by Thy glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Ghost.”

Yet there was no avoiding the fact that it was written to service the needs of a new Protestant state. As Robbins has argued, the maintenance of this role as shown in recent events could only diminish the Englishness of the Church.⁷⁴ In his Anglican days, Chesterton now realised, he had “exaggerated the importance of an intelligent minority,” the minority with whom he had associated. He had failed to realise that the Church was controlled by “a much vaster and vaguer background of men; who did not believe in anything in particular, but who claimed to be Protestant.” Still, it came as a shock to discover in 1927-8 how widespread the “vulgarisation of religion” had become; “the public and the world without were given up to Arian and Pelagian demagogues like Dean Inge⁷⁵ and Dr. Barnes⁷⁶; and a sort of negative Protestantism could still sweep the field.” The home secretary, William Joynson-Hicks, an evangelical Anglican, who had rallied the House of Commons against the revised Prayer-Book, would have been uppermost in his mind in characterising those who had settled the controversy as “a mob of politicians, atheists, agnostics, dissenters, Parsees; avowed enemies of that Church or of any Church, who happened to have M.P. after their names.”⁷⁷ He reserved his strongest contempt for a Protestant organisation – most likely the Protestant Truth Society – that had presented the MPs who had voted against the revised Prayer-Book with a “big black Bible or Prayer-Book, or both, decorated outside with a picture of the Houses of Parliament,” in his eyes a hot-bed of corruption. The only response seemed one of sarcasm: *In hoc signo vinces* (“in this sign shalt thou conquer”).⁷⁸

For Cowling writing at the beginning of the twentieth-first century, the Anglican vision of England had been virtually eclipsed, leaving a people who had been schooled in “duty, decency and death in two world wars” at the mercy of “liberation, denigration, moral uncertainty and an over-heavy State”.⁷⁹

However, as Cowling’s work shows, Anglo-Catholicism remains a powerful tool to be mobilised against the assumptions of liberalism in both politics and thought; assumptions that have sought the erosion of Christianity and have undermined the coherence of England’s “historic personality” at the same time. The legacy can still be recognised in the concerns that have been raised about the multicultural, anti-Christian face of Britain in the twenty-first century by leading Anglicans, for example, the Bishop of York, Dr. John Sentamu and the Bishop of Rochester until his resignation in 2009, the Rev. Michael Nazir-Ali. It remains to

be seen whether the Ordinariate in the Roman Catholic Church established by Pope Benedict for Anglo-Catholics will maintain a vibrant High Church tradition of cultural and political criticism, as well as Catholic belief.

¹ I would like to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council for funding the research that led to the writing of this article.

² Sheridan Gilley, "A New Chesterton Biography," *The Chesterton Review*, XXXV (Spring/Summer 2009), pp. 69-76; review of William Oddie, *Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy: The Making of GKC, 1874-1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

³ See Jock MacLeod, "Between Politics and Culture: Liberal Journalism and Literary Cultural Discourse at the *Fin de Siècle*," *ELT*, 51 (2009), pp. 5-22.

⁴ Alan Wilkinson, "Charles Gore, 1853-1932," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter, *ODNB*), 60 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), vol. 22, pp. 974-8.

⁵ Lucy Masterman, *C. F. G. Masterman: A Biography* (London: Frank Cass, 1968), pp. 30-31.

⁶ C. F. G. Masterman, *Frederick Denison Maurice* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1907), pp. 28, 37-8, 229-30; 51.

⁷ Masterman, *Frederick Denison Maurice*, pp. 229, 187.

⁸ Masterman, *Frederick Denison Maurice*, pp. 40-42.

⁹ Masterman, *Frederick Denison Maurice*, pp. 234, 40.

¹⁰ Masterman, *Frederick Denison Maurice*, pp. 49-50.

¹¹ Masterman, *Frederick Denison Maurice*, pp. 192-3. The comment was recorded in the biography written by his son: see E. R. Norman, *The Victorian Christian Socialists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 22.

¹² Masterman, *Frederick Denison Maurice*, p. 191.

¹³ Norman, *The Victorian Christian Socialists*, p. 22. Edward Norman (1938-), was an ecclesiastical historian and Chancellor of York Minster until his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 2004. In the twentieth century he maintained the Anglo-Catholic emphasis on the doctrinal integrity of Christianity against modern attempts to subordinate it to political interests touched on at the end of this article. See his Reith Lectures, 1978, *Christianity and the World Order* (1979), and *An Anglican Catechism* (2001).

¹⁴ Masterman, *Frederick Denison Maurice*, p. 68.

¹⁵ L. Masterman, *C. F. G. Masterman*, p. 51.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁷ Masterman, *Frederick Denison Maurice*, p. 102.

¹⁸ H. S. Jones, "The Idea of the National in Victorian Political Thought," *European Journal of Political Theory*, 5:1 (2006), 12-21.

¹⁹ "Realities at Home," C. F. G. Masterman (ed.), *The Heart of the Empire: Discussions of Problems of Modern City Life in England* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1901), pp. 7-9.

²⁰ "The English City," in Lucian Oldershaw (ed.), *England: A Nation, Being the Papers of the Patriots' Club* (London: Brimley Johnson, 1904), pp. 62-3.

²¹ He assumed the editorship of the *Commonwealth: A Christian Social Magazine* in 1901, and set about transforming it from the niche journal of the arts that it had become under its former editor, Henry Scott Holland, into a campaigning organ of social reform: Lucy Masterman, *C.F.G. Masterman*, p. 40.

²² Review of *Luke Delmege* (London: Longmans, 1901), *Commonwealth*, VII (May 1902), 153-4.

²³ "Society," *Commonwealth*, X (December 1905), pp. 367-71.

²⁴ "The Dogmas of Free Thought: A Defence of the Non-Controversial Method," *Commonwealth*, VIII (November 1903), p. 326.

²⁵ William C. Lubenow, *Liberal Intellectuals and Public Culture in Modern Britain, 1815-1914: Making Words Flesh* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2010), pp. 61, 133, 146.

²⁶ Masterman, "Mr. Herbert Trench's Poems," *Albany Review*, Vol. II, no. 12 (March 1908), pp. 683-90, p. 689.

²⁷ Chesterton, "The Ship of Immortality," *The Daily News* (hereafter, *DN*), 27 November 1907, p. 4.

²⁸ Keith Robbins, "Reginald John Campbell (1867-1956)," *ODNB*, vol. 9, pp. 853-5.

²⁹ Masterman, "Socialism and the New Theology," *DN*, 16 January 1908, p. 4.

³⁰ Oddie, *Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy*, p. 339.

³¹ Oddie, *Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy*, p. 336.

³² "An Open Letter to the Liberal Party," *DN*, 24 August 1912, p. 4. For the association between the Liberal party and English-British patriotism in the period between the first and second Reform Acts, see Jonathan P. Parry, *The Politics of Patriotism: English Liberalism, National Identity and Europe, 1830-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 5, 11; and "Liberalism and Liberty," in *Liberty and Authority in Victorian Britain*, ed. Peter Mandler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 78-80, 82, 85, 100.

³³ "An Astonishing American," *DN*, 7 August 1901.

³⁴ "A Neglected Originality," *DN*, 30 October, 1902, p. 8.

³⁵ Oddie, *Chesterton and the Romance of Orthodoxy*, p. 263.

³⁶ Kenneth Leach, "Conrad Le Despenser Roden Noel, 1869-1942," *ODNB*, vol. 40, pp. 970-72.

³⁷ "The Mystery of Nietzsche," *DN*, 2 March, 1914, p. 3.

³⁸ Chesterton, "The Patriotic Idea," in Lucian Oldershaw (ed.), *England: A Nation*, p. 16.

³⁹ Chesterton, "The Temple of Everything," *DN*, 24 March 1903, p. 8.

⁴⁰ Henry S. Holland, "England a Nation," *Commonwealth*, (January 1905), pp. 25-27.

⁴¹ Leach, "Conrad Le Despenser Roden Noel, 1869-1942."

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- ⁴² Chesterton, "The Patriotic Idea," in Lucian Oldershaw (ed.), *England: A Nation*, p. 1.
- ⁴³ Gilley, "A New Chesterton Biography," pp. 73-4.
- ⁴⁴ Much new and important research on the relationship of Chesterton to Manning is being done by Fergal Casey: see "Greening the Chesterbelloc: Distributist Social Vision in English Catholic Thought; Ireland and Remaking England, 1865-1936," D.Phil, University College, Dublin, 2006.
- ⁴⁵ Leach, "Conrad Le Despenser Roden Noel, 1869-1942," *ODNB*.
- ⁴⁶ H. G. Wells, "The Past and the Great State," in Wells *et al*, *The Great State: Essays in Construction* (London: Harper & Brothers, 1912), p. 32.
- ⁴⁷ Noel, "A Picture of the Church in the Great State," in Wells *et al*, *The Great State*, p. 320. The editors expressed their gratitude to Noel in taking the work on, despite the pressure of his other activities at the time, in a note at the outset of his chapter.
- ⁴⁸ Masterman, *In Peril of Change: Essays Written in Time of Tranquillity* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1905), p. 296.
- ⁴⁹ Masterman, *In Peril of Change*, p. 140.
- ⁵⁰ Maurice Cowling, *Religion and Public Doctrine in Modern England* (hereafter, RPD), vol. III: *Accommodations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 293.
- ⁵¹ Masterman, "Lord Acton," *DN*, September 26, 1906. Maurice had attended Acton's lectures on modern history at Cambridge.
- ⁵² Masterman, *In Peril of Change*, pp. 118-19, 116.
- ⁵³ 'Why Newman was Misunderstood', *The Universe*, 3 February 1933, in *The Chesterton Review*, XVI (May 1990), pp. 3-7.
- ⁵⁴ Cowling, RPD, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. xiii-xiv.
- ⁵⁵ R. Crowcroft, S.J.D. Green, and R. Whiting (eds.), *The Philosophy, Politics and Religion of British Democracy: Maurice Cowling and Conservatism* (London: I.B Tauris, 2010).
- ⁵⁶ Cowling, RPD, vol. III, p. xii.
- ⁵⁷ Cowling, RPD, vol. III, pp. xvi, xix.
- ⁵⁸ Cowling, RPD, vol. I, p. xvii, xiii
- ⁵⁹ Cowling, RPD, vol. II, *Assaults*, p. xviii.
- ⁶⁰ Cowling, RPD, vol. II, pp. 317-18.
- ⁶¹ Cowling, RPD, vol. I, p. 58.
- ⁶² Ian Harris, "The Anglican Mind of Maurice Cowling," in Cowling, Green and Whiting (eds.), *Philosophy, Politics and Religion of British Democracy*, p. 231.
- ⁶³ Cowling, RPD, vol. I, p. 94.

⁶⁴ "The Anglican Mind of Maurice Cowling," p. 243, quoting Cowling, *Mill and Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963).

⁶⁵ James Alexander, "Subjectivity, Civility, Ecclesiasticity," in Cowling, Green and Whiting (eds.), *Philosophy, Politics and Religion of British Democracy*, p. 56.

⁶⁶ Ian Harris, "The Anglican Mind of Maurice Cowling," p. 237. The three works were: *1867: Disraeli, Gladstone and Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); *The Impact of Labour, 1920-1924: The Beginning of Modern British Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); and *The Impact of Hitler: British Politics and British Policy, 1933-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

⁶⁷ Harris, "The Anglican Mind of Maurice Cowling," pp. 230-1.

⁶⁸ Chesterton, "The Two Compromises," *Commonwealth*, IX (June 1904), p. 178. Not the least of Balfour's concerns in taking personal charge of a Bill that favoured the Anglican Church was to maintain the strong Anglican support for the Conservative Party that had been given at recent elections: R. Mackay and H.C.G. Matthew, *ODNB*, vol.3, pp. 496-513, p. 501.

⁶⁹ See Cowling, *RPD*, vol. I, p. xxiii and the reference to politics as a "broken-backed" activity. See also Chesterton's qualifications to his praise of the "old adventurous sort of Republican" such as Swinburne and Byron in lamenting the passing of this figure in 1912; they never realised "how deep the religious root had struck amid the populace, as in Ireland and Russia": "The Soldier of Freedom," *DN*, 28 September 1912. A similar stance can be seen in his critical remarks on eighteenth-century Republicanism in *William Blake* (London: Duckworth, 1910, repr. 1920), pp. 114-17, 125, 166-7.

⁷⁰ Chesterton, "The Secular Solution," letter to the editor, *DN*, 12 May 1905; and see his criticism of the Liberal Government's Education Bill (1906), in "Something to Avoid," *DN*, 28 April 1906, making the same point about the need for a "secular solution" to the education problem, not because religion was unimportant in modern society but that it was "too large a matter for the State". In the context of the 1906 Bill, he was particularly concerned about the effect of imposing denominational religion on religious minorities, particularly mentioning the Anglo-Catholics: see his letter to the editor of *The Westminster Gazette*, "The Enigma of the Education Bill," April 26, 1906, 4. On Chesterton's distancing of himself from the Nonconformist Liberals on the issue of religious education, see Susan Hanssen, "'English in Spirit': G. K. Chesterton, Church and State, and the 1906 Education Act Debate", *The Catholic Social Science Review* 13 (2008), pp. 47-76.

⁷¹ L. Masterman, *C.F.G. Masterman*, pp. 73-4.

⁷² L. Masterman, *C.F.G. Masterman*, p. 368.

⁷³ Keith Robbins, *England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales: The Christian Church, 1900-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 187.

⁷⁴ Robbins, *England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales*, p. 188.

⁷⁵ William Ralph Inge (1860-1954), was the Dean of St. Pauls, the so-called "gloomy Dean." Chesterton constantly took issue with his latitudinarianism in religion and his individualism and opposition to democracy in politics.

⁷⁶ Ernest William Barnes (1874-1953), was a broad churchman who became Bishop of the largely Anglo-Catholic diocese of Birmingham in 1924. He immediately denounced the practice that was widespread in the diocese of reserving the sacrament. In 1927 he courted further controversy by preaching a sermon of evolution in Westminster Abbey, and delivering an address in Birmingham shortly afterwards attacking the doctrine of the real presence. In the wake of fierce criticism from both laymen and clergy, he defended his views in a book published at the end of 1927 entitled *Should Such a Faith Offend?* At the same time he

attacked the proposal to revise the prayer book, particularly in favour of greater latitude with regard to the reservation of the sacrament. He continued to challenge basic Christian beliefs for the rest of his life. A. E. J. Rawlinson, rev. Matthew Grimley, *ODNB*, vol. 3, pp. 985-8.

⁷⁷ Chesterton, "The Prayer-Book Problem," in *The Well and the Shallows* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1935), pp. 45-51.

⁷⁸ The legend (in Eusebius of Caesarea's *Vita Constantini*) is that, on the night before the battle of Pons Milvius, the emperor Constantine had a dream or vision of a cross of light in the sky with the words *in hoc signo vinces* under it.

⁷⁹ Cowling, *RPD*, vol. III, p. xxiii.