

"Culture, Creed and Conflict : Methodism and Politics
in Cornwall, c. 1832-1979".

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Abstract

"Culture, Creed and Conflict : Methodism and Politics in Cornwall, c. 1832-1979".

This thesis is a case study of the relationship between religion and politics. In the context of Cornwall, it examines the correlation between Methodism and Liberalism, both of which have been strong in the county. It investigates those political issues in which Methodists have been involved, the outworking in party terms of this, and the differing approaches to politics adopted by Methodists during the period under study.

Methodism, originally and basically a religious body, has always sought to keep politics out of its chapels, but Methodists have entered politics, especially when the issues were definable in theological or ethical terms, or to remedy Nonconformists grievances or perceived social injustices. Methodism never sought to act outside the law. Nor has it developed any agreed views on matters of economic policy.

In terms of party preference it is argued that Methodists generally supported Liberalism. Although the evidence for the first half of the nineteenth century is inconclusive in Cornwall, the issues in which Methodists were interested had drawn them into a clear identification with the Liberal Party by the end of the century. There were some Wesleyan exceptions from this rule and their numbers were swollen, for a time at least, by the issue of Irish Home Rule.

The emergence of the Labour Party has caused the break up of this Methodist-Liberal alliance. Some have seen the Labour Party as the political expression of their faith, while others have reacted against it by supporting Conservatism. The inter-war disintegration of the Liberal Party nationally hastened this process, though it is

argued that there is still in Methodism a greater body of Liberal support than hitherto has been allowed. In Cornwall particularly the Methodist-Liberal legacy, though withered and declining in strength, lingers on. These various attitudes to political issues and party support are seen as the outworking of different approaches and responses to politics made by Methodists at different times and in changing circumstances.

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List of Abbreviations used in the text.

A.R.	Annual Register.
Bap.	Baptist.
B.C.	Bible Christian.
B.C. Mag.	Bible Christian Magazine.
B.C. Mins.	Bible Christian Minutes of Conference.
B.J.S.	British Journal of Sociology.
B.M.	British Museum.
cand.	Candidate.
C.D.P.	Cornish and Devon Post.
C.C. Mins.	Minutes of the Christian Citizenship Committee, Cornwall District of the Methodist Church.
C.E.T.S.	Church of England Temperance Society.
C.G.	Cornish Guardian.
C.M.C.R.	Cornish Methodist Church Record.
C.M.H.A. Occas. Pub.	Occasional Publication of the Cornish Methodist Historical Society.
C.N.P.	Cornish Nationalist Party.
Con.	Conservative.
Cong.	Congregationalist.
C.R.O.	Cornwall County Record Office, Truro.
C.R.T.	Cornubian and Redruth Times.
C.T.	Cornish Times.
E.H.R.	English Historical Review.
I.L.P.	Independent Labour Party.
J.E.H.	Journal of Ecclesiastical History.
J. of C.M.H.A.	Journal of the Cornish Methodist Historical Association.
L.	Liberal.
Lab.	Labour.
L.U.	Liberal Unionist.
Meth. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.)	Minutes of the Methodist Synod, Cornwall District.
M.K.	Mebyon Kernow.
M.M.	Minutes of the (Wesleyan) Methodist Conference.
M.N.C.	Methodist New Connexion.
M.R.	Methodist Recorder.
M.T.	Methodist Times.
N.L.	National Liberal.
P.M.	Primitive Methodist.

Proc. of the W.H.S.	Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society.
R.C.G.	Royal Cornwall Gazette.
R.I.C.	Royal Institution of Cornwall.
S.D.F.	Social Democratic Federation.
S.R.C. Mins.	Minutes of the Social Responsibility Committee, Cornwall District of the Methodist Church.
U.K.A.	United Kingdom Alliance.
U.M.C.	United Methodist Church.
U.M.F.C.	United Methodist Free Churches.
Unit.	Unitarian.
W.B.	West Briton.
W.D.M.	Western Daily Mercury.
Wes. Meth. Mag.	Wesleyan Methodist Magazine.
Wes. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.)	Minutes of the Wesleyan Methodist Synod, Cornwall District.
W.M.A.	Wesleyan Methodist Association.
W.M.N.	Western Morning News.
W.W.M.	Western Weekly Mercury.

P R E F A C E

This study has been written with the belief that it is not possible for an author to write from a "neutral" standpoint. As David Lyon has written, "The sociologist MUST make big assumptions about the nature of man and of 'normal social life' in order to offer his sociology as a viable academic discipline".¹ Similarly, historians and political scientists make presuppositions which colour their writings. This writer is no exception and, in the absence of an index through which his preoccupations might indirectly emerge, he readily acknowledges those influences on his thinking of which he is conscious.

Firstly, the author must confess that he is not Cornish, and though he has lived in Cornwall, he is still mistaken for an "emmet" or "grockyle". Secondly, apart from spending a number of years in a Methodist Sunday School, (at the time somewhat reluctantly), the author is not a Methodist. He can therefore claim a degree of objectivity, while at the same time not being entirely unacquainted with the background of the subject he is studying.

Thirdly, and more importantly, the author is a Christian; in brief, someone who has "repented and believed the Gospel". Consequently, this study has been something of a personal quest, for in practice, though the specific context may change, a number of the issues involved in the approach of Methodists to politics face any Christian. But it also has wider implications. As the late Methodist and historian, Professor Butterfield, has written,

1. David Lyon, Christians and Sociology (London: I.V.P., 1975) p. 86

One of the most fundamental of the differences between people must be the question whether they believe in God or not; for on that depends their whole interpretation of the universe and of history - on that depends their answer to so many other questions.²

One consequence of this is that the author holds to a "Providential" view of history; that God is superintending the course of history from its beginning at creation to its end in judgment and that its ultimate meaning has been revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Such a perspective does lead to difficulties in identifying particular instances of providences outside of a biblical context. Nonetheless, one's perspective, for instance on the occurrence of revivals and the contemporary decline of Methodism, will obviously be influenced by one's answer to the question "Does God exist?"

Similarly, in a creature made in the image of God the religious "instinct" in man is taken to be a constant. The importance of the religious factor, and its study, is thus consequently asserted. It is seen as being potentially the product of genuine religious motivation and not wholly explicable in terms of a recitation of social factors. One need not be a theologian to suggest that God is the origin of the sense of God. An approach which seeks to explain religious beliefs solely with reference to their function in society or which argues the epiphenomenal nature of religion is rejected as inadequate.

Professor Butterfield once wrote, "We may think that we have a spacious vision, level and equal as it takes in wide horizons; but in reality each one of us

2. Herbert Butterfield, Christianity and History (London: Bell, 1950), p. 113.

looks upon the world from a special peep hole of his own".³ The author's own "peep hole" has now been revealed.

A study like this cannot be written without accumulating a great indebtedness to many people. I should like to thank "One and All" who have helped but space forbids naming each person individually. However, I must express my appreciation of the assistance given by the staffs of various libraries up and down the country, in particular the British Library, Colindale; the John Rylands Library, Manchester; the Cornwall Local History Library, Redruth; the Royal Institution of Cornwall, Truro and the Cornwall County Record Office, also at Truro. The free access given and helpfulness of many custodians of Cornish and local Methodist material must also be acknowledged, particularly Mr. John Probert, Rev. Thomas Shaw and two Chairmen of the Cornwall District of the Methodist Church, Revs A.B. Franklin and Ian Haile.

Many individuals, sometimes unwittingly, have contributed ideas which have influenced my thinking, especially those who kindly allowed themselves to be subjected to lengthy cross-examination or who gave of their time to answer my questions by post. To the various folk who have had to put up with me as well as put me up during my research, I extend my thanks. Thanks, too, to Gillian James for transforming manuscript to typescript. Last but by no means least, I acknowledge my debt to my supervisor, W.H. Cox, who has been an indispensable source of encouragement and guidance.

3. H. Butterfield, op. cit., p. 89.

CHAPTER ONEINTRODUCTIONWhat?

Professor David Martin once wrote of sociologists that they "are inclined to feel that religious behaviour is about as worthy of study as Liberalism in the Celtic fringes of the British Isles".¹ Political scientists may tend to share the opinions of these sociologists, but it is the conviction of this writer that, not only religious behaviour, but also Liberalism in the Celtic fringes, specifically in Cornwall, are subjects eminently worthy of study.

It is a commonplace in Cornwall to say that Methodism is the established religion of the county. Indeed, Gay in his geographical study of religion devotes a special section to Methodism in its Cornish expression. Cornwall became and has remained the "granite rock of Methodism", so much so that it was reported of at least one lonely, nineteenth century Cornish Anglican curate that he rented a pew on Sunday mornings in the Wesleyan chapel.²

Similarly, an examination of the county's election results, as seen in the political atlas of Kinnear and in the election statistics compiled by Craig, show the strength of Liberalism in Cornwall in the late nineteenth century and its continuing political strength relative to other regions of England in the twentieth century. Three of Cornwall's five seats have returned Liberal M.P.'s in the post-war years, an achievement seen in its true perspective

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1. David A. Martin, The Religious and the Secular: studies in secularisation (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 103.
 2. John D. Gay, The Geography of Religion in England (London: Duckworth, 1971) pp. 159-62, 165, 306-12; Henry Pelling, Social Geography of British Elections, 1885-1910 (London: Macmillan, 1967), o. 161.

when one considers the difficulty the Liberal Party has found in sending more than a dozen of its members to Westminster in this period.³

Cornwall thus presents an equation ripe for testing :

Cornwall	=	Methodist
Cornwall	=	Liberal
∴ Cornish Methodist	=	Cornish Liberal

It is to examine the relationship between Methodism and Liberalism in a specific context where both have been notably strong that this work has been directed. With occasional glimpses at the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century for background details, the study begins in the years surrounding the Great Reform Act of 1832 and follows the tracks made by Methodism and Liberalism, sometimes independently, sometimes together, over the fields of Cornish history until the present day.

Why?

Historically, Cornwall has lived in a form of "splendid isolation" from the rest of the country, and whilst this is not an unimportant factor in accounting for some of its idiosyncracies, it is also true to say that the history of Cornwall in the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is far from being fully written. In social and economic history, Cornwall has been well

3. Michael Kinnear, The British Voter: an Atlas and Survey since 1885 (New York: Cornell University Press, 1968); F.W.S. Craig, British Parliamentary Election Results: I, 1885-1914 (London: Macmillan, 1974), II, 1918-1949 (Glasgow: Political Reference Publications, 1969), III, 1950-1970 (Chichester: Political Reference Publications, 1971); for the period 1832-1885, see J.R. Vincent & M. Stenton, McCalmont's Parliamentary Poll Book: British election results, 1832-1918 (Brighton Harvester, 1971).

served by Hamilton Jenkin's composite work, Cornwall and its People, and Rowe's classic study, Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution. But the latter, like Rule's stimulating thesis, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', draws to a close in the 1870's.⁴

Cornish political history has been extensively researched in the "unreformed" period before 1832, even attracting the attention of Namier,⁵ and the reform movement in the county has been examined by Elvins. But after this one encounters a dearth of literature on Cornish politics. The recent articles of Lee and Rallings on the political culture of Cornwall are a step in the right direction, but much remains to be investigated.⁶

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4. A.K. Hamilton Jenkin, Cornwall and its People (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1970); John Rowe, Cornwall in Age of the Industrial Revolution (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1953); John G. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall c. 1740-1870: A study in social history' (Unpublished Ph.D.thesis: Univ. of Warwick 1971).
 5. Lewis Namier, The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III (2nd ed. London: Macmillan, 1957); see also, William P. Courtney, The Parliamentary Representation of Cornwall to 1832 (London: privately circulated, 1889); A. de C. Glubb, When Cornwall had forty-four M.P.s: A tale of times which have vanished (Truro: Jordan, 1934); W.T. Lawrance, Parliamentary Representation of Cornwall (Truro: Netherton & Worth, 1924); H.S. Toy, The Cornish Pocket Borough (Penzance: Worden, 1968).
 6. W. Brian Elvins, 'The Reform Movement and County Politics in Cornwall, 1809-1852' (Unpublished M.A. thesis: Univ. of Birmingham, 1959); Colin S. Rallings & Adrian Lee, 'Politics of the Periphery - the case of Cornwall' (Paper presented to the Conference of the P.S.A. Work Group on the Politics of the United Kingdom, Aberystwyth, September 1977); Adrian Lee, 'How Cornwall votes' (Paper presented to the Institute of Cornish Studies, Camborne, December 1977); Adrian Lee, 'Cornwall: Aspects of Regionalism and Nationalism' (Paper presented to a Workshop of Nationalist and Regionalist movements in Western Europe, Univ. of Strathclyde, January 1978).

The situation facing the student of Methodism is completely the reverse. There are many volumes on Methodism, nationally and locally, and here the difficulty is to avoid being sunk by them all. However, in the national studies few references have been made to Cornwall, even in the comprehensive Namierite-like tomes of Wearmouth.⁷

An exception to this rule, although it predates the main focus of this work, is the Halevy debate over the role of Methodism as a stabilising force in England at the time of the French Revolution.⁸

The new thematic history of Methodism has yet to examine the question of Methodism and politics, but some aspects of this relationship are explored in the writings of Maldwyn Edwards, Kent and Taylor, and in a stimulating article by Turner and Hill.⁹ This thesis, however, has followed in the footsteps of local studies of religion and politics, notably those of Moore and Obelkevich.

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7. Robert Wearmouth, Methodism and the Working Class Movements of England 1800-1850 (London: Epworth, 1937), Methodism and the Struggle of the Working Classes, 1850-1900 (Leicester: Backus, 1954), The Social and Political Influence of Methodism in the twentieth century (London: Epworth, 1957).
8. see below, p.p. 88-89.
9. Rupert Davies et al (Eds.), A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, I (London: Epworth, 1965; II (London: Epworth, 1978). Maldwyn Edwards, Methodism and England: A study of Methodism in its Social and Political Aspects during the Period 1850-1932 (London : Epworth, 1943); John Kent, The Age of Disunity (London: Epworth, 1966); E.R. Taylor, Methodism and Politics, 1791-1851 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1935); Bryan S. Turner & Michael Hill, 'Methodism and the Pietist Definition of Politics: Historical Development and Contemporary Evidence' in Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain, 8, edited by M. Hill, (London: S.C.M., 1975), pp. 159-80.

Furthermore, the recent theses on Methodism in Hull, Leeds and London, while not concentrating on the political angle of Methodism, provide a useful basis for comparison.¹⁰

Cornish Methodists have written profusely about the history of particular chapels and the life of their forebears. The origin and development of Methodism in Cornwall and its early relationship with the Church of England have been the focus of research of Michael Edwards and Brown. But even in Probert's highly factual Sociology of Cornish Methodism and Shaw's histories of Cornish Methodism and of the Bible Christians, political references are few and far between.¹¹

This absence of political references in the literature on Cornish Methodism serves as a warning and an illustration

10. Robert Moore, Pit-Men, Preachers and Politics: the effects of Methodism in a Durham mining community (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1974); James Obelkevich, Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825-1875 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); Clive D. Field, 'Methodism in Metropolitan London 1850-1920: A social and sociological study' (Unpublished D. Phil. thesis: Univ. of Oxford, 1974); Kevin K. Harrison, 'The decline of Methodism in Kingston-upon-Hull in the twentieth century' (Unpublished M.A. thesis: Univ. of Hull, 1973); Bryan S. Turner, 'The decline of Methodism: and analysis of religious commitment and organisation' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis: Univ. of Leeds, 1970).
11. Michael S. Edwards, 'Cornish Methodism: a study in division 1814-1857' (Unpublished M.A. thesis: Univ. of Birmingham, 1962); H. Miles Brown, 'Methodism and the Church of England in Cornwall: a historical survey of Cornish Methodism, its rise, its growth and relation to the Church of England' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis: Univ. of London, External degree, 1946); John C.C. Probert, The Sociology of Cornish Methodism to the present day (C.M.H.A. Occas. Pub., 17, 1971); Thomas Shaw, A History of Cornish Methodism (Truro: Barton, 1967) and The Bible Christians, 1815-1907 (London: Epworth, 1965).

of Cornish Methodist feeling on politics for, as far as traditional Methodism is concerned, there are far more important matters to be concerned with. The twin concerns of Methodism initially and for most of this period have been the proclamation of the Gospel and the pursuit of Scriptural Holiness. Political involvement was not on the list of activities in which Methodists as Methodists were engaged, though theological changes in this century have meant a re-ordering of priorities. The point, however, remains that this study puts under the microscope those points at which Methodism and politics touch, and although a slide under a microscope fills one's entire view, it is often, and certainly in this case, only a small part of the whole body under examination.

Like Methodism, the history of the Liberal Party has been well covered. In particular, much attention has been paid to the interrelated questions of accounting for the decline of the Liberals as one of the two major parties in Parliament and its replacement by the Labour Party.¹² A "longitudinal" study of a rural area, like Cornwall, enables one to examine the extent and explanation of the Liberal Party's survival as a political force. It also allows one to look at the fissiparousness to which that party was prone, dividing as it did on the question of Home Rule in 1886, over leadership in the Great War and again on the issue of tariffs in 1931. The effects of these splits can be analysed locally and, assuming a link between Methodism and Liberalism to exist, the Methodist reaction to them can be measured. Moreover, a study of these questions indirectly sheds light on the differing fortunes of the Labour and Conservative Parties in Cornwall.

12. J.R. Vincent, *The Formation of the British Liberal Party, 1857-1868* (1966; London: Penguin, 1972); Roy Douglas, *History of the Liberal Party, 1895-1970* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1972); Trevor Wilson, *The Downfall of the Liberal Party, 1914-1935* (London: Collins, 1966).

The association between Nonconformity and Liberalism is another much studied area. At its height in the late Victorian era this link has been excellently covered by Bebbington in his thesis. Its twentieth century decline has been detailed by Koss. This thesis has been influenced by both studies.¹³

In short, there is a large gap to be filled in Cornish social and political history, and, while in some measure seeking to fill this, this work enables the theories and hypotheses relating to Methodist political attitudes, the Nonconformist factor as a component of Liberal strength and the decline in Liberal fortunes to be tested. If, as Gash once commenced, the only way in which national history can be written is on "an established basis of local history",¹⁴ this on its own is a strong justification for this thesis. But, its validity is further enhanced by the importance of local factors in the politics of much of this period and to an extent still operative in Cornwall today.

Research into the history of the South West has been dogged by the different geographical definitions taken by various writers. Pelling, for instance, takes the South West to be the Counties of Devon and Cornwall. According to Social Trends, however, to this definition must be added the counties of Avon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire.¹⁵ The larger the area the easier it is for intra-regional differences to be obscured and the peculiar concentration of Nonconformity and Liberalism in Cornwall to be overlooked. Hence the importance of and the justification for taking a smaller,

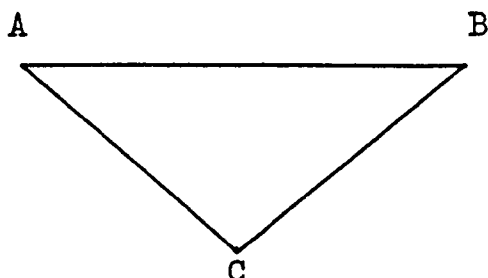
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13. David W. Bebbington, 'The Nonconformist Conscience: a study of the political attitudes and activities of Evangelical Nonconformists, 1886-1902' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis: Univ. of Cambridge, 1975); Stephen E. Koss, Nonconformity in Modern British Politics (London: Batsford, 1975)
14. Norman Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel: a study in the technique of parliamentary representation (London: Longmans, 1953), p. xvii.
15. H. Pelling, op. cit., ch. 8; Social Trends, 10 (London: H.M.S.O., 1980).

county unit, like Cornwall. Nonetheless, it is still a large area to study. But the River Tamar forms a natural dividing line and it would be an invidious, if not impossible, task to select a smaller area, whether constituency, circuit or chapel, which would have reflected Cornwall in its entirety.

The framework of this study can be best illustrated by visualising a triangle ABC, standing on its head. At point A, one is focussing attention on religion, in particular Methodism at the denominational level. At point

Fig. 1:1 The Framework of the Study

Religion/Creed/Methodism Politics/Conflict/Liberalism



Context/Culture/Cornwall

B the area of study is politics at the national level, with special emphasis on electoral politics. Since the key to understanding both Cornish politics and Methodist political attitudes rests with the Liberal Party, greater regard has been paid to it than to the other political parties.

The basic subject for study is the relationship between religion and politics, but while some conclusions will have a more general application, the point of intersection between point A, Religion, and point B, Politics, is not along the line AB, but at point C. Religion and politics, in practice as opposed to theory, cannot be divorced from their context. Christians may hold fast to the same doctrines, but the political outworking of their

faith and the effects of this may well prove to be different, for example, in Cambodia, Chile and Cornwall. This study makes no claim to universal applicability, but what it seeks to do is to examine how what was said at a denominational or national level reflected and influenced the feelings and experience of those at a lower level, whether he was a Methodist sitting in a chapel pew or a Liberal elector casting his vote, and especially if he was both.

The points of the triangle ABC can also be relabelled "Creed", "Conflict" and "Culture" respectively. If one is seeking to establish whether or not a connection existed between religion and politics in Cornwall, it is necessary to know what were the specific beliefs, in this instance, of Methodists. How did Methodists approach politics and in what ways, if at all, did the Methodist "Creed" affect their political actions? Taking these questions one stage further, how did this attitude and approach in Cornwall affect the political conflict between the parties at elections and on what issues were Methodists known to have a strong "connexional" view? Did political issues cause conflict among Methodists, and, if so, how did they deal with it?

By putting these issues in the context of Cornwall it becomes necessary to ask another series of questions. What factors in Cornwall may have predisposed the county to have become such a Methodist stronghold and bastion of Liberalism in the first place? How does Cornwall compare with other areas. Is it an exception to prove the rule or is the product of this research of more general value? In brief, what role does Cornish "culture" play in this?

A final barrage of questions arise from the time span of the research. From starting blocks to finishing tape it

is almost a century and a half. During such a long period, the Methodism, the politics and the Cornwall under investigation all change. It is necessary to note how they change and in what ways these changes influence each other.

In seeking to justify the worthiness of one's own area of study, there is a danger of exaggerating its distinctiveness. Madgwick pointed out in his work on Cardiganshire politics that "a political culture which appears to be unique may have qualities characteristic of many other areas".¹⁶ Wherever possible in this study comparisons have been made to illustrate the differences or similarities between Cornwall and other areas. In spite of the peril of hyperbole, the conviction remains that this subject is worthy of special attention.

How?

Material for the study has been gathered from various sources. The most fruitful of these has been newspapers. Firstly, as Kevin Harrison noted, "It may well be debateable whether the church is very newsworthy today, but there is no doubt that earlier in this century even the churches normal activities were given a great amount of news-space, especially in local papers".¹⁷ Secondly, it is equally true that the county's politics, especially before the First World War, were reported with as extensive a coverage as that reserved in many of today's newspapers for football matches. The political partisanship of most newspapers, while making it necessary to allow for bias, also meant that editors commented widely on political events.

For most of the nineteenth century the two most important Cornish newspapers were the conservative

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16. P.J. Madgwick, The Politics of Rural Wales: a study of Cardiganshire (London: Hutchinson, 1973), p. 15.
 17. K. Harrison, op. cit., p.2.

Royal Cornwall Gazette and the liberal West Briton, both published at Truro. They began publication in the early years of the century. Other towns in Cornwall started to produce their own local newspapers in the latter part of the century with the result that the Truro press, particularly the Royal Cornwall Gazette, tended to become more local in coverage. Again political partisanship could often be seen in the new journals, as for example in the rivalry surrounding the publication of the Plymouth based dailies, the Western Morning News and its more radical counterpart, the Western Daily Mercury.¹⁸

The method adopted in researching a specific election or subject was, first, to read through the West Briton and Royal Cornwall Gazette. This was, secondly, supplemented by reading the Plymouth dailies from the latter part of the nineteenth century onwards. Third, this in turn was added to by a study of other Cornish weeklies, according to three criteria: (i) topics or electoral contests of interest were followed up by a closer reading of the newspapers of that district; (ii) areas of the county's politics which were otherwise neglected by this method, the far west of the county for example, were further studied by the nearest local based newspaper; (iii) where some newspapers were unavailable, as far as possible, others were substituted.¹⁹

Newspapers became far less politically minded and partisan after the First World War. An indication of the decline in partisanship can be seen in the merger of the

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18. W. Elvins, op. cit., ch. 2, pp. 3-9, Appdx.IV; see also Alfred F. Robbins, Launceston, Past and Present: a historical and descriptive sketch (Launceston: Cornish & Devon Printing Co., 1884), p. 358
19. The British Library collection at Colindale gives the most extensive coverage of the Cornish press, but does have occasional gaps in sequences. The Cornwall Local History Library at Redruth is building up a

two Plymouth dailies in 1921 and of the two Truro journals in 1951. This was, therefore, a less productive approach from 1918 onwards. When coupled with the declining importance of Methodism and Liberalism in Cornwall and with the increasing "nationization" of politics, this added to the difficulties of researching the inter-war and post-war chapters.

However, while it is impossible to discover the views of the nineteenth century Methodist in the pew or Liberal activist by means of an interview or correspondence, this does become a possibility for the more recent period. In this study the pursuit of oral history testimonies was a selective one rather than an extensive survey. Apart from the time factor—a survey could easily form the basis of the entire thesis, yet would fail to give much insight into the nineteenth century—there are reasons for believing that a survey aimed primarily at studying Methodist political views would not have been successful. Turner found a number of respondents in his questionnaire refusing on principle to reply to questions on politics.²⁰ Furthermore, the writer's own appeal for information in the Methodist and Cornish press received a very poor response.

The interviewing concentrated on the leading "activists" both in Methodism and local, especially Liberal, politics. A survey of the attitudes of the parliamentary candidates to the "religious factor" in Cornish politics was undertaken, the results of which form part of chapter nine. A number of leading post-war political figures

microfilm collection of local newspapers and the Royal Institution of Cornwall (R.I.C.) possesses a complete run of the R.C.G.. Some of the other Cornish newspapers can be consulted at their local offices.
20. B. Turner, op. cit., ch. 3.

in Cornwall are dead and it proved easiest to locate former Conservative candidates and hardest to trace those standing for the Labour Party. Nonetheless, this was one method of counterbalancing the declining utility of the press as a source.²¹

Material was also drawn from the private papers of some of the leading political figures in Cornwall during the period under study. As a rule, however, the leading gentry whose papers survived to be deposited in the Cornwall County Record Office (C.R.O.) were not of Methodist origin, though the Pendarves-Vivian papers contained material which complemented the other sources. The papers of the Wesleyans, W.A. McArthur, Isaac Foot and Walter Runciman provided addition information and an insight into the workings of the Methodist-Liberal mind. The papers of some of the leading Liberal politicians, however, did not prove to be a fruitful area of investigation.²²

With regard to political records, their survival has been erratic. The absence of poll books for the period 1832 to 1872 made it impossible to undertake work along the lines of that done by Vincent in his fascinating study of Victorian voting behaviour.²³

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21. see Appendix II for details of the survey and Appendix III for a list of interviews undertaken.
22. The Pendarves Vivian and McArthur papers can be located at the C.R.O., (DDPV (290) and AD 366 respectively); the Runciman papers are lodged at the Univ. of Newcastle and material relating to Isaac Foot can be found in the possession of his sons, Lord Caradon, Lord Foot and the Rt. Hon. Michael Foot, as well as in the records of Miss H. Platt, Hon. Sec. of the Cromwell Society. W.R. Ward (Ed.), Early Victorian Methodism: the correspondence of Jabez 1830-58 (Oxford: O.U.P., 1976) contains interesting contributions from Cornish correspondents.
23. J.R. Vincent, Pollbooks: How Victorians voted (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1967); two poll books exist for Callington in the 1820's and some lists of voters and canvass returns for the 1830's. These can be found in the R.I.C. and the C.R.O. in Truro; see also W. Elvins, op.cit., Appx. 6.

The National Liberal Club collection contains the election address of most Cornish candidates from 1892 onwards, and Unionist minutes for several of the Cornish constituencies are open to inspection at the C.R.O.. The local records of the Liberal Party have not been located. Nonetheless, the material which has remained has been helpful in painting the background details.

Official Methodist documents were available in abundance. The Methodist Archive, now in the custody of the John Rylands University Library at Manchester, contains much material of a national and local nature. In particular, great use was made of the Minutes of Conference of the different Methodist connexions, especially those of the Wesleyans and the Bible Christians, the two largest component vertebrae in the Nonconformist backbone in Cornwall. The Methodist Recorder and the Methodist Times were also used extensively. By this means connexional views were established.

A great deal of material on Cornish Methodism has found its way to the safe haven of the C.R.O. at Truro. In addition to this, Rev. Thomas Shaw possesses a large collection of volumes on Methodist and Cornish history, which he kindly allowed the author to peruse. The problem with dealing with these local Methodist records, apart from their sheer quantity, was the obedience in the writing of these Methodist records to the convention of "no politics" in the chapels. Hence, although a sample of circuit and chapel minutes in the county were examined, their usefulness as a source was limited. They serve as a guide to those issues upon which Methodists were united, but for the most part they simply reflected the resolutions passed at the connexional Conference.

More helpful were the Minutes of the Cornwall District Synod. The Wesleyan Minutes for the Cornwall

District before 1932 can be found at Manchester, and the Methodist Minutes of the years after 1932 are in the possession of the Chairman of the Cornwall District. A further informative source were the local Christian Citizenship Minutes. These all contain numerous reports and resolutions illustrating the areas of activity and concern to Methodists.

These sources determined that the study focussed largely upon those Methodist elites involved in politics. Even at a county level, the political views of the Methodist in the pew remain an imponderable. There was in the Cornish Methodism of these years no Nonconformist champion, like Dr. Clifford in London, though the Free Methodist minister in Truro for a number of years was dubbed "the Nonconformist Bishop" and made his stance in politics clearly known. Nor was there in Cornwall an equivalent of Lloyd George, although Isaac Foot seemed cast to play such a role and might have done so had he been able to keep his seat in Parliament. Hence, this is in good measure a study of individual Methodist activists; people like the Budds, the Smiths, the Thomases, the Mudges and the Carkeeks.

Dangers and Difficulties.

It is necessary at the outset of the study to refer to some of the problems and pitfalls involved in it. One of these relates to the question of the validity of religious statistics and their interpretation. In what has been termed "post-Christian England", for example, the continuation of religious belief seems high. As Miller and Raab noted, "In 1970 fully 95% of survey respondents were willing to state a religious preference, although 47% of men and 32% of women admitted attending worship less than once a year".²⁴ How then does one

24. William Miller & Gillian Raab, 'The Religious Alignment at English elections between 1918 and 1970, Political

assess the "religious factor" and the vitality of a person's religion? It may be necessary to take to heart the scriptural injunction "Faith without works is dead"²⁵ and introduce some means of control whereby religious belief is seen to issue in religious practice.

The problem then becomes one of selecting what index of religious practice to employ. This is well illustrated by the Church of England as Gay has demonstrated. On the figures of 1962, its membership could be interpreted variously as 100% of the English population, an Englishman's birthright, 66% if the criterion adopted is christening and 24% if it is confirmation. Alternatively, it could be defined as the 7% of the population who were on the electoral roll, or the 6% who attended communion services at Easter, or the 5% who were present at Christmas. Some sociologists of religion, furthermore, have questioned the significance of religious practice which is not backed up by religious belief or motivation.²⁶

As Gilbert has commented, this problem is not so acute in Nonconformity for amongst Nonconformists, membership implies both a strong belief and an active commitment.²⁷ While this would be true for Methodism over much of this period, the development of nominalism in membership has introduced an unquantifiable element into Methodism and hence, the unity in belief, practice

Studies, XXV, 2 (June 1977), p. 237; of J.M. Bochel & D.T. Denver, 'Religion and Voting; a Critical Review and a New Analysis', Political Studies, XLVIII (1970) pp.207 ff.

25. James 2:20

26. J. Gay, op. cit., pp.24ff; A.D. Gilbert, 'The Growth and decline of Nonconformity in England and Wales, with special reference to the period before 1832: an historical interpretation of statistics of religious practice' (Unpublished D. Phil. thesis: Univ. of Oxford, 1974), p. 5.

27. A. Gilbert, op. cit., pp. 5, 448.

and membership has broken down. Not only is it difficult to compare the membership statistics of Nonconformists with those of Anglicans and Roman Catholics, nominalism also adds to the problems of making comparisons within the same group through time.

The extent of Methodist belief and influence in society is not fully explored by looking solely at membership figures, particularly in the nineteenth century. They form the core of Methodism, but there were also several times as many Methodist adherents as members in 1851. Furthermore, the high turnover in membership and the large numbers of children brought up in the Methodist families and Sunday Schools indicate that the Methodist "constituency" was considerably larger than a mere glance at membership figures would lead one to believe. Membership figures, however, do prove a minimum figure for use as an index of Methodism, and for this reason have been included in Appendix I.

These are simply the problems associated with assessing the reliability of Methodist statistics. Another problem, limiting their utility, is that the figures at the local level relate to groups of chapels in a circuit rather than to individual chapels. The issue becomes even more complicated when one seeks to relate these figures to the political events of the same period. If one succeeds in establishing a person's religious membership, how does one know whether it implies consequential action in politics? Is it possible to know how a man values his religious adherence or membership against other points of reference when voting? For statistical purposes, how can one determine to what extent the members of a denomination possessed the franchise, essential if one is to assess their impact on elections? As the two sources from which religious and political statistics have been drawn are so different, the utility of

correlation is diminished. Hence, efforts to use such sources for information were only used on a limited scale.²⁸

As Nossiter has commented, the task of collecting data from church and chapel records and then relating them to voting behaviour is a Herculean one and, because of the "erratic survival of records", a Sisyphean one as well. These statistical difficulties point to the need to use quantifiable data with care and they justify the greater attention which has been paid to identifying individuals who were active in Methodism and on the political platform. As Charles Booth so aptly expressed it, "Spiritual influences do not easily lend themselves to statistical treatment."²⁹

Turning to the question of assessing the religious affiliation of Cornish parliamentary candidates, those with connexions with Methodism can be divided into five levels of commitment. The first level is that of association, whereby the name is linked to Methodism, or Nonconformity, where attendance at chapel is seen, at least for the duration of the election, but where no specific link can be established. It is often what is believed about a candidate that is as important politically, if not more so, than the veracity of the belief. Hence the vigorous denials in nineteenth century Cornish politics of charges of atheism or Catholicism, both deemed to be damaging.

A second layer of commitment is that of upbringing, as for example in a Methodist family or Sunday School.

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28. see chapter 6 for a comparison of late Victorian and Edwardian voting behaviour and Methodist membership, and chapter 8 for a discussion of Nonconformist political strength in the 1920's.
29. T.J. Nossiter, Influence, Opinion and Political Idioms in Reformed England: Case Studies from the North-East 1832-74 (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1975), p. 174; J. Gay, op.cit., p.22.

Thirdly, a candidate could be a member of a Methodist or Nonconformist chapel. If he were, he also tended to be involved in its work by holding some position of responsibility, perhaps as a local preacher, circuit steward or some connexional post, and this forms the fourth category. It may be more useful to distinguish in the third and fourth layers between local chapel involvement, as a local preacher for instance, and a wider national involvement, perhaps as a Conference representative. The fifth and final category is that of Methodist minister or former Methodist minister standing for parliamentary honours. An inconceivable prospect for most of the nineteenth century, this century it has happened in Cornwall with two individuals.

These layers of commitment have little to say on the question of a person's beliefs, whether or not he held to Methodist doctrines, although it can be reasonably assumed that the more involved the person concerned was, the more likely he would be to follow Methodist teachings. These categories are meant, however, to act as a crude, empirical tool to be used to identify the extent to which "Methodists" were active in politics at the level of candidatures. While at the lowest level the label may be used simply for political advantage, it is still indicative of the strength of religion as a factor in that its use is considered necessary at all. Furthermore, the extent to which a person has Methodist or Nonconformist sympathies means that he is more or less likely to be influenced by them than, for example, by Anglican or athiestic thinking.

It may be that a candidate may desire to be or be identified anyway with the traditions, values and institutions of Methodism regardless of his actual religious beliefs. An illustration of this type of thinking can be seen in Ireland where it is possible to be a support of the Orange Associations of

Protestantism because they uphold certain values, like freedom, without this necessarily implying agreement with Protestant theological views. Furthermore, the idea which persists in Ireland that a person who is once a Catholic is always a Catholic has its parallels in Methodism. Indeed, so strongly held were Nonconformist convictions in Cornwall that during the course of the collection of oral history data, it was said of one Methodist candidate, "I don't know whether he was a Christian, but he was certainly a Nonconformist!"

The Plot

An allegation made against preachers is that they sometimes take a text out of context and use it as a mere pretext for airing their particular views. In order to avoid this accusation in an academic setting, chapter two sets out the context of this study. The geography, demography and socio-economic structure of Cornwall are described. The religious history of the county is then touched upon, showing the weakness of Anglicanism and Old Dissent, and the strength of superstition. An account is given of the arrival, development and divisions of Methodism in the county and by using the relevant material in the 1851 Census, comparisons between the religiosity of Cornwall and other areas and comments on the relative strengths of the different branches of Methodism in the county are made. Finally, reasons are advanced for the hold Methodism gained in Cornwall.

Attention is then focussed in chapter three on nineteenth century politics, tracing developments in these years until 1885. The political background of Cornwall and Wesley's attitudes to politics are described. A study is then made of the views of Cornish Methodists on parliamentary reform and the contemporary issues of Colonial slavery and Catholic Emancipation. The consequences of the Great Reform Act are detailed,

illustrating the political weakness of Cornish Nonconformity in this period, and the debate over the role of Methodism as a non-revolutionary force is examined in the light of a study of Cornish Chartism. Further evidence of Methodist political attitudes is given by contrasting their response to the Maynooth issue with their relative indifference to the campaign for free trade. Education and Nonconformist grievances are then discussed as issues potentially leading to the political involvement of Methodists. The chapter closes with a review of the changes in Methodist political attitudes in Cornwall during these years.

A strict chronological progression is interrupted in chapter four. Instead the temperance question is examined, because it gives an insight into Cornish social life and changing social attitudes in Methodism, and as it was also a means by which Methodists were drawn into the political area. Historically, the issue is briefly traced from Wesley's day through the early temperance societies to the arrival of teetotalism in the county. The effect of this new development is examined in the light of the division of Methodists in St. Ives, and then further traced to 1885. After reviewing the influence and importance of Methodism on the Cornish temperance movement, temperance as a political issue is explored, especially the lobbying for the Permissive Bill and locally the battle for the Cornwall Sunday Closing Bill.

The fifth chapter is a study of the election of 1885. The hypothesis that by this date Wesleyans were predominantly Liberals in politics is tested. In order to examine its influence, Methodist attitudes to the franchise and to the political issues of importance, as they defined them, are discussed, before a seat by seat study of the election in Cornwall is undertaken. An assessment is then made of the main election issues, taking account of the influence

of the Methodist vote.

Chapter six deals with the closing years of Queen Victoria's reign. It begins with a general consideration of continuity and change in Methodist politics in these years. This is followed by a study of the attitudes of Methodists and Liberals in Cornwall to Gladstone's espousal of Home Rule, pursuing the question until the defeat of the Second Home Rule Bill. A further glance is taken at the continuing importance of temperance as a political issue. Attention is then focussed on the Boer War and the response this evoked in Cornish Methodist and Liberal circles. The chapter concludes with a look at the ideological link between Methodists and the political parties of the day and their moral approach to politics.

The years preceding the First World War form the basis of the next Chapter, number seven, and it finds political nonconformity reaching its zenith in the 1906 election. The background to the Liberal landslide of that year is first painted with the unifying effect on Liberals and Nonconformists accomplished by the Unionist legislation in the fields of education and temperance. Particular attention is paid to the passive resistance movement amongst the county's Nonconformists. The history of the Liberal Government follows a study of the 1906 contest, especially the events leading to the first election of 1910. The outcome of this election, the subsequent re-surfacing of the Irish Home Rule question and the second election of 1910 are in turn examined. Before reflecting on the events of these years, the China Clay Strike of 1913 is discussed in the context of Methodism and trades unionism in Cornwall.

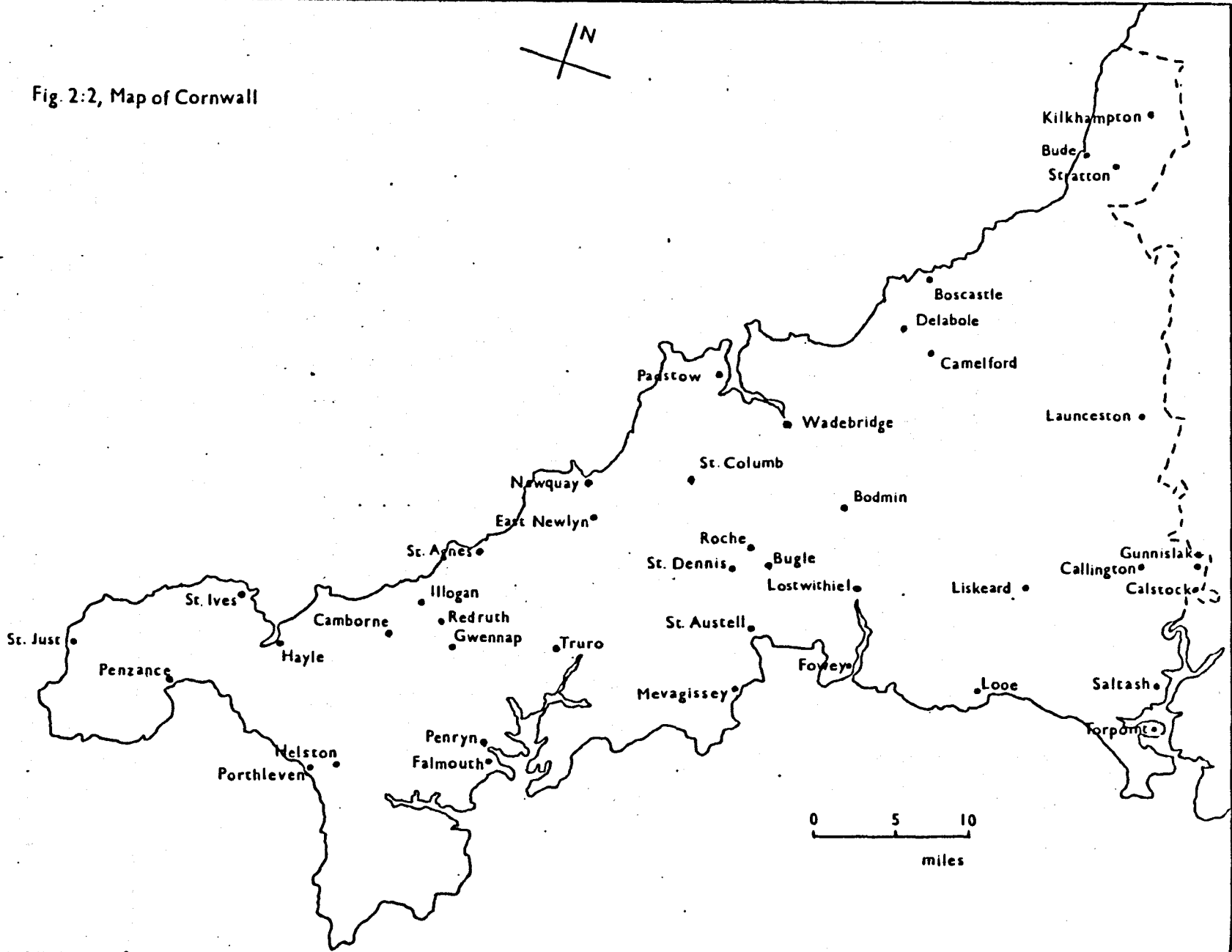
Two World Wars isolate the intervening years to form a distinct period which is covered in the eighth chapter. The Methodist reaction to the First World War opens the chapter, which then looks at the growing signs of Methodist decline and the moves leading to Methodist union. Methodist attitudes to the political events of this period up to and including the Second World War are discussed. This is followed by an examination of the confused political situation with its fluctuating party fortunes. A study of the continuing links between Nonconformity and Liberalism at the local level completes the chapter.

Bringing the story to date, the ninth chapter provides a contemporary perspective to the thesis. Note is made of the continuing decline of Methodism and also of the ecumenical initiatives of these years. The current social and political attitudes of Methodists today are described, before the scene switches to Cornish politics. Party fortunes and constituency histories are briefly sketched and the distinctive traits in Cornish politics identified. Finally, with the help of a survey of former parliamentary candidates in Cornwall, the relationship of the Nonconformist legacy to Cornish politics is examined.

The questions posed in this Introduction and those which arise from the material contained in these chapters are examined in the conclusion. Chapter ten commences with an assessment of the effect of the environment of Cornwall to keep the study in perspective. The rise and fall of Cornish Methodism is discussed as part of the secularisation debate and the changing face of Cornish Methodism is noted in connection with the Church-sect typology. The Methodist approach to politics, political issues and political parties is then analysed before

a typology of religion and politics based on Methodism during this period is constructed. The whole structure forms a case study of the interrelationship of religion and politics.

Fig. 2:2, Map of Cornwall



CHAPTER TWOHISTORICAL BACKGROUNDGeography, Demography and Socio-Economic Structure.

Cornwall consists of a long and narrowing peninsula, jutting out into the North Atlantic. It is surrounded by sea on three sides. To the east of the county the natural boundary is the River Tamar, dividing Cornwall from Devon. Seventy miles to the west is Land's End. The Cornish landscape has made communications within and without the county difficult. Thus, geography alone has determined that, for a large part of its history, Cornwall has been isolated from the rest of the country. This gives some logic to the thoughts of the old folk encountered by A.L. Rowse, who were convinced that Cornwall was detached from England, except where it was "joined on" at the Saltash Bridge.¹

The great number of tumbling-down, ivy-clad engine houses located among the old mine workings form a lasting impression in the memory of a traveller to Cornwall. This is an illustration of the influence of the natural features of the county on its history and development. It is not surprising, since Cornwall has been so well endowed with minerals, that one author has written, "in no part of the county, and scarcely at any time has the geography wholly escaped the impress of mining."² Tin and copper, which historically have been the most important minerals,

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1. John Betjeman & A.L. Rowse, Victorian and Edwardian Cornwall from old photographs (London: Batsford, 1974), p. vii.
 2. N.J.G. Pounds, 'The Historical Geography of Cornwall' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis: Univ. of London, External degree, 1945), p. 207.

were found mainly in the granite areas of the Penwith peninsula, around Camborne and Redruth, and also on Bodmin Moor and Hinston Down. Many other ores have been mined, in particular lead, and the discovery of kaolinised granite in the St. Austell area has led to the development of the china clay industry since the eighteenth century. Slate especially at Tintagel and Delabole, and granite have also been worked.

There are references to the exportation of tin from Cornwall in classical writings and by the thirteenth century Cornwall was the largest producer of tin in Europe.³ At first only deposits near the surface were extracted but by the fifteenth century underground mining had commenced. Improvements in mining techniques and technology in the second half of the eighteenth century led to a rapid expansion in mining. In the 1740's copper production overhauled that of tin, and continued to increase throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. The year of maximum output was 1856, when 13,000 tons of copper were produced from the 206,000 tons of ore raised. From then onwards, copper production collapsed. By the end of the century output was less than 500 tons.⁴

Tin mining in Cornwall held its own longer than copper, even though its share of total world tin production diminished greatly. Its years of peak production were between 1863 and 1866. Production remained stable until 1895, when it began to fall markedly. The First World War brought with it a

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3. W.G.V. Balchin, Cornwall: an Illustrated Essay on the Landscape (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1954), pp.33,40.
 4. County of Cornwall: Report of the Survey, Written Analysis Part 1 - The County (Truro: Cornwall County Council, 1952), p.149.

revival in mining, but this was not sustained between the wars. In both cases, foreign competition and the cost of production in Cornwall were the reasons behind this decline.⁵

The change in Cornwall from alluvial to underground mining demanded a greater concentration of people than had hitherto been required. It led also to the development of ancillary industries to supply the mines, but Cornish industry did not develop on any large scale beyond the initial extractive stage. The numbers employed in mining rose from about 16,000 in 1801 to 50,000 at its peak in the 1860's but declined to only 8,000 by the end of the century. Mines employed women and children, as well as men, although working conditions in mines were unhealthy and the incidence of accidents was high.⁶

The fluctuating fortunes of the mining industry have affected the population of the county. The number of inhabitants in Cornwall rose from 192,281 in 1801 to 342,159 in 1841, an increase of more or less the same as the percentage population increase for England and Wales. But, whereas in England and Wales the population continued to rise, the increase in Cornwall slowed down in the 1850's and 1860's, and a small decrease was registered in 1871, followed by a larger one a decade later. Since then, the Cornish population has continued to decline with the exceptions of 1911, 1951 and 1971. There is a clear correlation between the

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5. J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', pp.2-3; County of Cornwall: Report of the Survey, p. 149; J. Rowe, Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution, p. 323.
 6. County of Cornwall: Report of the Survey, p. 149 J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', p. 11.

Fig. 2: 2, Comparison of the population figures for Cornwall to those for England and Wales, (1801-1971)⁷

<u>Year</u>	<u>England and Wales</u>	<u>%change^(a)</u>	<u>Cornwall</u>	<u>%change^(a)</u>
1801	8,892,536	-	192,281	-
1811	10,164,256	1.32	220,525	1.35
1821	12,000,236	1.67	261,045	1.70
1831	13,896,797	1.48	301,306	1.44
1841	15,914,148	1.36	342,159	1.28
1851	17,927,609	1.22	355,558	0.39
1861	20,066,224	1.13	369,390	0.38
1871	22,712,266	1.25	362,343	-0.19
1881	25,974,439	1.35	330,686	-0.91
1891	29,002,525	1.11	322,571	-0.25
1901	32,527,843	1.16	322,334	-0.01
1911	36,070,492	1.04	328,098	0.18
1921	37,886,699	0.48	320,705	-0.22
1931	39,952,377	0.54	317,968	-0.09
1939 ^(b)	41,460,000	0.37	310,100	-0.31
1951	43,757,888	0.54	c(345,442	0.92
			c(346,468	
1961	46,104,548	0.52	343,278	-0.09
1971	48,749,575	0.56	381,672	1.07

Notes

- (a) Percentage intercensal increase or decrease.
 (b) 1939 mid-year estimate.
 (c) The top figure is that for Cornwall and the Scilly Isles according to the 1951 boundaries; the figure below is the population calculated with the revised boundaries of 1971.

Source: Census 1971 (London: H.M.S.O., 1973).

7. On the basis of the returns of the Cornish clergy to the Bishop of Exeter, the population of Cornwall has been estimated as follows :

1672 : 103,000
 1744 : 125,800
 1779 : 148,729

The figures are quoted in J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', p. 5.

boom years of mining and the greatest increases in population, and the peaking of both in the 1860's and their subsequent decline. It is only in recent years with migration into the county that the population trend has altered.

With the decline in mining, many Cornish miners left the county. So long as work could be found, migration was mainly internal. The opening of mines in East Cornwall in the 1820's subsequently led to the immigration of mines from West Cornwall into the area. Some miners moved to the coal mines in the north of England, but many more crossed the seas to exercise their skills. Rowe has noted, "Before long there were to be as many Cornish miners in Johannesburg and Butte City as there were in Redruth and St. Just". The population figures do not show the extent of emigration. Since the Census figures showed an excess of births over deaths, it has been estimated that the decrease in population between 1861 and 1871, if emigrants were included, would be nearer 40,000 than the 7,047 shown in the Figures.⁸

"Farming", it has been said, "till recent times was the Cinderella of the Cornish economic order". It was only in the less densely populated eastern half of the county that agriculture remained the dominant industry,

8. J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', pp. 6-7; J. Rowe, Cornwall in the age of the Industrial Revolution, p. 326: for a fuller treatment of this theme, see John Rowe, The Hard-Rock Men: Cornish Immigrants and the North American Mining Frontier (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1974) and Arthur C. Todd, The Cornish Miner in America (Truro: Barton, 1967): see also John Rowe, Cornish Methodists and Emigrants (C.M.H.R. Occas. Pub., 11, 1967) for a brief examination of the Methodist aspect of this subject.

but the most fertile land was limited to the sheltered valley slopes. Those parishes where mining was predominant followed the overall population trend of the county, but the population of agricultural parishes showed a slow rise until 1841, after which a gradual, but continuous process of rural depopulation took place. This has been correlated with the high agricultural prices which existed under the Corn Laws and the recession and withdrawal from use of marginal land which followed their repeal.⁹

The main exception to the story of late nineteenth century decline is to be found to the north and west of St. Austell. The number of inhabitants there had risen steadily since 1801 as the china clay industry developed, leaving its distinctive effect on the landscape. Some of the unemployed miners found work in the china clay pits, but it was never sufficient to absorb them all, and, to the miners, working in the clay pits involved a loss of status.

Some coastal parishes benefitted from the development of the tourist industry, but this has been mostly a twentieth century phenomenon. Retired people have also tended to migrate to the coastal areas of Cornwall. With its long coastline, the sea has played an important role in Cornish history. Fishing, however, as a major economic activity, has been confined to the three parishes of St. Ives, Paul and Mevagissey. For the rest, it has been only a seasonal source of employment, especially fishing the pilchard shoals.

9. J. Rowe, Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution, p. 208; N. Pounds, op.cit., p. 303

One of the notable features of Cornwall is that there is no metropolis, but rather a number of smallish towns rivalling one another for pre-eminence. Some of the towns remained static or declined in population. This was the experience of Launceston, Truro and Bodmin. Camborne and Redruth grew rapidly with the extension of mining, only to contract with its decline later in the nineteenth century. Falmouth, with its deep harbour, and St. Austell, serving the China clay industry, have grown steadily. While there has been a marked move towards urbanization this century, Cornwall still remains by comparison a rural area.^{10.}

The settlement pattern in Cornwall is distinctive in itself, since the compact, nucleated village, associated with the Anglo-Saxon, is not to be found, except to the east and north-east of the county. In Cornwall, the idiosyncratic unit of settlement is the small hamlet consisting of a few cottages and farms. Balchin has observed, "the pattern of tiny fields and dispersed settlements is more marked in Cornwall than in any other English County". It is a legacy of Cornwall's Celtic heritage.¹¹

The pattern of land ownership in Cornwall is also different. The aristocracy has owned less than the average for England, but Cornwall has had one of the highest figures (32%) for land owned by commoners holding more than 10,000 acres.¹² But what also stands out in Cornwall is the large number of smallholdings. Vincent has noted that in 1903 the average size of holdings in Cornwall was 44.8 acres, compared with an overall average in England of 66.1 acres. Farms of over

10. N. Pounds, op.cit., pp. 303 ff.

11. W. Balchin, op.cit., pp. 16-18.

12. T. Nossiter, Influence, Opinion and Political Idioms in Reformed England, p.208; V.M. Chesher, 'A social and economic study of some West Cornwall families' (Unpublished B. Litt. thesis, Univ. of Oxford, 1957), p. 229.

1,000 acres still did not exist in the county in 1954, and part time holdings continue to be popular.¹³

It has been said of the historical geography of Cornwall that it is of great interest, because in it can be seen "...with a clarity perhaps greater than in any other county of England how the man made landscape has evolved out of the natural landscape."¹⁴ This was the environment in which Cornish Methodism was born. Indeed, if one lasting impression of a visitor to Cornwall is the old time workings, another is the prevalence of Methodist chapels, dotted all over the countryside, seemingly in every village and town.

Before Wesley

However, Methodism did not arrive in a religious vacuum. According to one writer, an examination of the visitation returns for the eighteenth century shows that there was "considerable zeal" within the Anglican Church at this time, before the Wesleys arrived and before the influence of the Evangelical clergy could be felt in Cornwall.¹⁵ But, equally, it seems that, as the century progressed, taking communicant figures and non-residence as indices, the condition of the Church of England in the county was deteriorating. The visitation returns reveal that not only was attendance at communion declining, but so also was the frequency with which communion was celebrated. In 1779, one third of Cornish clergymen were non-resident and the poverty of Cornish livings encouraged pluralism, though these

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13. J. Vincent, Pollbooks, p.43; see also Commission on the Constitution, Written Evidence, viii, England (London, H.M.S.O., 1972), p. 27.
14. W. Balchin, op. cit., p. 18.
15. Cr. C.B. Davies, The Early Cornish Evangelicals 1735-60: A study of Walker of Truro and others (London: S.P.C.K., 1951) pp. 22-23.

problems were not confined to Cornwall.¹⁶

Until 1877, Cornwall formed part of the Diocese of Exeter. The difficulties of travelling and the character of some of the Bishops meant ecclesiastical supervision was not effective. It was not till Phillpotts was installed as Bishop in 1830 that the situation improved.¹⁷

The rigidity of the parish system also acted as an encumbrance. Many of the parish churches were distant from the communities they served. In Cornwall this was a particular problem because of the dispersed settlement pattern and because some of the churches had been built on the remote, monastic sites of the Celtic Saints. The Rector of Lanteglos could lament in 1821, "The dissenters are considerable in number - the chief cause of their existence is the great distance of the churches from Camelford, a borough town in the parish..."¹⁸ The redistribution of population caused by the mining boom accentuated the problems facing the Cornish parishes and the difficulties involved in creating new parishes hindered efforts to improve the situation.¹⁹

To this picture of Cornish Anglicanism should be added the activities and activism of the Evangelical clergy. Samuel Walker of Truro was the most notable. Although in terms of numbers they were never large, their influence extended beyond the boundaries of their

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16. H. Brown, 'Methodism and the Church of England in Cornwall', pp. 43-44, 48; Norman Sykes, Church and State in England in the eighteenth century (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1934), p. 417.
17. H. Brown, op. cit., p. 29; see G.C.B. Davies, Henry Phillpotts: Bishop of Exeter, 1778-1869 (London: S.P.C.K., 1954).
18. Quoted in H.M. Brown, A Century for Cornwall: the Diocese of Truro, 1877-1977 (Truro: Blackford, 1976)p.6.
19. N. Sykes, op. cit., pp. 405-6.

own parishes. Thomson and Bennet, for instance, who held livings in North Cornwall, were associated with Wesley in some of his journeys through the county, but, for the most part, the Evangelicals and the Wesleys worked independently of one another.

Old Dissent in Cornwall was not strong. Daniel Defoe touring Britain in 1713 counted only four meeting houses in Cornwall compared with seventy in Devon.²⁰ In 1744, the incumbent of Creed rejoiced at the small number of "anabaptists" in his parish, whose teacher "...now seldom visits 'em - to so low a condition by ye blessing of God are they reduced".²¹

George Fox had visited Cornwall in 1665, being imprisoned for a time in Launceston. He did not have a high opinion of the Cornish, commenting, "I never saw any people ruder, the Indians were more like Christians than they". By 1700 there were two ty seven societies and 400 adherents in Cornwall. This momentum was not maintained and Cornish Quakers became an introverted and middle class group, largely associated with the Fox family of Falmouth, namesakes only of their founder.²²

Over fifty Cornish clergymen had been ejected from the Church of England by the 1662 Act of Uniformity. This was the beginning of Congregationalism in Cornwall, though it was an uphill struggle to keep the churches going and it was not till 1777 that independency really got underway. By this time it formed part of the Evangelical Awakening. It seems that some of the

20. G. Davies, The Early Cornish Evangelicals, p. 27.

21. Quoted in H. Brown, 'Methodism and the Church of England in Cornwall', p. 54.

22. Quotation for T.R. Harris, Methodism and the Cornish Miner (C.M.H.A. Occasional Publication, 1, 1960), p. 4; H.M. Brown, The Church in Cornwall (London: Cox & Wyman, 1964), p. 40.

characteristics of early Methodism, for example village preaching and itinerant ministers, were adopted by Cornish Congregationalists.²³

Baptists had been active in the Falmouth area. But two Baptist missionaries in Cornwall in 1796 at the request of the Baptist Missionary Society expressed their regret "... that the Dissenters have paid so little attention to this part of the kingdom and thereby lost so favourable an opportunity of serving the cause of religion."²⁴

In his study of religion in the rural setting of South Lindsey, Obelkevich noted the importance of what he called "popular religion". He defined this as "the non-institutional religious beliefs and practices, including unorthodox conceptions of christian doctrine and ritual, prevalent in the ranks of rural society". It was a sort of amalgam of "unofficial Christianity" with a larger helping of "pagan survives". This was also very strong in Cornwall.²⁵

Popular religion manifested itself in various situations. The newspapers contained numerous accounts of those delivered from the powers of evil witches by witch finders. They also reported cases where "conjurers" or "cunning men" were used to recover lost goods. A number of beliefs were concerned with curing illnesses or

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23. Richard Ball, Congregationalism in Cornwall: A brief survey (London: Independent Press, 1955) pp. 8, 13, 29-31.
24. Quoted from L.A. Fereday, The Story of Falmouth Baptists: with some account of Cornish Baptist beginnings (London: Carey Kingsgate Press), p.62.
25. J. Obelkevich, Religion and Rural Society, p. 261; T.C. Peter, A Compendium of the History and Geography Cornwall, 4th ed. (Truro: Netherton & Worth, 1906), p. 193.

were associated with death. Others involved a degeneration or paganisation of Christian practices. An example of this was the custom of children at Gwennap to christen their dolls in the streams on Good Friday. In the Camborne area, the remedy for stopping a cut from bleeding involved the use of a florin. This was the only coin with a cross on it.²⁶

Much of the folk-lore surrounds fishermen and miners. The fisherman's belief, that it would bring ill fortune to mention wild animals when at sea, was the cause of an assault case at Newlyn, when it was thought that a hare's pad was nailed to the mast of one boat by a rival crew. Amongst miners there was a widespread belief in "Knackers" or underground spirits in the mines. They were believed to possess a capricious and spiteful disposition. The high incidence of deaths in the mines and the role of fortune in mining helps to explain the prevalence of such beliefs in mining communities. Writing of some Cornish miners who had settled in the North of England, the West Briton reported, "The Cornish folk are thought to be very superstitious by the Northumbrians".²⁷

It has been argued that the origin of beliefs in "piskies", or small people and similar stories can be traced back to Celtic folk-lore, much of which was lost when the Cornish began to speak English as their own tongue. But the important point is the strength of popular religion in the county.²⁸

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26. A. Jenkin, Cornwall and its People, pp. 274, 285: for reports in newspapers, see W.B., 3 December 1841, 14 January 1842, 6 September 1844, 25th July 1845, 27 November 1863, 25 November 1897 and more recently Sunday Independent, 17 June 1979: see also, D. du Maurier, Vanishing Cornwall: the spirit and history of Cornwall (London: Gollancz, 1967), pp.111 ff and Robert Hunt, ed., Popular Romances of the West of Cornwall; or the Drolls, Traditions and Superstitions of old Cornwall (London: John Camden Hotten, 1865).
27. A. Jenkin, op. cit., p. 258; W.B., 9 September 1886.
28. A. Jenkin, op. cit., pp. 255, 283, 300.

The Origin and Development of Cornish Methodism.

John Wesley first journeyed to Cornwall in 1743. From 1738 onwards, he travelled the length of the country preaching the Christain Gospel and organising his converts into small groups. As a life-long Anglican, Wesley regarded his missionary endeavours as being complementary to the Church of England rather than in competition with it. The strategy he adopted in his itinerations has been summed up by Brown: "Where the masses of the people were, thither went the Wesleys". The growing mining population and the weakness of the Church of England explain the considerable portion of time Wesley spent in Cornwall.²⁹

Most of his time in the county Wesley spent in the West of Cornwall, which was where the majority of Cornishmen lived and where he gained his earliest followers. Wesley had originally come to Cornwall to address a religious society already in existence at St. Ives. Even allowing for exaggeration, large numbers listened to his preaching and opposition to his presence was mainly confined to the politically sensitive years from 1743 to 1747.³⁰

By 1824, according to the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, one in nineteen people in Cornwall was a Methodist. This was the highest density in England. Methodism had found good soil in Cornwall. It had grown through a series of revivals. These were noted for their emotionalism. They were occasions when a chapel would be kept open day and night for a number of

29. H. Brown, 'Methodism and the Church of England in Cornwall', p. 109.

30. The Wesleys' entries in their Journals on their visits to Cornwall can be found in John Pearce, Ed., The Wesleys in Cornwall (Truro: Barton, 1964).

weeks and when impromptu prayer meetings were held at the bottom of mines.³¹

The excesses of these revivals were condemned both within and without Methodism. Samuel Drew, an eminent Cornish Wesleyan, commented, "If the work be of God, he does not want the tricks I have witnessed". Even John Riles in his defence of the 1814 revival conceded that there had been "some little irregularity and disorder", but pointed to the evidence of changed lives as proof that the work was of God. The Cornish Banner argued that a degree of emotion was to be expected in the salvation of a sinner from hell. Yet it was also a characteristic of these revivals that there was a substantial falling away after them.³²

One problem in seeking to explain the revivals is that they were spread over a number of years prior to the explosive increase in membership and that they occurred in different places at different times. The revivals can be correlated with disturbed or exciting times, but the link is too general to be of much value as an explanation. Bad harvests, high food prices and fluctuations in the fortunes of mining do not shed light on the picture.³³

The cyclic pattern of revivals has led Rule to

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31. Wes. Meth. Mag. 1824, p. 378; J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', p. 293: Revivals took place in 1764 c. 1782, 1798, 1814, 1824, 1833, 1839, 1848-49, 1862-65 (J. Probert, The Sociology of Cornish Methodism, p. 28)
32. T. Shaw, A History of Cornish Methodism, pp. 65-66; John Riles, An Account of the Revival of the Work of God in the County of Cornwall (Penryn: Cock, 1814), preface; Cornish Banner, December 1846, p. 186.
33. J. Probert, The Sociology of Cornish Methodism, pp. 28-33; see also Sydney G. Dimond, The Psychology of the Methodist Revival: an empirical and descriptive study (Oxford: O.U.P., 1926).

suggests that revivals "were a means of joining young persons to the church". However, the age cohorts he refers to includes a rather large proportion of the entire population and this does not explain why the revivals became less frequent as the nineteenth century continued. It is notable that the revivals took place for the most part in the West Cornwall. This was the area most affected by industrialisation, furthest away from Exeter and with the strongest Celtic legacy. However, as Payne has commented, "Spiritual origins are extremely elusive".³⁴

Wesley remained an Anglican until his death. Yet the societies he organised gradually separated from the Anglican Church. This was a movement Wesley was able to check while he was alive, but which could not be contained after his death in 1791.

There were a number of factors involved in this divergence of paths. Wesley himself disagreed with the parish system. In his correspondence with Samuel Walker of Truro, he rejected the concept of a geographically fixed ministry. Another influence was the problem which faced Walker's own congregation at Truro, when on his death, a man strongly opposed to his theological views succeeded him. In this case a number of the fellowship formed their own congregational church. The question of the status of many of Wesley's helpers aroused concern. The Anglican Church did not look too kindly upon them, since only a few were ordained ministers.³⁵

Not all Methodists possessed the same

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34. J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', pp.294 ff: Ernest A. Payne, The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England (London: S.C.M., 1944), p. 74.
35. N. Sykes, op. cit., p. 392.

loyalty to the Established Church as Wesley. Increasingly Methodism had been gaining adherents from outside the Anglican sphere of influence, especially from the lower strata of society. Equally, many Anglicans did not take kindly to the growth of Methodism. Lavington, Bishop of Exeter, was one fierce critic of Methodism. Furthermore, between the Evangelicals within the Established Church and the Methodists co-operation was hindered by theological differences. Anglican Evangelicals were Calvinistic in doctrine, while Methodists were Arminian by conviction.³⁶

The separation of Methodists from the Church of England, in Cornwall at least, can be explained largely in terms of the "self-sufficiency" of Methodism. The affection of Cornish Methodists for Methodism was great, especially since it was the means of their conversion. The intimate fellowship and spiritual nourishment obtained from the Methodist societies, originally designed to supplement the Church services, eventually replaced them. Cornish Methodism grew without the help of the Church of England. While not initially hostile to the Established Church, it was aware that it owned nothing to it.³⁷

Loyalty to the Church of England lingered on in some places. Brown has noted how, as the eighteenth century progressed, the clergy increasingly classified Methodists as Dissenters, as they stopped attending the parish services. But evidence remains that in certain rural areas in Cornwall, Methodist attendance at church continued well into the nineteenth century.³⁸

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36. L.E. Elliot-Binns, The Early Evangelicals: a religious and social study (London: Lutterworth, 1953), p. 185; see also Richard Polwhele, Anecdotes of Methodism (London: 1800) for early opposition to Methodism; N. Sykes, op. cit., p. 396
37. M.S. Edwards, 'The Cornish Methodism a study in divisions', pp. 35-36; H. Brown, 'Methodism and the Church of England in Cornwall', p. 152.
38. M.S. Edwards, op. cit., p. 213; H. Brown, op.cit., p.482.

The Divisions in Methodism.

One of the characteristics of Methodism from the death of Wesley to the middle of the nineteenth century was its fissiparousness. It is not surprising that an area which became so strongly Methodist, like Cornwall, should reflect the major divisions which developed in Methodism and even possess some minor variations of its own. It is possible to categorise Methodist divisions into "offshoots" and "secessions". The former were characterised by an emphasis on evangelism and revivalism, thereby building up a large following, whereas the latter were caused by matters relating to the constitution of Methodism. Secessions were formed almost entirely from former Wesleyans and did not tend to increase in numbers to the same extent as offshoots.³⁹

The Bible Christians, one of the two main Methodist offshoots, were essentially a West Country phenomenon. M.S. Edwards has called them "a peculiarly Cornish expression of Methodism". William O'Bryan was their founder. In 1815 he was expelled from the Wesleyan Connexion in North Cornwall, because he was unable to work within the Wesleyan framework of organisation and discipline. The offshoot, growing out an initial class meeting O'Bryan held at Shebbear in Devon, was one whose appeal was primarily to rural inhabitants. The Bible Christians gained from the discontent with the Established Church and from the outset possessed a pronounced dissenting outlook. They placed a strong emphasis on revivalism and employed women as preachers. In dress there was a Quaker-like insistence upon simplicity. Shaw has described them as, "For the most part ... ordinary Methodists, though they tended to be simpler and plainer than the Wesleyans, but they were

39. R. Currie, op. cit., pp. 57-58.

often noisier and, in Devon and Cornwall, where their main strength lay, they had perhaps more than their share of eccentric individuals".⁴⁰

In 1829 O'Bryan left his own group when his claim to complete control of the Bible Christian conference was rejected. He and his supporters founded the Arminian Bible Christians. It was almost entirely a Cornish division and by 1835 most of them had rejoined the Bible Christians and O'Bryan had left for America. Also linked to the Bible Christians were a group known as Boyle's Connexion. These were the followers of John Boyle, a former Wesleyan itinerant who had settled in the vicinity of Truro. He had established a number of chapels, which on his retirement had merged with the Bible Christians. Some, in fact, seceded at a later date because of O'Bryan's autocratic control of the Connexion.⁴¹

The Religious Census of Attendance, taken in 1851, shows that the main region of Bible Christian strength was in the eastern half of Cornwall, especially in the districts of Stratton, Camelford and St. Columb on the North East coast. They were instrumental in bringing Methodism to these places. They were comparatively weaker in the South East of the county and in the mining areas of Western Cornwall. Even so, they were the second largest Methodist body in Cornwall with a membership in 1851 of 6,445. This was over 40% of their total strength, including foreign missions.

Primitive Methodism, the other Methodist offshoot,

40. M.S. Edwards, op. cit., p.90; T. Shaw, A History of Cornish Methodism, pp. 91-93.

41. Michael S. Edwards, The Divisions of Cornish Methodism (C.M.M.A. Occas. Pub., 7, 1964), pp. 7-8.

began in 1810 in Staffordshire under the leadership of Hugh Bourne and William Clowes. They considered the ban by the Wesleyan Conference on the use of American-style, outdoor, revivalist camp meetings an undue restraint on evangelism and, thus, formed their own movement, seeking to follow in the footsteps of the original and in that sense 'primitive' Methodists. With the exception of the Potteries and Durham, they too were a rural phenomenon which became more urban in character towards the end of the century. In organisation they placed an emphasis on lay representation, especially at the Annual Conference. Like the Bible Christians, they employed women as itinerants and by their evangelistic zeal they became the second largest branch of Methodism in the country.⁴²

Primitive Methodism did not come to Cornwall until 1825. Clowes was invited by the former Bible Christian preacher, William Turner, and spent five months in missionary activity in the Redruth area. Gradually the cause spread to St. Austell, St. Ives and Penzance and by 1851 the Religious Census records Primitive Methodism as being thinly established over most of western Cornwall. Their membership for that year was 1,879 (1.7% of their total membership). An acute shortage of money made them particularly susceptible to economic circumstances. As Probert put it, "The closure of a mine could result in the end of a chapel!" It seems too that Primitive Methodists in Cornwall were preoccupied with the problems of chapel building, partly due to poor financial management and partly to scarce resources. The struggle to keep the work going in Cornwall may have directed their attention away from political activity associated with

42. J. Gay, op. cit., pp.150-2.

Primitive Methodists elsewhere.⁴³

The close similarity between the Bible Christians and the Primitive Methodists in origin and organisation is evident. Indeed, one historian of Primitive Methodism considered, "Each was so like the other that they might have been called the Methodist twins".⁴⁴ This helps to explain why the Bible Christian did not expand much beyond the borders of Devon and Cornwall, and why the Primitive Methodists found difficulty in establishing themselves in the South West.

The first of the secessions was the Methodist New Connexion. This originated in 1797 when Alexander Kilham refused to agree to the Plan of Pacification, which followed Wesley's death.⁴⁵ With the support of about five thousand Methodist members, he left the Original Connexion to form the New Connexion, which closely resembled the parent body with the important exception that it gave equal lay and ministerial representation at its Annual Conferences. Most of its membership was to be found north of a line drawn from the Wash to the Severn. In 1851 there were only nine chapels South of this line, three of which were located in Cornwall.⁴⁶

The New Connexion only reached Cornwall in 1834, as a result of a dispute between the Wesleyan Superintendent at Truro, John Baker, and two of his class leaders, James Sawle and William Scott. The upshot of the dispute was the departure of Sawle and Scott from Wesleyanism. They established a M.N.C.

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43. John C.C. Probert, Primitive Methodism in Cornwall: a history and sociology, pp. 1-5, 109.
 44. H.B. Kendall, The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church, II, (London: Dalton, 1905), p. 328.
 45. For details of this, see E.R. Taylor, op. cit., pp. 70-71, 80-81.
 46. J. Gay, op. cit., pp. 149-50.

circuit, although in 1846-47 it was almost wiped out by emigration. The three chapels in existence in 1851 were all found to be in the Truro area. Their membership for that year was 132.⁴⁷

The year 1827 saw the formation of the Protestant Methodists over what became known as the Leeds Organ Case. The Wesleyan Conference directed that an organ be installed in a chapel, overriding the wishes of the local congregation. It has been said that the organ installed in Brunswick Chapel, Leeds cost "£1,000. and 1,000 members". The leader of the protesters, Matthew Johnson, travelled the country to rally support for his cause against the Conference decision. In 1830 there was an active group of Protestant Methodists in the Breage area of Cornwall.⁴⁸

In 1835 the Protestant Methodists joined with the Wesleyan Association. This sprang out of Dr. Samuel Warren's opposition to the idea of a Theological Institution, which would have had the autocratic Jabez Bunting as its Principal. After his expulsion from the Wesleyan Conference, Warren took his case to the courts, where the verdict went against him, hence, upholding the legality of Conference authority over all Methodist societies.

The distinctive constitutional feature of the Wesleyan Association was its circuit independence. The Annual Assembly, - the name Conference was disliked - lacked sovereign power, and it was perhaps the emphasis on the local and lay elements which explained its appeal in Cornwall. The Wesleyan Association also

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47. see W.R. Ward, ed., Early Victorian Methodism: the correspondence of Jabez Bunting, 1830-58, pp.63 ff; M.S. Edwards, The Divisions of Cornish Methodism, p.3.
48. E. Taylor, op. cit., p. 153, fn.2; O.A. Beckerlegge, Free Methodism in Cornwall (C.M.H.A. Occas. Pub., 2, n.d.), p.7.

benefitted from the accretion of other splinter groups in Methodism, in addition to the Protestant Methodists. It became known as the Wesleyan Methodist Association in 1840.

The controversy over the Theological Institution aroused particular interest in Camelford, where in December 1834, T.P. Rosevear, a well known local preacher, chaired an "illegal" meeting on the subject. When the Superintendent of the circuit withdrew Rosevear's membership card, he precipitated a secession of the majority of the circuit's members. It has been said of this episode that it resulted in the virtual elimination of Wesleyan Methodism "between Boscastle and Bude". At Helston and Liskeard, too, large numbers left Wesleyanism. A degree of animosity developed between the two sides, especially over the ownership of the chapels.⁴⁹

By 1851 the W.M.A. had consolidated its position and had spread throughout the North East of the county. The Bodmin, Camelford and Wadebridge circuit was one of the largest in the Association. The main support for the W.M.A., as with the M.N.C., was to be found North of the Wash-Severn line. Once again Cornwall proved to be an exception to this rule. In 1851, its Cornish membership was 3,095.⁵⁰

The last and most serious split in Methodism came in 1849, following what was known as the "Fly sheets" agitation. These were a series of attacks on the Wesleyan hierarchy, as personified by Jabez Bunting, the leading force in Wesleyan Methodism at

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49. M.S. Edwards, 'Cornish Methodism: a study in division', p. 134; at Camelford 634 out of 702 members seceded; in 1836 at Helston the numbers were 342 out of 1,545 members and in 1837 at Liskard, 425 out of 1,160 members.
50. J. Gay, op. cit., pp. 154-5

this time. Currie has commented, "The strength of the Fly Sheets is their remarkably skilful analysis of the Buntingite system, much of which was taken from the published 'Minutes' and was unexceptionable to anyone except Buntingites. But a great deal of the pamphlets consisted of well authenticated but scandalous accusations against Bunting and his followers".⁵¹

The issue, at heart one concerning the reform of the powers of the Wesleyan Conference, reached its climax when three ministers, Everrett, Dunn and Griffiths, were expelled by Conference for their refusal to deny any complicity in the authorship or circulation of the Fly Sheets. They organised a campaign to try to raise sufficient support to force reform upon the Wesleyan Conference. Hence, it was sometime before they organised themselves into a separate group which was both a sign of their failure to achieve this aim and an explanation of why so few of the estimated 100,00 members lost by Wesleyanism joined the Wesleyan Reformers.

Although still in the process of being formed, by 1851 it had become clear that their strength lay mainly where the W.M.A. was weakest. In Cornwall the most promising area was the Redruth District. Even though one of the expelled ministers, Samuel Dunn, was a Cornishman by birth, this division did not take on two large an aspect in Cornwall. This has been attributed to the opposition of eminent Cornish Wesleyans of the day, like Thomas Garland and Dr. George Smith, though the prior success of the W.M.A. in the county also weakened its impact.⁵²

The Wesleyan Reformers adopted a similar organisation to that of the W.M.A. and, as the nature

51. E. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 186, fn.2.

52. M.S. Edwards, 'Cornish Methodism: a study in division', p. 160.

of their origins and of their objections to the Original Connexion were so similar, the two bodies joined together in 1857 to form the United Methodist Free Churches. Their Cornish membership in 1857 was 3,721, 9.3% of their total membership. The U.M.F.C. were strongly influenced by Congregationalism in their organisation and were more typically Nonconformist than their parent body.⁵³ There were a small number of chapels which preferred to remain outside the newly formed U.M.F.C.. Instead they created the Wesleyan Reform Union.

One of the minor, local variants of Methodism in Cornwall emerged in 1802 when a secession took place in Redruth, superficially for a trivial reason (either the erection of a gallery or the installation of pews). Underlying this was the high-handedness of the local Methodist Superintendent, Thomas Kelk. Thus, under the leadership of Dr. Boase, a Redruth medical man and local preacher, a number of members left the Redruth Wesleyan circuit. They were friendly with the Bible Christian leader, O'Bryan, but on the death of Dr. Boase in 1813 they returned to their parent body.⁵⁴

Another cause of friction was the ownership of the chapels. In 1813 at Ladock, near Truro, the itinerant ministers wanted to settle the chapel on the "model deed" recommended by Conference. Some of the trustees objected to this, because of their distrust of the Wesleyan Conference. In this way a number of independent Methodist chapels, not all formerly Wesleyan, emerged.⁵⁵

53. E. Taylor, op. cit., p. 186.fn.2.

54. John C.C. Probert, Dr. Boase of Redruth (Redruth: 1965), p.9: the exact number involved is hard to determine. It varies according to the source used from 90-381.

55. M.S. Edwards, The Divisions of Cornish Methodism, p.3; T. Shaw, A History of Cornish Methodism, p.3.

A more important local division was that which led to the formation of the Teetotal Wesleyan Methodists. The total abstinence movement was gaining much support in Cornwall in the late 1830's. But, when in 1841 the Superintendent of the St. Ives circuit followed the Wesleyan Conference prohibition on the holding of teetotal meetings in the chapels and refused to reconsider this decision, 250 Methodists in St. Ives seceded and 150 others in the neighbourhood joined them.⁵⁶

The Wesleyan Connexion, in spite of these divisions, continued to be the biggest and most important branch of Methodism. M.S. Edwards described mid-nineteenth century Wesleyans as follows: they "...retained ministerial rule, were sensitive to their position in the community, and tended to ignore other bodies as much as possible. The ministers distrusted uncontrolled revivalism, political democracy and teetotalism". Cornwall, however, was one of the few places where the fervency and extended meetings, usually associated with the Methodist offshoots, was to be found amongst the Wesleyans.⁵⁷

According to the 1851 Religious Census, Wesleyanism remained strongest in the western half of the county, where it took hold first. The greatest concentrations of Wesleyans were to be found in the Truro and Penzance areas. In 1851 there were 23,346 Wesleyans in Cornwall, which was 7.7% of their British membership.

An examination of the origins and divisions of

56. The membership of the St. Ives circuit in fact fell from 1,890 members in 1841 to 1,032 the following year: for a fuller discussion of the Teetotal Wesleyan Methodists and temperance, see below, p. 137ff.
57. M.S. Edwards, The Divisions of Cornish Methodism, p.3; R. Currie, op. cit., p. 58.

Methodism in Cornwall shows that the county was a microcosm of Methodism in the whole country. It is important to remember, however, that there were some differences between Cornwall and the rest of the country. Firstly, in Cornwall the Bible Christians were far stronger than the Primitive Methodists, who were the more significant nationally. Secondly, the Warrenite division in 1835 was more serious in Cornwall than the later troubles surrounding the "Fly Sheets". The reverse was true in the country as a whole.

Several explanations have been put forward to explain these divisions. The role of individuals and the clash of personalities has been a key factor in some of them both nationally and locally. It is clear, for instance, that O'Bryan, for all his gifts as an evangelist, found it difficult to take criticism and to work under the authority of others. Rosevear, prominent in the formation of the W.M.A. at Camelford, was known to possess a fiery temperament, while Bunting, nicknamed by his adversaries "the Pope of Methodism", was said to possess at times an "ungovernable will to govern".⁵⁸ But the role of personality in the division of Methodism seems to have been to highlight existing problems and not to cause them.

Many of the disputes revolved around the roles and powers of the lay and ministerial elements within Methodism. The power of the Wesleyan Conference as represented by the local Superintendent minister can be seen in the emergence of the W.M.A. at Camelford and

58. J. Kent, The Age of Disunity, p. 77: With Bunting, as Kent argues, it is necessary to distinguish between his personal ascendancy in the Wesleyan Conference and the issue of ministerial authority. A number believing in the latter did not necessarily agree with the former.

in the secession of the Teetotal Wesleyans and Dr. Boase's people. The resentment over ministerial authority is reflected in the constitutions adopted by non-Wesleyan Methodists with their differing combinations of lay and clerical representation at their respective conferences. Indeed, the Wesleyans themselves decided to include laymen to some extent in 1877.⁵⁹

The conflicts originated over differing doctrines of the ministry and, as Kent has written in another context, "A post-Liberal age seems to find it difficult to believe that men could have separated over doctrine at all". The original doctrine held that the authority of the Ministry did not depend upon the congregations and gave ministers pastoral oversight for the Connexion. The new doctrine held that whatever authority ministers possessed ultimately derived from the congregations. Ministers were merely representatives. The secessions were, therefore, again to quote Kent, "...the clumsy, human and unfortunate way in which the movement from the earlier to the later doctrine took place". With the offshoots, it was a zeal for evangelism frustrated by the Old Connexion which ignited them, though significantly their constitutions were similar to those of the secessionists.⁶⁰

Contact between the different branches of Methodism in these years was limited. M.S. Edwards has observed, "It is impossible to read the 'religious intelligence' section of each of the denominational

59. R. Currie, op. cit., p. 160.

60. J. Kent, op. cit., pp. 44, 178; there is an interesting parallel between the fissiparous tendencies of nineteenth century Methodism and twentieth century Socialist bodies. Both split over points of doctrine or strategy and many of the divisions revolved around personalities.

Methodist magazines without the strong impression that each body was quite uninterested in the work of any other; unless the work directly affected its own".⁶¹ Just as Methodists drifted away from the Church of England through the sufficiency of its own activities, so the different Methodist bodies themselves, more consciously perhaps, strove to be independent and self-sufficient.

In some areas the divisions left a legacy of bitterness, which the building of rival chapels, sometimes for prestigious reasons, did much to perpetuate. But at the same time, it must be remembered that Methodists agreed on fundamental doctrines and had in common a desire for the salvation of souls. Moreover, missionary work and philanthropic concern were areas where joint endeavours were possible.

The 1851 Census.

In 1851 a Census of Religious Attendance took place, some of the results of which had already been mentioned. The compiler of the Census, Horace Mann, considered that attendance was a more useful indicator of people's religion than a question in the Census on religious adherence, which anyway would have been of doubtful legality. It is a useful document in assessing the strength of religion in England and Wales, especially since it is the only Census of its kind ever taken in this country. It is open to a number of criticisms, the most important being that no means was included to discover how many people attended services once, twice or even thrice on the day of the count. Nonetheless, it provides a unique opportunity to see the progress

61. see M.S. Edwards, 'Cornish Methodism: a study in division', pp. 185 ff. for a fuller discussion of this.

made by Methodism and to compare it with other Christian groups in Cornwall.⁶²

In his Report, Mann estimated that over five million people had intentionally stayed away from public worship. He commented, "The most important fact which the investigation as to attendance brings before us is, unquestionably, the alarming number of non-attendants... it must be apparent that a sadly formidable portion of the English people are habitual neglecters of the public ordinances of religion".⁶³

One of the methods devised to convert attendances into numbers of people is to take the figures for the best attended service of the day and total them up. This Mann did and, for purposes of comparison, some of these have been listed in Figure 2:3 and expressed as percentages of the population. This gives the minimum number of attenders of Census Sunday on the assumption that no one attended more than on best attended service.⁶⁴

62. Much has been written on this Religious Census: J.Gay's The Geography of Religion in England is largely based on it and the national aspect is also dealt with in Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church, I (London: Black, 1966), pp.363-9; K.S. Inglis, 'Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851', J.E.H., 7 (1960), pp. 74-86; and W.S.F. Pickering 'The 1851 Religious Census - a useless experiment?', B.J.S., 18 (1967), pp. 382-407: for Cornwall, see Thomas Shaw, The Pastoral Crook: the state of religion in the Diocese of Exeter in the mid-nineteenth century (C.M.H.A. Occas. Pub., 16, 1970) and J. Probert, The Sociology of Cornish Methodism, pp. 54-60.

63. Census of Great Britian, 1851: Religious Worship, England and Wales: Reports and Tables (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1853), pp. cliii, clviii.

64. Indeed, the attendances for Cornwall show that in general Anglican services were best attended in the morning and Methodist and Nonconformist meetings in the evenings. The possibility of overlap was therefore present.

Fig 2:3. % of the population present at the most
numerously attended services on 30 March, 1851.⁶⁵

	Population	C.ofE.	Prot. Diss.	R.C.	Others	All
Eng. and Wales	17,927,609	16.6	17.4	1.4	0.1	35.5
S.W. Counties	1,803,291	22.6	21.2	0.3	0.1	44.1
Wiltshire	240,966	26.4	23.9	0.4	0.2	50.9
Dorset	177,095	30.1	16.3	0.5	0.1	46.9
Cornwall	356,641	12.6	32.5	0.2	(0.004)	45.3
Somerset	456,259	25.5	17.6	0.3	0.1	43.6
Devon	572,330	22.6	17.2	0.2	0.1	40.2

Several clear differences emerge from Figure 2:3 between the South West region and the rest of England and Wales, and within the South West. The South West recorded above average attendances in both the Anglican and Dissenting categories. This is in keeping with the general pattern of attendance, which was higher in rural areas than elsewhere. Catholicism was also notably weaker in the South West than in England and Wales. The total overall attendance in the South West varied quite widely, though Cornwall, even after its revivals, was only marginally above the average figure for the region.

Figure 2:3 illustrates the weakness of the Church of England in Cornwall. Compared with Devon and the South West as a whole, Cornwall was 10% less Anglican. Cornish Anglicanism even fell below the national average. Equally clear is the strength of Protestant

65. Based on Census of G.B., 1851: Religious Worship, Table N, p.ccc; the four categories used are Church of England, Protestant Dissenters (including Methodists), Roman Catholics and Others. The figure for "Others" given in Table N for Cornwall does not tally with the figure in Table C, the county tables.

Dissent in Cornwall. The percentage was over two and a half times that of Anglican attenders. It was easily the highest figure for the South West and was one of the highest in England and Wales.⁶⁶

Fig. 2:4, Number of Attenders at public worship in Cornwall on 30 March, 1851.⁶⁷

	Maximum-Minimum		Shaw-Mann		Inglis Index	
	%pop.	%church -goers	%pop.	%church -goers	%pop.	%church -goers
Methodist ^a	23.6	66.1	32.5	64.9	43.5	64.0
C.of E. ^b	9.6	26.8	13.7	27.4	19.2	28.2
Noncon. ^b	2.2	6.2	3.3	6.7	4.6	6.8
Others ^c	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.6
R.C.	<u>0.1</u>	<u>0.4</u>	<u>0.2</u>	<u>0.4</u>	<u>0.3</u>	<u>0.4</u>
Totals	35.7%	100.0%	50.0%	100.0%	68.0%	100.0%

- a) consists of Wesleyan Methodists, Methodist New Connexion, Primitive Methodism, Bible Christians, Wesleyan Association and Wesleyan Reformers.
 b) Independents, Baptists, Society of Friends, Unitarians and Lady Huntingdon's Connexion.
 c) Brethern, Isolated Congregations, Jews, and the Catholic and Apostolic Church.

It is possible to look more closely at the formation of the broad categories of Fig. 2:3 by examining the analysis of individual counties found in Table C of the Census. From this, Figure 2:4 has been calculated. It expresses in defined groups the percentage of the Cornish population and of Cornish churchgoers in places of public worship, calculated by three different methods. The Maximum-Minimum is simply Mann's best attended service

66. W. Pickening, on. cit., p.398: only North and South Wales, and Bedfordshire recorded a higher total percentage of Protestant Dissenters.

67. Based on Census of G.B., 1851: Religious Worship, Table C, p.cxcix.

of the day in smaller categories. The Inglis Index of Attendance is an addition of the attendances at all services throughout Census Sunday expressed as a percentage.

Mann also suggested taking the attendances at morning services, and adding to it one half of the afternoon attendances and one third of those present in the evening. This he considered would give some idea of the actual attendance, even though his choice of fractions was an arbitrary one. Shaw noted the unfairness of this method to the Nonconformists, who met mainly in the evening. Hence, the Shaw-Mann method takes the whole of the best attended service, one half of the next best attended service, and one third of any other services held that day.⁶⁸

The Maximum-Minimum figure underestimates the numbers attending, while the Inglis Index clearly exaggerates the numbers. An example of this is in the Scilly Isles, where using the Index of Attendance 106.6% of the population would have attended public worship. The index is useful, however, when dealing with the relative strengths and weaknesses of the various denominations, as it includes all the services. The Shaw-Mann method is probably nearest the mark, though the different methods of calculation make little difference to the breakdown of the churchgoers by denomination.

The most significant fact to emerge from Figure 2:4 is the strength of Methodism in the county. Mann's category of Protestant Dissenter, so far as Cornwall is concerned, means Methodist. According to the Shaw-

68. T. Shaw, The Pastoral Crook, pp.7,20-21: Shaw in his own figures alters the fraction at the third service from one third to one quarter.

Mann figure, about one third of the Cornish people were to be found in a Methodist chapel of one kind or another on Census Sunday. In his calculations for the whole country, Mann estimated that 30% of the population were unable to attend public worship for one reason or another. On this basis, again using the Shaw-Mann method, the Methodist category alone in Cornwall accounts for 54.1% of all those free to attend a place of worship.

Figure 2:4 again highlights the weakness of the Established Church. Apart from the Scillies, St. Germans and Stratton districts, Anglicanism was weaker than Methodism, notably in the mining districts of the west. The fact that the state of the Church of England in Cornwall had been improving under the guidance of Bishop Phillpotts gives some indication of the position into which it had fallen in previous years, for even in 1851 its weakness was striking.⁶⁹

This comparative revival of Anglicanism in the South West led to a demand for a separate diocese for Cornwall. One effect of the Religious Census was to shock the established Church into action on discovering that there were more Nonconformists in places of worship than Anglicans. The desirability of a new diocese was acknowledged and various schemes were proposed. After much vacillation and local rivalry over the location of the cathedral, Truro was the site chosen and an Act establishing the Bishopric of Truro was passed in August 1876.⁷⁰

The Nonconformist groups were weaker still than the

69. A thousand years: from Kenstec to Benson (Truro: Dean and Chapter of Truro, 1977), p.5, gives an indication of the endeavours of Phillpotts when when Bishop.

70. A thousand years: Kenstec to Benson, p.13.

Anglicans. Nationally, the Index of Attendance for the Baptists registered 4.4% and for the Independents 5.8% of the population.⁷¹ In Cornwall, the total Nonconformist Index of Attendance was only 4.6%. The Independents, the largest of the traditional Dissenters in Cornwall, numbered thirty seven congregations in Cornwall in 1851, while the Baptists possessed twenty five churches. These were thinly scattered across the county.

Falmouth and Penzance, perhaps because of their position as ports, prove a popular location for the smaller religious groups. They contained the only Unitarian congregations and Jewish communities in the county. There was a Catholic and Apostolic Church at Falmouth and three churches belonging to Lady Huntingdon's Connexion at Bodmin, Penzance and St. Ives. Quaker meeting houses numbered twelve, and in East Cornwall there were six Brethern groups, though as they objected to the Census, their strength may have been greater. This all highlights the numerical weakness of Cornish Nonconformity, excluding Methodism.⁷²

The position of Catholicism in Cornwall is an interesting one. In 1549, the Cornish had rebelled against the further protestantisation involved in the introduction of a new Prayer Book, and in Elizabethan England Cornwall contained more known recusants than the whole of Devon, Dorset and Somerset put together. By the nineteenth century the picture had changed considerably, with only a small remnant of Catholics left, associated with families like the Arundells of

71. J. Gay, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

72. see T. Shaw, The Pastoral Crook, pp. 31-33 for further details and also Alex M. Jacob, 'The Jews in Cornwall', Cornish Review, Winter 1951, pp. 26-28.

Lanherne, and with comparatively little Irish Catholic immigration. There were Catholic congregations at Falmouth, Penzance and Camborne, but the number of Catholics in Cornwall was numerically insignificant.⁷³

Fig. 2: 5, Analysis of Cornish Methodist Attendances on 30 March 1851.⁷⁴

	Max.-Min.		Shaw-Mann		InglisIndex		Gray
	%Meth.	%Pop.	%Meth.	%Pop.	%Meth.	%Pop.	%Pop.
Wesleyan	64.6	15.2	64.6	21.0	64.6	28.1	8.6
B.C.	18.5	4.4	19.1	6.2	19.4	8.4	0.4
W.M.A.	10.0	2.4	9.6	3.1	9.4	4.1	0.6
P.M.	5.5	1.3	5.4	1.8	5.4	2.4	3.0
M.N.C.	0.7	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.6	0.3	0.6
Wes. Reform	0.7	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.5

Figure 2: 5 analyses the individual branches of Methodism. It illustrates the predominance of Wesleyanism in Cornwall and, compared with Gay's Index of Attendance for Methodism in England and Wales, it indicates the idiosyncracies of Cornish Methodism, notably the greater strength of the Bible Christians and the W.M.A. as well as of Wesleyanism. In brief, the 1851 Religious Census shows that Cornwall was a Methodist stronghold and that Wesleyanism was the dominant form of Methodism in the county.

In order to give a fuller picture of the strength of Cornish Methodism through time, in Figure 2: 6 the

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73. A.L. Rowse, Tudor Cornwall: Portrait of a Society (London: Cape, 1941), p.343; H. Brown, The Church in Cornwall, pp. 78 ff; G. Oliver, Collections illustrating the history of the Catholic religion in the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wilts and Gloucester... (London: Dolmans, 1857), pp. 29-32
74. Based on Census of S.B., 1851: Religious Worship, Table C, p. cxcix; the final column is extracted from J. Gay. op. cit., p. 226.

membership figures have been expressed as a percentage of the Cornish population as revealed by the Census returns. This is what Currie has called the "Membership-Population Ratio" (M.P.R.).⁷⁵

Fig. 2:6, Membership of the different branches of Cornish Methodism as a % of the county's total population.

Year	B.C.	M.N.C.	U.M.F.C. ^a	P.M.	Total Non.Wes.	Wes.	Total Meth
1821	-	-	-	-	-	4.90	4.90
1831	1.16	-	-	0.38	1.54	5.97	7.51
1841	1.78	0.11	(1.04)	0.40	3.33	7.52	10.84
1851	1.81	0.04	(0.87)	0.53	3.25	6.57	9.81
1861	2.22	0.12	1.37	0.66	4.37	6.27	10.64
1871	2.37	0.18	1.35	0.67	4.56	6.18	10.74
1881	2.64	0.13	1.39	0.73	4.89	6.80	11.69
1891	2.78	0.12	1.52	0.60	5.04	7.02	12.06
1901	2.91	0.11 ^b	1.50	0.49	5.01	6.61	11.63
1911		4.73 ^b		0.50	5.23	6.24	11.47
1921		3.94 ^b		0.39	4.23	5.65	9.98
1931		4.03 ^b		0.31	4.34	5.37	9.71
1941							8.89
1951							7.14
1961							7.11
1971							(4.70) ^c

- a) in 1841 and 1851 the figures are those for the W.M.A.
 b) figures for the United Methodist Church.
 c) excludes Cornish circuits in the Plymouth and Exeter District.

According to Currie, the Methodist M.P.R. peaks in 1841 and declines from then onwards. Cornwall displays a slightly different pattern. The M.P.R. peaks in 1841, declines in the 1850's and rises again in the 1860's to reach its highest point in the 1890's. Thereafter it declines.⁷⁶ Another point of interest in the Cornish M.P.R. rate is comparative growth of Non-Wesleyans in relation to Wesleyans. This was due largely to the continuous increase in Bible Christian membership.

75. R. Currie, op. cit., p. 89

76. Ibid., p. 90.

The full strength of Methodism at its height in the nineteenth century is not shown by these figures. Firstly, the figures are those of membership compared with the whole population. Bearing in mind that generally children under fifteen did not become members, the percentage of the Cornish population over fifteen who were Methodists in 1851, for example, may be more accurately placed at 15%. Secondly, the 1851 Religious Census illustrated that a large body of adherents, at least the same size as the membership and probably larger, were also present at Methodist services, at least in the mid-nineteenth century. Thirdly, in the first half of the nineteenth century particularly, Methodism was characterised by a high turnover in membership. Hence, its influence extended beyond its current membership and attendance.

In Cornwall, the inter-relationship between the economic situation and its population explains the eccentricity of the Methodist M.P.R.. As Figure 2:7 shows, Cornish Methodism was adversely affected by emigration. The emigration figures for Cornwall in 1891 and 1901 were the largest for any Wesleyan district. Indeed, the effects of emigration had been commented upon at an earlier date than this. A Methodist minister at St. Agnes had written in 1871, "The men go abroad, fathers and young men of the better class of workmen - for it is they who are able to raise money to emigrate - such men in fact as would furnish us, if they stayed at home, with local preachers, leaders and stewards!"⁷⁷

Cornwall also received considerably fewer from other circuits than it lost through removals. This

77. Peter Prescott, The Case of Cornish Methodism considered or the Missing Linch-Pin (London: Osborne, 1871), p. 3; R. Currie, op. cit., p. 98.

was partly a product of the general phenomenon known as leakage. In Cornwall, it was accentuated by migration up-county.

Fig. 2: 7. Comparison of Membership changes in the Wesleyan Methodist circuits of Cornwall, 1881-1931

Year	New Members	Received from other circuits	Lost to other circuits	Emigration	Ceased Membership
1881	2,533	263	731	-	1,043
1891	1,577	309	747	113	990
1901	1,509	215	628	136	838
1911	912	278	486	-	629
1921	575	159	459	-	287
1931	500	275	386	-	261

Figure 2: 7 also demonstrates Currie's thesis explaining the fall in Methodist numbers. Instead of conversions, resulting in an influx of new members, Methodism became more dependent upon losing fewer of its existing members and on the recruitment of the children of traditional Methodist families. Hence the decline in those becoming new members and in those ceasing to be members.⁷⁸ This is the situation facing Methodism in Cornwall and elsewhere today.

Why Methodism?

Having established the strength of Methodism in Cornwall, the question arises as to why it was that the county was so responsive to the voice of Wesley. The success of Methodism was complementary, not only to the work of the Established Church, but also to that of Old Dissent. Thus, Methodism grew most where Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists were weakest. Where the

78. R. Currie, op. cit., p. 100.

Church of England had been successfully countered by one or more of them, there was less scope for Methodism. One important factor in Cornwall, therefore, was the weakness of the Church of England and the failure of Old Dissent to take advantage of this.⁷⁹

The distribution of the Free Churches led Tillyard to conclude, "...the individualism of these non-conforming bodies in practice limited to their operation to districts where conditions were favourable for the support of a minister by the voluntary offerings of congregation". He argued that this was the case in areas where there was a general adhesion to Dissent, for instance, in the counties supporting the Puritans during the civil war, or where in urban districts there was a concentration of population great enough for a minority to be of sufficient size to support a minister.⁸⁰ Cornwall, far from being a Puritan stronghold, had been staunchly Royalist in the Civil War. Furthermore, it did not have large concentrations of population. It therefore fulfilled neither of Tillyard's conditions for Old Dissent to be strong.

An advantage of Methodism over the earlier nonconforming bodies and the Church of England was its more flexible system of organisation. The Methodist structure was built on the circuit, which consisted of a number of societies in an area under the supervision of one minister, or a team of ministers, assisted by a number of local preachers. Hence, it was possible to support several small causes rather than one large one. Parts of the country which had hitherto been unable to afford to be Nonconformist could now do so. As Tillyard wrote, "It is evident that the circuit system

79. J. Gay, op. cit., pp. 147-8; Frank Tillyard, 'The Distribution of the Free Churches in England', The Sociological Review, 27 (1935), p. 4.

80. F. Tillyard, op. cit., p. 4; see also his Tables on pp. 10, 12-13.

is far better adapted to the circumstances of the small, village chapel than the plan of having a minister for every congregation".⁸¹

Methodism's organisational elasticity contrasts with the ossified state of Anglicanism. Methodism was able to face a new and changing situation without past commitments. Moreover, with its system of classes and opportunities for lay participation, converts were well shepherded and able to use their talents.

Another important factor in explaining the growth of Methodism was its evangelical message. The zeal of early Methodists in preaching the Gospel meant that they did not confine themselves to any particular area of the county, but went everywhere. This "enthusiasm", as it was called, caused people to think, rejecting it as extremism or considering it in even greater detail and possibly accepting it. With the collapse of Evangelicalism under episcopal and clerical disapproval,⁸² Methodism was the main evangelical alternative in the county.

Rule has observed that there is a difference between describing conditions favourable to the rise of Methodism and explaining how these were translated into an actual response. Some writers have placed great emphasis on the appeal of Wesley's message, culturally, to the Celtic temperament of the Cornish miner. Shaw, for example, has written, "Cornish Methodism has been

81. F. Tillyard, *op. cit.*, p. 6; B. Greaves, 'Methodism in Yorkshire' (Unpublished Ph.d. thesis: Univ. of Liverpool, 1968), p. 343.

82. L.E. Elliott-Binns, The Early Evangelicals: a Religious and Social Study (London: Lutterworth, 1953), pp. 351-2; the author also mentions the emotional preaching of Methodists and the attempts of Methodists to attract Anglicans away from the parish church, as being other factors for this, but Evangelicalism in the Church of England largely depends on the clergymen, and the non-replacement of

marked by an emotional approach to and expression of religion, an independent and conservative spirit, and an intense and ascetic spirituality, all of which are characteristics of a Celtic people".⁸³

One wonders, however, to what extent these are general characteristics of early Methodism everywhere. To quote Bebbington, "Methodism had a more direct impact on those marginal to society, resentful of social authority, and unassociated with the Landowners church, whether cultures with a Celtic ancestry (Cornwall), an anti-Celtic tone (Shetland) or nothing to do with the Celtic factor (Lincolnshire)".⁸⁴ In short, the Celt did not respond in any uniform way to Methodism and the appeal of Methodism was not confined to the Celt.

Rule's own account of the rise of Methodism in Cornwall places the emphasis on the prevalence of folk religion. Stressing the dangerous conditions in the mines and at sea, which brought men into close proximity to death, he argues that working in such an environment led to a dependence upon fate and a consequent belief in superstition. This it was "the credulousness of the Cornish labourers which was an essential part of their ready acceptance of Methodism". The transition was one from folk belief to folk belief expressed in religious idiom.⁸⁵

Rule has claimed that Methodism more than any other Christian church in the nineteenth century was

Evangelical clerics by those of similar mind was thus the prime cause of its decline.

83. J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', p. 246; Thomas Shaw, Saint Petroc and John Wesley: an Examination of the Celtic Background of Cornish Methodism (C.H.H.A. Occas. Pub., 4, 1962), p. 24.
84. Correspondence, Dr. D. Bebbington, 22 June, 1977.
85. J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', pp. 251, 253.

prone "... to give an excessive degree of comprehensiveness and frequency to the occurrence of divine intervention". An example of this is the famine in Ireland. This was correlated with the strength of Popery and related to Providence by the Wesleyan editor of the Cornish Banner: "A persevering obedience to His will, or disobedience to His laws, either by individuals or nations is sure sooner or later to be visited with blessing or curse". The question, however, is whether or not Methodism emphasised the workings of Providence more than, say, those of a Calvinistic standpoint, which is debateable, and, if so, why this doctrine caused folk to abandon or modify their former beliefs.⁸⁶

The early Methodists would have no truck with folk beliefs. Everything was attributed to God or Satan, and to well known Cornish Methodists, like Billy Bray, the Devil was a reality. Evidence, not only of the official opposition of Methodism to folk beliefs, but also of their ability to co-exist comes from the Local Preachers' Minute Book in the North Hill circuit in 1821. It briefly stated, "We deprecate the practise of consulting the white witch and conceive that Deut. 18: 10, 11 and 12 is quite sufficient to justify our opinion on this subject".⁸⁷

In short, Methodism opposed the widely held folk beliefs of the Cornish, though it did not replace them completely. The "specially Methodist theological formulations of belief" as Moore put it, were not necessarily those of the Methodist in the pew. A similarity between Methodism and popular religion was that they both posited the existence of the supernatural. "One function which paganism and Christianity both

86. Ibid., p. 252; Cornish Banner, February 1847, p.226.

87. J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', pp.251, 258-9; F.W. Bourne, Billy Bray: the King's son (1877; rept. London: Epworth, 1976), pp. 86-97; Herbert

served" commented Obelkevich, "was to provide explanation and meaning for death illness and evil and misfortunes of all kinds". One would suggest, however, that between trusting in a superintending Providence, based on the existence of God, and a belief in piskies or ill-wishing there is a greater breach than Rule allows.⁸⁸

The importance of Wesley himself and of his teachings must also be mentioned, since again "credulity" and working conditions may have predisposed the Cornish to seek some form of ultimate meaning in religion, but would not necessarily lead them to accept Methodism. Accordingly to Sykes, "The two Evangelical revivals led respectively by John Wesley and George Whitefield...had arisen definitely in reaction and protest against the dominant rationalistic and Latitudinarian tradition in the church".⁸⁹ It would seem, therefore, that the prevailing teachings of the churches, established and dissenting, did not meet the spiritual needs of the population.

Into this situation came Wesley, whose preaching was aimed at individuals, to bring sinners to repentance. He gave his hearers a diagnosis of their situation and offered a Christian and heartfelt solution to their needs. This offer many were to take up.

Bolitho, Truly Rural, Lights and Shadows on the History of the North Hill Circuit of the Methodist Church, 1743-1946 (1946), p. 89.

88. R. Moore, Ht-Men, Preachers and Politics, p. 94;
 J. Obelkevich, op. cit., p. 304.
 89. N. Sykes, op. cit., p. 390.

CHAPTER THREEEARLY METHODIST POLITICAL ATTITUDES, 1832 - 1884.Political Background

In the unreformed House of Commons Cornwall was over-represented, returning forty four M.P.'s. Describing the political situation in 1760, Namier wrote,

There was a peculiar excellence in the Cornish boroughs, an elaborate and quaint machinery for making Members of Parliament, in which irrelevancy reached its acme. Twenty one boroughs returned 42 Members; their total electorate was less than 1400; and those enfranchised did not think of politics while engaged in election business. As an archaic ritual and a pursuit of pleasure and profit, Cornish borough elections have the charm inherent in human actions when sincere; and there was no humbug about the way Cornish boroughs chose their representatives.¹

Namier noted that in Cornwall the boroughs were more closely connected with the Government than elsewhere, and consequently there were high numbers of "placemen" sitting for them. The boroughs were often used to introduce "rising stars" to Parliament or, alternatively, to provide a safe haven for those "on the downward path". The phenomenon of complete strangers representing Cornish seats was so common that in the parliamentary debates on reform the Marquis of Blandford observed,

through the whole series of Cornish returns can scarcely be found a single instance of a Cornish name... By the mere operation of paper and parchment, Cornish seats have been transferred like shares in a joint stock company at the market price to some great capitalist of London.²

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1. L. Namier, op.cit., p. 299; at this same time, Wales returned only 24 M.P.s and Scotland 45.
 2. Ibid., pp. 299, 355; W. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 116.

Most of the boroughs were in the hands of a patron who either controlled or influenced the selection and election of the candidates. Several lists exist naming the patrons. One in the Tremayne collection, compiled around 1830, records the state of each borough. At Camelford it was noted, "Lord Cleveland opposed by Lord Hertford or vice versa. I forget which". Tregony, where some property had recently changed hands, was declared open, "for the tenants do not mind voting against the Lord and being ejected". More typical, however, was the influence of Lord St. Germans at St. Germans and Liskeard, which meant that the former was considered "quite closed" and the latter "not likely to be disputed".³

Often the borough partons sold their seats to the highest bidder. Lord North, for instance, was lavish in his expenditure on Cornish boroughs. The voters, too, had to be rewarded for their services. In 1819 Sir Mannaseh Lopes, bargaining for the votes of the freemen of Grampound, was alleged to have said, "If they can find any gentleman who can pay them better, they may transfer their services to him". Lopes was imprisoned for eight months for bribery and corruption, and fined £10,000. Two years later Grampound, a borough described by Lord John Russell as "one mass of notorious corruption", was disfranchised. So widespread was Cornwall's reputation for corruption in the eighteenth century that the verb "to Cornwallise" was coined, signifying bribery at elections.⁴

In his description of English landed society, Thompson has commented that political interest at this time was responsible for a great many of the philanthropic gestures of the landowners in the places

3. C.R.O., DDT 3053; see also L. Namier, op. cit., pp. 144-8 and A. Glubb, op. cit., pp. 15-17 for other lists of patrons.

4. W. Lawrence, op. cit., pp. 110-11, 283, 332; H. Toy, The Cornish Pocket Borough, p. 15: see also, A.R., 1819, Appx. pp. 210-13.

where their property and political aspirations coexisted. Even such a notorious Cornish boroughmonger as Sir Christopher Hawkins, who once fought a duel with Lord De Dunstanville over influence in boroughs, was also said never to distrain for rent, to have established schools for the poor and to have given £100. towards the enlargement of the Wesleyan chapel. This was, as it were, the acceptable face of boroughmongering, and caused Toy to distinguish between "pocket" boroughs, where patrons often performed deeds for the general benefit of inhabitants, and "rotten" boroughs, where the only beneficiaries were the few electors.⁵

As there was no common franchise, Cornwall sent to Parliament numerous petitions on voting rights. The venality of the electors made it desirable for the patrons to reduce the number of electors as far as possible. This led to some absurd situations. In 1784, for instance, Arthur Wade at Bossiney elected both M.P.s. Even within the county the number of voters in each seat varied. In 1783 the total number of voters in the borough seats was less than half that of the freeholders responsible for electing the two county members.⁶

Wesley's attitude to Cornish politics can be glimpsed in an entry he made in his Journal when in Cornwall in 1747. At St. Ives he wrote,

I spoke severally to all those who had votes in the ensuing election. I found them such as I desired. Not one would even eat or drink at the expense of him for whom he voted. Five guineas had been given to W.C., but he returned them immediately. T.M. positively refused to accept anything; and, when he heard that his mother had received money

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5. F.M.L. Thompson, England Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century (London: R.K.P., 1963), pp. 204-5; H. Toy, op. cit., pp. 19, 29.
6. A. Glubb, op. cit., pp. 15-17, 26; H. Toy, op. cit., p. 32; W. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 3.

privately, he could not rest till she gave him the three guineas, which he instantly sent back.⁷

One of Wesley's great desires in politics was that Methodists with the vote acted uprightly, unaffected by the corruption surrounding them and so evident in Cornwall.

Wesley's reputation as a Tory is well known, but it is put in context in a letter he penned to one of his "Assistants" in St. Austell. He wrote,

MY DEAR BROTHER, - If, as I am informed, Mr. Gregor is a lover of King George and the present Administration, I wish you would advise all our brethren that have votes to assist him in the ensuing election.⁸

Respect for those in civil authority was a point much emphasised by Wesley.

A different, but no less influential attitude to politics is reflected in a comment recorded in the diary of the Cornish Methodist itinerant, Rev. Richard Treffry. Writing in Tregony, he noted, "A few months ago almost all the inhabitants of the town eagerly ran together to hear the word but now through the election, many are grown weary and others are totally dead".⁹ A strong reason for Methodist dislike of politics was quite simply due to the effect that it had on the spiritual life of individual Methodists. When seen in the context of the political standards of the unreformed Parliament, the views of Wesley and Treffry become more understandable. The striving for holiness for which early Methodism was noted conflicted with the ethos of politics.

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7. J. Pearce, op. cit., p. 101.
 8. John Wesley, Letters, Ed. J. Telford (London: Epworth, 1931) VIII, p. 173.
 9. R.R. Blewett, These things have been: The Rev. Richard Treffry and his diary, 1802-4 (St. Day Parish Paper: February 1968), p. 181.

Methodists, the Great Reform Act and Politics.

The movement for political reform in Cornwall began in 1809 as a result of revelations of Government corruption. During the Napoleonic Wars, the Reformers were accused of being traitors, but their strength had grown by the General Election of 1826 to the point where they were able to launch one of their supporters on a parliamentary career. At the time of the debates on the Reform Bill, the Reformers gained support from the economic distress in the county.¹⁰

The Conservatives, however, were divided into those who were willing to make concessions and those totally opposed to the Bill. In Cornwall this discussion focussed on the proposals of Francis Hext, a squarson from Helland, who suggested varying the franchise in towns according to their size and extending boundaries of boroughs rather than their complete abolition.¹¹

The Peers' rejection of the Bill in May 1831 brought from the Reformers a requisition to the Sheriff to hold a county meeting. It had been signed by over 3,000 people in two days. The Sheriff refused and instead it was organised by five magistrates who supported political reform. This action and the large number of reform meetings held throughout the county indicate the popular support for the measure. When the Reform Bill was passed, it was an event greeted with all manner of celebrations, dinners for the poor and elderly being particularly popular. It left the Tories in disarray for a decade.¹²

10. Western Flying Post, 22 May, 1809; W. Elvins, op.cit., ch.I, p.9, ch.II, pp. 1-3, ch. IV, p. 6.

11. W. Elvins, op. cit., ch. V, p. 10, ch. VI, pp. 1.

12. Ibid., ch. VI, p. 30; W.B., 18 May 1832; Cornubian, 26 June, 3, 10 July 1832.

Elvins in his account of the reform movement in Cornwall finds it interesting that "public opinion" in the county was won over to the Reform side by the activities of the local Cornish gentry. This was different from other parts of the country where national leaders and orators, like Hunt and Cobbett, were the driving force behind the reform agitation. By implication, therefore, Methodists were not prominent in this movement, because the two classes conspicuously absent from Cornish Methodism according to Probert's analysis were landed and professional classes. Indeed, he wrote, "We know of no Cornish Methodists in the county family class". In the whole period before the Reform Act and for some time after it, one major reason for a lack of recognizable Methodist involvement in parliamentary politics was the almost complete distinction between those classes in society in which Methodism took root and those which controlled political life.¹³

In the agitation for the Reform Bill, it is possible to highlight the involvement of individual Methodists. Edward Budd was an indefatigable labourer for the cause of reform by pen and voice. A Wesleyan, he was the editor of the Reformers' newspaper, the West Briton. The Reformers also had the support of the Cornubian, a Falmouth paper edited by another Wesleyan, Thomas Garland. Henry Mudge, a Bodmin Wesleyan better known for his temperance activities, and Samuel Thorne, one of the early Bible Christian leaders, were other Methodists who spoke out in favour of the Bill.¹⁴

13. W. Elvins, op. cit., ch. V, p. 19; J. Probert, The Sociology of Cornish Methodism, p. 24.

14. Cornubian, 22 May, 1832 (Budd); T.R. Harris, 'Thomas Garland; Cornish Methodist stalwart', J. of C.M.H.A., 5, I (1977), p. 12 (Garland); Cornubian, 29 May 1832 (Mudge); M.S. Edwards, 'Cornish Methodism: a study in division', p. 192 (Thorne).

A different view to this was held by the younger Rev. Richard Treffry, who was stationed in the county at the time of the Reform debates. He wrote,

I trust that so awfully democratic and revolutionary a measure will never pass. I am not so foolish as to deny the existence of many evils, both civil and ecclesiastical, as things at present exist: but I can, without difficulty, conceive a yet worse state of things, ay a thousand times worse... For myself rather than that democratic infidels should be our legislators, and the horrors and absurdities of atheism our principles of guidance, let Britain be for ever desolated and her history go down to posterity at least without this frightful conclusion of her glories, her virtues and her triumphs.¹⁵

Treffry represented a strong current of Methodist connexional opinion, although Methodist ministers in Cornwall were not to be seen on platforms of either Reformers or their opponents. Moreover, the names of the leading Methodist laymen and ministers in Cornwall, who were to be found at missionary gatherings and in some cases at meetings of the mining interest, were absent from the lists of those present at meetings for or against political reform.

Treffry did not seem to have a high regard for the right to vote. He recorded somewhat cynically at Christmas in 1835,

Tomorrow is to be a day of great bustle with us: the election of our town councillors. As our burgesses never had to choose anything before (except their wives) of more importance than the colour of a coat, they are full of the responsibility and glory of their newly acquired privilege. I am a burgess, but do not avail myself of my illustrious right.¹⁶ I wish anyone would give me a good book for it.

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15. Richard Treffry, Memoirs of the Rev. Richard Treffry, Jun. (London: Mason, 1854), p. 71.
 16. Ibid., p. 190.

This, however, was not typical of the advice given to Methodists. At the time of the Reform Act, the Wesleyan Conference Address, noting the political ferment, warned,

Take heed to yourselves, brethren, 'lest your hearts be overcharged with the cares of this life'. Let not worldly politics engross too much of your time and attention. Avoid all undue eagerness and anxiety on subjects which, however their importance may be magnified by the men of the world, are only of moment in the estimation of the Christian, as far as they can be rendered subservient to the best interests of mankind. Should you require any additional Civil Rights, you will, we trust, consider them as talents entrusted to your care, to be employed in promoting the interests of humanity and religion.

The Bible Christian leaders considered tardiness in legislation preferable to the use of force and violence.¹⁷

The avoidance of party politics was a particular concern of the Wesleyans. In 1832 the Conference Address asked rhetorically,

You may innocently exercise the privileges which belong to you as members of civil society; and in the calm and conscientious discharge of this function you may promote the most valuable moral and civil results; but can you, with perfect security to your religious character and to your peace of heart become the ardent agents of political parties?

As Christian has commented, "The Methodist view was that when politics entered a man's mind, religion tended to go out". This attitude is another reason for the lack of Methodist involvement in Cornish politics in the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁸

An outworking of this attitude can be seen in the

17. M.M., 1831, p. 74; B.C. Mins., 1832, pp. 12-13.

18. M.M., 1832, p. 183; C.J. Christian, 'The relation of the Methodist movement to political thought in England, 1800-1850, with special reference to Methodist records' (Unpublished M.A. thesis:

experience of the Cornish Methodist, Samuel Drew. Drew worked in a shoemakers shop. This, being a place for political discussion, gave him a taste for the subject. His own workshop, therefore, in turn, became a place where politics were discussed, causing him to work late at night. This continued until a little urchin cried through the keyhole, "Shoemaker! Shoemaker! Work by night and run about by day". This childish prank had a deep effect on Drew, who later recalled,

To me it was as the voice of God and it has been a word in season throughout my life... I ceased to venture on the restless sea of politics or trouble myself about matters which did not concern me. The bliss of ignorance on political topics I often experienced in after life.¹⁹

A similar attitude to politics was voiced by another well known Cornish Wesleyan, William Carvosso. His son wrote of him,

'Mind not high things', was a precept to which he strictly adhered; and hence, no one could ever draw him aside to embark either in vain politics, or in airy schemes to advance his worldly interests. With great simplicity he aimed at duty and heaven.²⁰

In brief, Methodists continued to give pre-eminence to the Gospel above all things, including political activity.

There were, however, certain specific issues which did draw Methodists openly into the political arena. In 1803 a Committee of Privileges was established to

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- Univ. of Manchester, 1936), p. 112.
19. J.H. Drew, The Life, Character and Literary Labours of Samuel Drew, A.M. (London: Longman, 1834) pp. 102-3.
 20. William Carvosso, The Great Efficacy of Simple Faith in the Atonement of Christ, Exemplified in a Memoir of Mr. William Carvosso, Sixty years a Class-Leader in the Wesleyan-Methodist Connexion, Ed. Benjamin Carvosso, Abridged ed. (London: Mason, 1860), p. 25.

watchover Methodist interest in parliamentary legislation, and which, for instance, successfully mobilised Methodist opinion against a Bill proposed by Lord Sidmouth, which would have restricted the rights of local preachers. The Bill was withdrawn on the Second Reading.²¹ But two further issues which roused Methodists into action around the time of the Reform Act were the questions of Colonial Slavery and Catholic Emancipation.

In 1807 the trade in slaves had been prohibited by Britain and attempts were made to force other countries to do likewise. A strong lobby subsequently developed in Britain to abolish slavery completely. Methodists were agreed that one good use for the franchise was to support the early and entire abolition of slavery in the British Dominions. They were encouraged by their leaders to use all their influence against this "national disgrace".²²

There were a number of reasons why Methodists were willing to be drawn into this issue. Doctrinally, slavery was seen as a challenge to the belief in the equality of all men before God. It was condemned as a sinful and unchristian system, as well as being severe and unjust simply on humanitarian grounds. Slavery was also seen as a hindrance to missionary work. There were more slaves who were members of the Methodist churches than of any other church. Missionaries sent home reports of the atrocious conditions on the plantations and, in turn, found themselves made scapegoats by the planters when rebellions broke out. This added to Methodist

21. C. Christain, op. cit., pp. 51 ff.

22. M.M., 1830, p. 622; 1831, p. 75; 1832, p. 175; see also, B.C. Mins., 1832, pp. 12-13.

concern at home.²³

In Cornwall, missionaries went on tour campaigning against slavery. One minister held a series of meetings in the county exhibiting instruments of torture to emphasise his point. At the formation of the Helston Anti-Slavery Committee, a former Wesleyan missionary in Jamaica was present to describe the conditions of the slaves there, before proposing appropriate abolitionist resolutions. Similarly, the Wesleyan minister at Camborne, who had worked in the West Indies, assisted in the foundation of the Falmouth Anti-Slavery society.²⁴

There was a considerable body of respectable, predominantly Nonconformist opinion alive to this issue and Anti-Slavery societies mushroomed throughout the county. The leading light of the agitation in Cornwall was Rev. E. Clarke, a Baptist minister at Truro, but as the Cornubian observed in an editorial tirade against slavery, "The Wesleyans are unanimous in seeking its melioration". Chapels were used for anti-slavery meetings and on at least one occasion petitions for the abolition of slavery were placed by the chapel doors to be signed by a great number of people as they left the Sunday services.²⁵

The Wesleyan Conference of 1831 had directed its members to vote only for candidates who would pledge themselves to support the speedy abolition of slavery. There was some attempt to bring this question to the notice of electors by the Truro Anti-Slavery Society in

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23. W.B., 9 March, 20 April 1832; according to C. Christian, op. cit., p. 130, 23,000 out of 32,000 Methodist members in the West Indies were slaves; see also, Raymond Cr. Cowherd, The Politics of English Dissent: The Religious Aspects of Liberal and Humanitarian Reform Movements from 1815 to 1848 (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1956), pp. 46 ff.
24. W.B., 26 July, 1833, 9 December 1831, 6 December 1832; Cornubian, 15 October 1830.
25. Cornubian, 1, 7 October 1830; R.C.G., 26 May 1832.

the 1831 election. At the first election following the Reform Act, the leaders of Truro Dissent and Wesleyanism agreed to solicit answers from parliamentary candidates for the borough on the slavery issue. It is difficult to assess how many votes their actions influenced, but what this does show is that Methodists were capable of dirtying their hands in the mire of politics, when the subject could be defined in moral terms.²⁶

The agitation for Roman Catholic Emancipation prior to the Reform Act was a second issue drawing Methodists into politics. Meetings were held throughout the county petitioning against emancipation and in these Methodists were actively involved. The biggest anti-Catholic meeting in the county took place in the Wesleyan Chapel at Helston, loaned specially for the occasion. Almost 2,000 people were present and Sir Richard Vyvyan, a Tory Ultra, presided over the meeting.²⁷ Among the numerous speeches were those of several Wesleyan ministers.

One of these, Rev. J. Thomas, began by admitting that this was the first time he had ever come forward at such a meeting and that he did so as an individual. But he based his opposition to Emancipation on the Catholic distortion of the Scriptures, its doctrine of the priesthood and acknowledgement of the Pope's supremacy. These were in his view sufficient reasons to disqualify Catholics as legislators.²⁸

A second Wesleyan minister, Rev. J. Mason, stood up to deplore the inaccessibility of the Bible to the

26. M.M., 1831, pp. 66,75; W.B., 29 April 1831; Cornubian, 27 November 1832.

27. R.C.G., 17 January 1829; W. Elvina, op. cit., ch. V, pp. 3-4.

28. R.C.G., 17 January 1829.

Catholic lower orders and the Papal Bull against the work of the Bible Society. Reluctant to be involved in a political meeting, he felt that the danger to the Protestant constitution on this occasion demanded his presence. He argued, "Either our forefathers did not understand the nature and tendency of Popery or Popery is really changed". It had not apparently changed sufficiently and he encouraged his hearers to be "faithful in guarding and preserving to our posterity our excellent constitution".²⁹

At a similar meeting in Callington, the Wesleyan minister, Rev. Joshua Wade, was said to have "inveighed in no very measured terms against the Catholics", spicing his address with relevant quotations from Wesley. One correspondent, who took Wade to task for his "disgraceful speech", quoted from it. Wade, stating his belief in religious liberty, had explained,

I mean by it the liberty of religion which I learn in my Bible - I do not mean the religious liberty of idolatry for my Bible tells me that those Kings of Israel were most in favour with God who exterminated idolaters - and Roman Catholics are idolaters - they worship the Saints and Virgin³⁰ Maries - they ought not therefore to be tolerated.

There was some opposition to this Methodist involvement in Wesleyan circles. A Wesleyan minister in a letter to the West Briton expressed his surprise that some of his colleagues were taking such a prominent part in political meetings on the Roman Catholic question. He commented, "I had thought it a principle with us as Ministers of Religion, whatever our private political opinions might be, to have nothing to do with the public discussion of political questions". He believed that their views were not representative of Methodist opinion,

29. R.C.G., 17 January 1829.

30. R.C.G., 10 January 1829; W.B., 30 January 1829.

which he gauged—was evenly divided on the issue. Furthermore, he was indignant that trustees had permitted the use of chapels for political meetings.³¹

Edward Budd was amongst those who favoured Catholic Emancipation. He appealed as a Protestant on behalf of Roman Catholics at a Truro meeting, arguing that it was injustice which helped to bind Catholics together. Removing this, he believed, would lead to a greater effectiveness of Protestantism amongst Catholics. Although his views were shared by the Bible Christian leader, James Thorne, his was not a popular speech, provoking hisses from the audience.³²

Another correspondent to Budd's newspaper reminded Methodists and Dissenters that it would be inconsistent of them to oppose Emancipation after they had received Roman Catholic help in opposing Lord Sidmouth's Bill and in achieving the Repeal of the Test and Corporations Act. Nonetheless, it appears that the majority of Methodists were opposed to it. The Royal Cornwall Gazette quoted the opinion of the Wesleyan President of Conference, who estimated that nine out of ten Wesleyans were against Emancipation. The paper also took pleasure in reporting the numerous anti-Catholic petitions despatched to Parliament by Cornish Wesleyans.³³

There was a tendency among the political leaders of the county to divide on this issue as they divided on the Reform Act, but the distinction was not a rigid one. An aristocratic opponent of the Reform Bill like De Dunstanville supported the measure. In the opinion of

31. W.B., 23 January 1829

32. W.B., 16 January 1829; F.W. Bourne, The Centenary Life of James Thorne of Shebbear (London: Bible Christian Book Room, 1895), p. 140.

33. W.B., 23 January 1829; R.C.G., 28 March, 17 January 1829.

Charles Lemon, one of the County members, the majority of the inhabitants of Cornwall were against the measure, but not the majority of freeholders.³⁴

This subject illustrates the combination of factors operative in determining Wesleyan political attitudes. In the justification of their action by those involved and in the opposition, not so much to the views expressed, but to their actions, one can see the effect of a 'no politics' convention in Methodism. The issue was one which in any case roused deeply ingrained anti-Catholic prejudices and fears for the Protestant constitution, and to this Methodists added a theological conviction that Popery was wrong. The contrast between the involvement of Methodists in the anti-slavery and anti-Catholic Emancipation campaigns, and yet their apparent indifference to parliamentary reform is striking.

The Consequences of the 1832 Reform Act.

The 1832 Reform Act stands as a milestone in British political history. It affected the franchise and the distribution of seats. In Cornwall, as elsewhere, the electorate grew as a consequence of the Act. Indeed, in some places it would have been difficult for it to have decreased. However, the variation in the price of property throughout the country meant that, while in areas like London the £10. householder qualification bore some resemblance to manhood suffrage, in areas such as Cornwall it was indicative of a person of some substance.³⁵

It was the redistribution of seats which had the most obvious effect in the county. One of the aims of

34. W. Elvins, op. cit., ch. V, pp. 4 ff.; R.C.G., 28 February 1829.

35. N. Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel, p. 99.

the Act was to transfer to the new industrial regions some of the seats which had been the worst offenders in terms of corruption. Many of the rotten boroughs of Southern England came under attack. In Cornwall, thirteen boroughs were completely disfranchised.³⁶ A further four boroughs had their representation cut to one members.³⁷ This led to the anomalous position of some Whigs voting for the destruction of their own political power.³⁸

In some cases the surviving boroughs were enlarged by including areas of the county surrounding them. This happened in four instances in Cornwall, although these boroughs were still comparatively small afterwards. It was difficult to apply this method to Cornwall because of past over representation. Indeed, this may explain why Grampound was disfranchised rather than enlarged in 1821. The Hundred in which it was located already contained four other boroughs.³⁹

The counties were perceived as having inadequate representation. Hence, most of them received an additional two members. In Cornwall this was achieved by dividing the county into two, the Eastern division representing the agricultural interests and the Western division representing the mining interest. Overall, Cornwall's parliamentary contingent had been cut by the Reform Act from forty two to fourteen. The only other alteration in representation to occur before 1884 was the partial disfranchisement of Bodmin in 1868.

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36. Bossiney, Callington, Camelford, Fowey, East Looe, West Looe, Lostwithiel, Michell, Newport, St. Germans, St. Mawes, Saltash, Tregony.
37. Helston, Launceston, Liskeard, St. Ives.
38. Charles Seymour, Electoral Reform in England and Wales; the development and operation of the parliamentary franchise (1915; rept. Newton Abbott: David & Charles; 1970), p. 63.
39. N. Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel, pp. 68, 432.

Many of the consequences of the Great Reform Act emerged only with the passing of time. There was therefore a degree of continuity between the politics of Cornwall before and after 1832. In most of the Cornish boroughs the electorate was still sufficiently small to be "worked" by methods which became illegal or impossible to use by the end of the century.⁴⁰

The classic example of the continuance of a pocket borough is Launceston. The patronage of this borough passed to the first Duke of Northumberland in 1775 when he bought the Werrington Estate, near Launceston. Reformers contested the borough in the 1830's but discovered that the Werrington influence had survived the Reform Act. Eventually Werrington was sold to a Mancurian businessman. The first election after this sale saw another contest as the Liberals campaigned in the hope that the Ballot Act 1872 had freed the borough from the power of Werrington. Although the new owner was unseated on petition in the 1874 election, he merely nominated his son as the candidate in the ensuing by election. His son won and the influence of Werrington remained until the redistribution of seats accompanying the Reform Act of 1884.⁴¹

In his study of the techniques of parliamentary representation during this period, Gash concluded that in a number of counties where there was no great landowner,

Power might reside in the hands of some ten, twenty, or thirty county gentlemen of comfortable wealth and independent outlook who decided among themselves the representation of the county in Parliament... Such men might occasionally prefer

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40. For an estimate of the political influence operative in each Cornish seat in the mid-nineteenth century, see Charles R. Dod, Electoral Facts from 1832 to 1853 Impartially Stated, Ed. H.J. Hanham (Brighton: Harvester, 1972).
41. H. Toy, The Cornish Pocket Borough, pp. 41 ff.; W. Lawrance, op. cit., p. 120.

the claims of family connexion, personal popularity and good neighbourliness, to those of party loyalty and political principle.

This was often the case in Cornwall, where there was a popular saying that "All Cornish gentlemen are cousins".⁴²

Furthermore, the importance of local interests in Cornish politics must be borne in mind for these were capable of being as influential as party labels.⁴³ The mining lobby was especially influential in the western parts of the county. The importance of Cornish mining led to a link with the smelters of South Wales. However, relations between the smelters and mine owners were not always cordial, the financial problems of Cornish mining often being blamed on the smelters. Similarly, those who invested in foreign mines were regarded with suspicion. The mining interest, then, was composed of several different, sometimes conflicting, powerful groups.⁴⁴

Another local factor was present at Falmouth and Penryn, which in the first decade following the Reform Act was thought of as being a Government borough, because of the presence in Falmouth of a packet station. However, the packet station was moved from the town in 1839. This particular borough showed that "Cornwallising" was not entirely a thing of the past. Before a by election in the constituency in 1840 Bonham wrote to Peel,

42. N. Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel, pp. 189-90; for instances of arrangements between local families in Cornwall, see pp. 190-1, 264-5; A. Jenkin, Cornwall and its People, p. 127

43. An amusing illustration of local interests in the days before the 1832 Reform Act comes from the advice given by the Marquis of Buckingham to his candidate at St. Mawes. He wrote, "The only political trust to which your St. Mawes electors will bind you is the belief that the Pilchard is the best of all possible fish which, as long as you are not obliged to taste it, you may undertake for their sakes to believe". (W. Lawrance, op. cit., p. 214.)

44. J. Rowe, Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution, p. 121.

"The first rich man of either party that goes to Falmouth will certainly win".⁴⁵

Launceston provides further evidence of bribery and treating. In 1874 the new owner of Werrington, Col. Deakin, during the course of the election campaign attempted to placate his irate tenants by promising to allow them the right to kill every rabbit on his new estate. His defeated opponent claimed that this was a corrupt practise. Upholding the petition, the judge commented that such a reasonable, even laudable proceeding at any other time, constituted in the height of an election an illegal proceeding. Again in the 1837 election in the borough, Sir Henry Hardinge, a veteran of Waterloo, was returned unopposed. Afterwards drunkenness was rife, and this provoked the West Briton to comment that Hardinge had "slain as many by the juice of the grape at this election as he ever did by the prowess of his arm, notwithstanding his acknowledged bravery".⁴⁶

In short, the Great Reform Act of 1832 did not immediately remove all the abuses of the old system. The importance of the continuity of certain aspects of pre-Reform politics is that it shows that political affairs remained in the hands of those classes in society in which Methodism was weakest. The wealthy landed gentry of the county, when they did not stand themselves, recruited their candidates from the ranks of the sons of the aristocracy, officers in the Army and Navy, barristers in the western circuit, most having had a public school and Oxbridge education. Nonconformist candidatures,

45. N. Gash, Politics in the Age of Peel, pp. 124, 130, 132, 451; see also, H.J. Hanham, Elections and Party Management: Politics in the time of Disraeli and Gladstone (1959; rpt. Hassocks: Harvester, 1978), p. 263.

46. W. Lawrance, op. cit., pp. 76-77; W.B., 2 July 1874, 28 July 1837.

(leave alone Methodist), were rare. This was not all surprising, bearing in mind that as late as 1868 there were more Jews in Parliament than Wesleyans. However, by sanctioning the principle of change and by the reforms it introduced, the 1832 Reform Act had set in motion an evolution of the parliamentary system.⁴⁶

Methodism, Chartism and Radicalism.

The role played by Methodism as a stabilizing force in society has been the subject of much academic debate. The idea that Methodism prevented the development of a revolutionary movement in England has gained wide currency since the publication of Halevy's work on this country. Hobsbawm, however, has argued that the fact that there was no revolution and also that Wesleyan Methodists were officially opposed to revolution does not necessarily mean that Methodism was responsible for diverting this country from a revolutionary path. On the contrary, he believes that Methodism was numerically too small to have achieved this aim and that radicalism did occur in Methodist strongholds, indicating by inference some Methodist involvement.⁴⁷

Cornwall is an area of interest in this debate. To the authorities, it was a place of strategic importance, because of its proximity to France. It was the intended landing place of the Old Pretender in 1715. Indeed, much of the hostility encountered by the Wesleys in the 1740's was attributable to the equation of Methodism with Jacobitism.⁴⁸ Methodists with their enthusiastic revivals

46. J. Vincent, The Formation of the British Liberal Party, p. 40.

47. Elie Halevy, A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century, Trans. from the French by E.I. Watkin & D.A. Barker, 2nd rev.ed., 6 vols. (London: Benn, 1949-52); E.J. Hobsbawm, 'Methodism and the Threat of Revolution in Britian', History Today, 7 (1957), pp. 115, 122-3.

48. J. Pearce, op. cit., pp. 12 ff.

remained objects of suspicion. With the outbreak of the French Revolution, the charge levelled against them was changed to Jacobinism.

Rev. Richard Polwhele was a leading authority of allegations against Methodism. One accusation he made was that of causing political unrest in Camborne. Samuel Drew took issue with him in a pamphlet war, declaring,

the naked truth is, that not one ever did join the mob from choice; but many were compelled to join through necessity. Instead of 'a share in all the plunder and the destruction of all subordination', those of the Methodists who had any authority were a check upon the mob during the day.

Implicit in Drew's defence is the recognition of some Methodist involvement, albeit reluctantly, but Polwhele's charges exaggerate this. Indeed, allegations like these seem to have caused early Methodists to seek to demonstrate how loyal and patriotic they really were.⁴⁹

Hobsbawm conceded that Cornwall is an exception to his argument. Methodism was strong, notably among the mining population. Radicalism was weak. Hobsbawm explains this, not by reference to the moderating influence of religion, but by noting the archaic system of industrial organisation. The system of wage payment and of financing the mines he considered to be factors inhibiting the development of class consciousness.⁵⁰

The lack of radicalism in the county can be seen in the meagre support given by the 1830's to the agricultural discontent associated with the name of "Captain Swing". In an analysis of the disturbances between 1830 and 1832, Cornwall was classified as being

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49. R. Polwhele, Anecdotes of Methodism, pp. 43,59; T. Harris, Methodism and the Cornish Miner, pp. 16 ff.; J. Drew, op. cit., p. 129; cf. R. Polwhele, A letter to the Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of Exeter;... Proposing to his Lordship a Scheme of Coalition between the Wesleyans and the Church of England (Truro: 1833)
50. E. Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 121; see below, p. 294 ff.

"only marginally affected by the labourers' movement". A more common form of protest experienced in the county, occurring as late as 1847, were food riots produced by high food prices.⁵¹

The problem was Cornwall's growing mining population as well as profiteering, real or alleged, by the corn merchants. The rioting miners sought to prevent the export of corn from the county and sometimes forced its sale at prices they were willing to pay. Rule in his study of these food riots notes that there was a decline in violence associated with them as time went by. This he attributed to the exaggerated nature of the earlier accounts because it was a new phenomenon, and to the accumulation of experience and consequent sophistication of technique. But he also regarded the growing influence wielded by Methodism as an influential factor.⁵²

The shibboleth of mid-nineteenth century radicalism was Chartism. It is commonly mentioned in this context that William Lovett, one of the early Chartist leaders, was given a strict Methodist upbringing at his home in Newlyn, near Penzance. Indeed, he briefly joined the Bible Christians. However, as Rowe has observed, he only engaged in political agitation after he had left the county for the metropolis.⁵³

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51. E. J. Hobsdawn & George Rudé, Captain Swing (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1969) pp. 304-5; J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', p. 116.
52. J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', pp. 151 ff; see also J. Rowe, Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution, pp. 33, 89, 142, 158-63, 180-4, and T. Shaw, A History of Cornish Methodism, p. 93.
53. William Lovett, The Life and Struggles of William Lovett in his pursuit of bread, knowledge and freedom.... (London: Trübner, 1876), pp. 7, 21-22; J. Rowe, Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution, p. 156.

Chartism was introduced to Cornwall in the spring of 1839.⁵⁴ The Chartist convention in London, disappointed at the low number of names on their petition, decided to send delegates to agitate areas from which no names had been forthcoming. Cornwall was one such area. Abram Duncan, the Dumfries delegate, and Robert Lowery from Newcastle were despatched by packet boat to Falmouth. The strategy they adopted for their month sojourn was to concentrate on the most densely populated mining areas, visiting the large centres of population in a circuit which they covered twice.⁵⁵

The two Chartist emissaries found the work hard going in the face of political ignorance. A report they sent to the Northern Liberator read, "The people here have never heard of the Charter and knew nothing of the movement until we came." Yet they were optimistic, believing "Cornwall will yet rank high in the radical cause. Here is a mine of democratic ore".⁵⁶ On one occasion at St. Ives, Lowery tried to assess the situation by asking the town crier announcing their meetings if there were any Radicals in the town:

'A what Master!, said he, with a vacant stare.
'Any Radicals or Chartists?' said I. I shall never forget the vacuity and bewilderment of his countenance. 'No' he answered, 'they catch no fish here but pilchards and mackerel'.⁵⁷

The reaction of the Cornish press to the Chartists was hostile. The Royal Cornwall Gazette wrote of a meeting at Truro that the delegates style of speech was

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54. J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', pp. 362-83, is a useful study of Cornish Chartism; a summary of this can be found in J.G. Rule, 'Methodism and Chartism among the Cornish Miners', Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, 22 (1971), pp. 8-11.
55. Weekly Record of the Temperance Movement, 11 October 1856.
56. Northern Liberator, 16 March 1839.
57. Weekly Record, 25 October 1856.

"seditious and inflammatory" and of another meeting that the speeches were "athiestical and destructive in the extreme". The West Briton report of the Truro meeting said that the addresses "evinced considerable talent but were highly inflammatory". The hope was expressed that "the good sense of Cornishmen will prevent them from being tainted with notions so wild and visionary as those of the Chartists". The West Briton also contained an amusing report of a Chartist convert signing the Charter in the belief that he was taking a teetotal pledge.⁵⁸

Duncan and Lowery also met with opposition from local magistrates, clergy and teetotalers. Lowery wrote, "The magistrates had condemned, the parsonocracy had preached and the tyrant masters threatened". In one instance the town crier had been forbidden to announce Chartist meetings by the parson. Instead, he told everyone that the parson would not let him cry the meeting, thus arousing additional interest. A visiting teetotal speaker to Gwennap alleged on the basis of his experience that Chartists were habitual takers of intoxicating drinks. Alcohol was the explanation of Chartism.⁵⁹

It appears that the two delegates attended a Methodist chapel on at least one Sunday during their visit to Cornwall and that the message they brought was sometimes couched in religious language. According to one biographical sketch of Lowery, "In Cornwall in 1839, he spoke of the Bible as the 'People's Charter'. Universal suffrage was a divine principle, democracy 'the political law of God; one must obey it, as Jesus had done, by resisting oppression'.⁶⁰

58. R.C.G., 8, 22 March 1839; W.B., 8, 22 March, 1839.

59. J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', pp. 366, 374; Weekly Record, 25 October 1856.

60. Weekly Record, 25 October 1856; Brian Harrison & Patricia Hollis, 'Chartism, Liberalism and the life of Robert Lowery', E.H.R., 82 (1967), p. 527.

However, Cornish Methodists do not seem to have been impressed by this, and on at least one occasion Chartists and Methodists were in open confrontation. Lowery and Duncan ended their labours by calling a meeting in Gwennap Pit, the famous natural amphitheatre in which Wesley had spoken. The Wesleyan Conference refused them permission to use it. Recalling what happened, the Vicar of Gwennap wrote to the Home Secretary, "I cannot close without adding my very sincere approbation of the conduct of the Wesleyans of this parish on the occasion. The leaders consulted with me in the most effectual manner to prevent any outbreak and also to discourage the intruders". According to Lowery, however, several thousand people gathered to elect Duncan and himself to the Convention as the Cornish delegates. It was not so much that the Chartists were blocked out of Gwennap Pit, but rather that they refrained from utilising their numerical superiority.⁶¹

The importance of direct opposition to the Chartists must not be overlooked. It was one of the reasons given in the press for the failure of Chartism to take root in the county. The West Briton, for instance, asked, "What but our religious light is it that has kept our working classes at peace and free from Chartism". It must also be remembered that the two Chartist delegates placed great emphasis on the opposition of Methodists. Duncan, who quickly developed Cornophobia, commented at St. Ives, "I don't think there can be much love of liberty here; its too full of Methodist chapels and they are too priest ridden to like freedom".⁶²

A second way in which teetotalism and Methodism neutralised Chartism in the county was by what Rule has

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61. J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', p. 370; Northern Liberator, 6 April 1839, see also M.S. Edwards, 'Cornish Methodism and the Chartists', J. of C.M.H.A., 2 (1966), pp. 109-110.
62. W.B., 14 February 1840; Weekly Record 25 October 1859; J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', p. 368.

called "competitive opposition". As Duncan commented, "Between the religious and the teetotal agitation, a considerable amount of enterprise and talent is absorbed". Local preachers, class leaders and teetotal committee members were largely drawn from the ranks of the working classes. Moreover, those who identified themselves with the Chartists were in danger of being banned from addressing religious or teetotal meetings.⁶³

At St. Ives teetotalism and Methodism were both strong. On their first visit the two Chartists had been encouraged by the response they had received, but their follow-up visit was a complete failure, because a religious revival had broken out. As Rule commented, "in competing for an audience with a religious revival, they were not only losers but non-starters".⁶⁴

Rule has also suggested a third way in which Methodism weakened the effectiveness of Chartism. This he termed the "negative" effect of Methodist teaching. The Methodist emphasis on obedience to those in authority and the strong belief in Providence led to a passive approach to politics. By this means, deprivation and suffering was diverted away from expression in social discontent, and was transformed instead into an acceptance of existing conditions.

The Royal Cornwall Gazette on April 5th was "happy to say that the Delegates have left the county without seeing much fruit..." Although they had been able to attract big audiences, they failed to translate this into a lasting movement. There is no evidence of the

63. J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', p. 371.
 64. Weekly Record 25 October 1856; J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', p. 372.

involvement of the Methodist in the pew with Chartism and it is clear that the local leaders of Methodism opposed it. While some support for the non-militant Complete Suffrage Union can be found in Cornwall, notably in the Launceston area, Chartism did not take hold.⁶⁶

Soon after the departure of the Chartist agitators, there appeared in the courts a case which excited much interest in the county. This was the prosecution of a number of Truro tradesmen for causing a church rate riot in Truro the preceding year. Three men, Richard Barrett, a draper, Jacob Edwards, an ironmonger, and Samuel Randall, a pipemaker, had refused to pay the church rate. When some of their goods were distrained, they published a handbill, printed by a local Wesleyan, George Clyma, and advertised in the West Briton to draw attention to this act of "State Church persecution".⁶⁷

Thus, when an auctioneer attempted to sell the distrained goods a large crowd was present making it impossible to do this. The bidding was low. The money had a habit of getting lost before reaching the auctioneer. The defendants shrewdly included a Bible in the goods to be sold, which the auctioneer refused to sell. The three non-payers were present but the leaders of the crowd were Richard Spurr, a carpenter, and William Ball, a watchmaker.

Although at the trial the borough constables testified that the assembly was noisy but not violent, windows were broken, the auctioneer's clothes were torn and part of the crowd entered his shop by breaking down

66. R.C.G., 5 April 1839; J. Rule 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', pp. 372-3; J. Rowe, Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution, pp. 156-7; cf. R.C.G., 24 January 1845, 14, 28 April 1848 for later Chartist meetings.

67. This account is based on reports in W.B., 5, 12 April, 3, 10 May 1839, and A.R., Chron. pp.51-55.

the front door. On the basis of the damage done and the inflammatory nature of the handbills, the three non-payees were convicted, fined £25. and imprisoned for one month. Spurr and Ball were also imprisoned for a month. Ironically, the judge was believed to be a Dissenter.⁶⁸

There was widespread support for the defendants. On their release from prison, special dinners were arranged and a fund for the "victims" established. A branch of the Religious Freedom Society was founded. The leading characters in the riot appear to have been Nonconformists. Edwards was a prominent Bible Christian layman. Randall was said to be a professing Dissenter and Barratt was believed to attend "Bethesda Chapel". Ministerial support at the meetings of sympathy seems to have come mainly from the Nonconformists and the new society was composed of Dissenters rather than Methodists.

Most Methodists were not willing to become involved in such agitations, even though their personal feelings on the issue were often strong. Even the Bible Christians, who had no qualms about being identified as Nonconformists, were not extreme in their views. In 1837 their Conference had warned, "While we advise you conscientiously and constitutionally to seek a redress of all ... other grievances under which we labour as dissenters, we would affectionately caution you against that undue excitement to which political subjects too often lead".⁶⁹

In Truro concern over the question of church rates

68. J. Rowe, Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution, p. 156; A.R. 1839, Chron. p. 55.

69. B.C. Mins., 1837, p. 14; for Cornish Wesleyan feeling, see W. Ward, Early Victorian Methodism, p.182.

was consistently strong, emerging at elections. — However, the Truro Church Rate Riot, as it came to be called, was notable because it was exceptional for this kind of grievance to lead to such action.⁷⁰ If it was hard to spur Methodists to act over grievances like this, how much more alien to their thinking was the message of Chartism.

Methodists, Maynooth and Free Trade.

Since 1795 the Government Estimates had included an annual grant for the Roman Catholic training college at Maynooth. In 1845 Peel, as part of his Irish policy, proposed to increase the grant and to give a large, lump sum for building purposes. In addition, the money for this was no longer to be the subject of an annual vote. As it was, the debates on the annual grant were lively, and it was not surprising that his proposed scheme of endowment should cause considerable controversy throughout the country.⁷¹

Cornwall was no exception. The West Briton demanded to know why the people of England should be taxed for the delinquencies of the Church in Ireland. The Royal Cornwall Gazette, visualising the ultimate endowment of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, urged its readers to hold public meetings of protest. Soon, Cornwall was contributing to the flood of anti-Maynooth petitions sent to Parliament.⁷²

Nonconformists were in the forefront of this agitation. At St. Agnes, for instance, the Independent,

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70. Cornish Guardian, 2 January 1835; cf. Benjamin Gregory Sidelights on the Conflicts of Methodism, 1827-1852 (London: Cassell, 1898), pp. 237 ff.
71. Millicent G. Fawcett, Life of the Right Hon. Sir William Molesworth (London: Macmillan, 1901), pp. 246-7.
72. W.B., 4 April 1845; R.C.G., 28 March 1845.

New Connexion and Wesleyan ministers joined forces to oppose the scheme, while at Camborne, George Smith, the eminent Wesleyan historian, spoke out against the proposed measure. Not all Cornish Nonconformists, however, opposed it. The Independents at Penzance petitioned in its favour and at Falmouth opposition was channelled towards petitioning against State Church endowments in general. Nevertheless, the Wesleyans were said to have opposed the Maynooth Bill with "almost perfect unanimity".⁷³

There is a similarity between the Methodist reaction to Maynooth and its earlier disapproval of Catholic Emancipation. The Wesleyan minister stationed at Truro argued "that the tenets of Rome are anti-Christain, idolatrous, anti-social and utterly incapable of being reconciled with the doctrines of the Gospel..." One of the deputation of speakers at a Wesleyan missionary meeting at Truro named Popery as one of the biggest evils faced by missionaries. Anti-Popery opinions were also voiced at the Wesleyan Conference. Before the Maynooth controversy had erupted, the Presidential address, speaking of Catholicism, had claimed, "The brand of Antichrist is upon her. For she still makes void the laws of God by her traditions".⁷⁴

One major difference between the Methodist agitation over Maynooth and their earlier anti-Catholic activity was that in the intervening years the Tractarian movement had emerged in the Anglican Church. The similarity in doctrine and practice between Tractarians and Catholics caused Methodists serious concern. The Wesleyan Superintendent minister at Truro,

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73. W.B., 2, 9 May 1845; G.I.T. Machin, 'The Maynooth Grant, the Dissenters and Disestablishment, 1845-1847', E.H.R., 82 (1967), p. 63.
74. W.B., 4 April, 2 May 1845; R.C.G., 18 April 1845; M.M., 1840, pp. 111-12.

for instance, wrote to Jabez Bunting, "Most of the clergy here are rife with the worst parts of Puseyism and are doing all they can to injure us". In Penzance, a Wesleyan layman wrote to a friend in similar vein, "We are surrounded with Puseyism, both in town and country..."⁷⁵

The Wesleyan Conference was pleased with "the strenuous and strictly religious opposition" which ministers and members alike had shown to the Maynooth proposals. As it explained, "Towards the adherents of Rome, as men and as fellow citizens we entertain a cordial goodwill; but to the corrupt and corrupting system of which they are at once the votaries and the victims, we are irreconcilably hostile". This view was shared by the Bible Christians.⁷⁶

In the face of this public hostility to the Maynooth proposals, Peel succeeded in passing the measure only by exerting his personal authority and with the support of the Opposition. His own party split along lines which foreshadowed the division over the Corn Laws. In Cornwall, seven members voted for the measure and four against. Lord Ashley wrote,

The Free Church of Scotland, the 'religious public' of England, Wesleyans, Dissenters, all alike are protesting and petitioning, probably with little chance of success, but with fixed resolution so far as in them lies, to cashier their representatives at another election.⁷⁷

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75. W. Ward, Early Victorian Methodism, pp. 272ff.; Joseph Carne, Letter to an unknown correspondent, 14 July 1843, Penzance, (Methodist Archive); cf. Norman Gash, Reaction and Reconstruction in English Politics, 1832-1852 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), p. 97; see also Cornish Banner, July 1846, pp. 4, 16-19, 26, 32.
76. M.M., 1845; pp. 254-5; B.C. Mins., 1852, p. 19; see also C.R.O. DDX 308.
77. N. Gash, Reaction and Reconstruction, p. 96.

This opportunity came in 1847. In the election for East Cornwall, the two candidates were returned unopposed. But this did not stop questions being posed at the nomination. One elector was straight to the point. He asked, "Do you believe it to be sinful to vote for money for the propagation of false doctrines?" Henry Mudge, a Bodmin Wesleyan, called upon the candidates to protect "Protestant teachers of the truth". The West Briton reflecting upon this kind of action, commented, "An attempt has been made throughout the elections, and, in many cases, too successfully, to get up the 'No Popery' cry".⁷⁸

In the East Cornwall contest, W.H. Pole Carew, who had voted in favour of the Maynooth proposals, was attacked for expressing his belief that it was not inconsistent with religious principle to pay the Irish Catholic clergy from a national fund. Nicholas Kendall, who edged out Pole Carew from the seat in 1852, found it necessary to maintain a vociferous opposition to the Maynooth grant in order to retain the Dissenting and Low Church vote. Pole Carew's subsequent political career was plagued by allegations that he was a Puseyite or Roman Catholic.⁷⁹

But it was at Bodmin that the Maynooth issue made most impact. One of the Conservative members who had voted in favour of the Bill was not standing again, but the other, Sir Thomas Spry, who had only voted against the proposals on the third reading, was standing for re-election. The Wesleyans of the town had held a meeting and had passed resolutions deploring the concessions to Roman

78. W.B., 13, 20 August 1847.

79. W.B., 30 July 1847, 13 March 1857; R.C.G., 22 April 1859; see also G.I.T. Machin Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1832 to 1868 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977) p. 284.

Catholics and pledging themselves not to vote for any candidate unless he was "distinctly" and "unequivocally" pledged to resist further concessions. The Chairman of the meeting likened the issue to a battle between Christianity and idolatry.⁸⁰

A few weeks later, the Wesleyan electors met again to discuss the answers the candidates had given to questions on Maynooth. The replies of the new candidates, James Wyld, a Liberal, and H.C. Lacy, a Liberal Conservative, were declared satisfactory. Those of Spry were not. Hence, as one report put it, "The sixty five electors forming the union considered it would be a violation of their mutual agreement to support him."⁸¹

Spry was well beaten. The action of the Wesleyan electors was an important factor in this, but Spry was also the only protectionist among the three candidates and the only one favouring the coastal rather than the central route for the Cornish railway. Nevertheless, the election reports in the local newspapers emphasise the importance of the anti-Popery agitation and, indeed, the Peelites themselves were convinced that Maynooth had lost them more support in 1847 than had Free Trade.⁸²

The significance of the Maynooth agitation in Cornwall is twofold. Firstly, it shows the beginnings of political organisation amongst Wesleyans as a group. Secondly, it indicates the continuity of Anti-Catholicism as an issue able to bring Methodists into the political arena. As Gash has commented, "Anti-Catholicism was, and remained for many more generations, a strong element

80. Cornish Banner, May 1847, pp. 321-6

81. Penzance Journal, 21 July 1847.

82. G. Machin, 'The Maynooth Grant, the Dissenters and Disestablishment', p. 83; the result was Wyld 297 votes, Lacy 259, Spry 117.

in English life."⁸³

There is another striking contrast between, on the one hand, Methodists and Maynooth, and, on the other, Methodists and the Anti-Corn Law League. In Cornwall, the free trade question was connected to the mining interest, who waged a battle against the reduction of duties on imported ores. This was lost in 1842-3. Free trade views had been aired even earlier in the agricultural Eastern Division, although they were not particularly popular. In 1839, for example, when Sir Thomas Acland toured the county advocating free trade, he was greeted with a hail of stones at Camelford.⁸⁴

However, there was no great opposition when the Corn Laws were eventually repealed. The Royal Cornwall Gazette sought to mobilise the county against Peel's proposals, printing a model petition to Parliament for imitation, but it seemed more concerned over the fate of Cornwall's railway. Although the Cornish Conservatives were divided, the Protectionists were not particularly vociferous. It was only in 1850, in response to an agricultural depression, that the "East Cornwall Society for the Protection of Native Industry" was launched, aiming to oust Robartes from his representation of East Cornwall because of his free trade views. In the end, their protectionist candidate, Kendall, only succeeded in squeezing out the other Conservative.⁸⁵

The weakness of protectionism in the county is perhaps partly explained by the number of large landowners who were free traders. The Robartes, Molesworths and Aclands, in addition to the Fortescues of Boconnoc and the Gilberts of Trelissick, between them owned a considerable portion of Cornwall. It must also

83. N. Gash, Reaction and Reconstruction, p. 100.

84. J. Rowe, Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution, pp. 142, 205-6, 247-8.

85. R.C.G., 6, 30 January 1846; W. Elvins, op. cit., ch. IX, pp. 12 ff.; J. Rowe, op. cit., pp. 250-1.

be borne in mind that some of the landowners' opposition may have been mollified by their interest in mining. Free trade, as a reducer of food prices, may have appealed to them as a stabilising force amongst a mining population prone to riot in times of high food prices.⁸⁶

It has been argued that some of the divisions in the agricultural ranks were religious. Rowe has commented, "Religious Nonconformity became the ally of the Anti-Corn Law League; tithe troubles had led many farmers to abandon the Church of England for Wesleyanism, whilst an even greater number had joined...the Bible Christian movement." Probert's study confirms the importance of farmers in Cornish Methodism. He even compares their role in the local chapel to that of the local squire in the parish church. Officially, however, Methodism had nothing to say on the question of free trade or protection, and Methodists as Methodists did not get involved in the agitation in Cornwall.⁸⁷

Methodists and Education.

The most striking aspect of education in Cornwall in the early part of the nineteenth century was its paucity. An educational enquiry in 1835 reported that 31,629 Cornish children were under daily instruction in 1,089 schools. Only nine of these were run by Dissenters. There were 34,361 children, aged between four and fifteen, who attended 367 Sunday Schools. Nonconformists were responsible for teaching 18,738 of these children in 173 schools. In total, according to the Census of 1831 there were 100,756 children in the county. Therefore, a large number of them were not receiving any education at all

86. J. Rowe, op. cit., pp. 247,251; W. Elvins, op. cit., Appx. V.

87. J. Rowe, op. cit., p. 247; J. Probert, The Sociology of Cornish Methodism, p. 23.

and the benefit of the education given in some of the schools is open to question.⁸⁸

There were only six Sunday Schools in areas where there were no other schools. This supports Rule's conclusion that "the number of children who were educated solely at Sunday Schools was small compared with those who had received at least a small degree of secular education". The figures show that Methodists were contributing little to the county's education in terms of day schools, but there were occasional instances of Methodist involvement on an individual level. Edward Budd, for instance, was a schoolmaster before becoming editor of the West Briton, and Richard Dingley, another Wesleyan, took a leading part in the formation of the British school in Launceston in 1834.⁸⁹

It was not until the 1830's that the Wesleyans became more aware of educational needs and changed their views on the subject. The Minutes in 1833 expressed Conference satisfaction at the formation of weekday schools and recommended their formation wherever adequate financial support was available. The Cornwall District Meeting of Wesleyans discussed the deficiency of education the following year and noted the support in the county for the idea of giving "a more decidedly Christian and more purely Methodistical education to the children of Methodist parentage".⁹⁰

Education brought the Wesleyan Connexion into politics in 1839 and again in 1843. In 1839 a Whig proposal to give assistance to schools where the Douai Bible was read provoked strong Wesleyan opposition. This was said to be

88. J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', p. 322.

89. Ibid., pp. 322, 324; T. Shaw, A History of Cornish Methodism, p. 117; H.S. Toy, The Methodist Church at Launceston (Launceston: 1964), p. 16.

90. M.M., 1833, p. 297; R. Treffry, op. cit., p. 168.

the biggest threat to the Connexion since Lord Sidmouth's Bill. In 1843, it was Graham's Factory Bill which came under Methodist fire. The Bill aimed to reduce the hours children worked in factories so that some time could be spent at grant-aided factory schools. But Methodists were concerned about the power the Bill gave to Anglican clergymen and feared the effect of the measure on their Sunday schools. The Bill was abandoned to be submitted the following year shorn of its educational clauses. As Graham ruefully commented, "Religion, the keystone of education, is in this country the bar to progress".⁹¹

By 1844, in response to the defeated Bill, the Wesleyan Educational policy had been formulated. It was decided that there was little hope at the present of Parliament introducing an acceptable educational system. Therefore, on the suggestion of the President of Conference, the Wesleyans set themselves a target of establishing 700 new Connexional day schools in seven years. In fact, it took over twenty years to achieve this figure, but it made Wesleyanism a strong and respected force in English education.⁹²

Originally, the Wesleyan educational effort was entirely voluntary, but in 1846 the Government proposed an educational scheme, including the possibility of Government support for Methodist schools. There were those who wanted the purely voluntarist position to be maintained, but, the Wesleyan Education Committee eventually decided to co-operate with the Government plan. According to Kent, this decision, taken by a small committee without reference to most of the leading Wesleyan laymen added to the growing demand for lay

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91. W.R. Ward, Religion and Society in England, 1790-1850 (London: Batsford, 1972), p. 244; C. Christian, op. cit., pp. 191 ff., 200 ff.; M.M., 1843, pp. 536-7; B.C. Mins., 1843, pp. 8-9; H.F. Mathews, Methodism and the Education of the People (London: Epworth, 1949), p. 135.
92. M.M., 1844, p. 109; H. Mathews, op.cit., pp. 127-8.

representation at the Wesleyan Conference. It has been further argued that it was through the issue of education that Wesleyans became aware of the potential political influence they carried with Governments.⁹³

An example of the Wesleyan response to the Government scheme can be found in the Cornish Banner. It emphasised the need for education to have a proper base, arguing,

Education, to be efficient, must take into account the entire condition, character and destiny of man, and must teach and train the child with reference to all the wide range of duty and privilege in future life and for ever.

This was central to the Wesleyan approach to education.⁹⁴

The Cornish Banner went on to concede that the question of different religious opinions was a difficult one, but believed that Government intervention in education was justifiable, because voluntary effort could not meet the need unsupported and as education was seen as an antidote to the problems which cost Governments money. However, it did have some reservations about the scheme. It urged that an amendment be made to ensure that the Scriptures were read daily in the Authorised Version, a safeguard against Catholicism and Socinianism. The need to ensure the liberty of children not to attend the Sunday School associated with a denominational school, if they did not want to, was also emphasised.⁹⁵

The middle of the nineteenth century was the heyday of the Wesleyan voluntary school. The Connexion had aimed at establishing two schools in each circuit, but in Cornwall there were only five in 1856 and eighteen in 1883. This supports the claim made in 1873 that "The

93. H. Matthews, op. cit., pp. 135-7; J. Kent, op. cit., pp. 98, 137-8.

94. Cornish Banner, April 1847, p. 291; M.M., 1844, p.109.

95. Cornish Banner, April, pp.289-295, July 1847, pp. 399-403.

Weslayans, as a body, have never heartily and universally taken to day-school work". By 1870 the need for further educational reform had become urgent and W.E. Forster was responsible for piloting through the Education Act of that year.⁹⁶

Forster's Education Act had sought to find a compromise between those who supported a denominational system of education and the advocates of unsectarian education, but it left many Nonconformists dissatisfied. The Cowper-Temple clause, for instance, which required undenominational religious instruction in Board Schools, made religion an adjunct rather than the guiding force of education. Clause twenty five of the Act was regarded with displeasure. It permitted School Boards to pay the fees of poor children out of the school rates, and it raised the possibility of rates paid by Nonconformists being used to pay for children to attend Church schools. The Cornwall District Wesleyan Synod was particularly fearful that the extension of the denominational system would threaten the interests of Methodism in the country areas.⁹⁷

An interesting insight into political feelings on this issue is given in a conversation one of the M.P.s for West Cornwall recorded in writing at the end of 1871. He jotted down,

Had a talk with J. St. Aubyn, Downing and Shilson - on th. strength of the Wesleyans in our Division - th. latter (a remarkably level judge) regards them of great strength. They would all oppose anybody who they considered in any way irreligious either politically or privately - Shilson does not think they would all combine to oppose in any minor Education question such as the 25th clause of the 1870 Education Bill.

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96. T. Shaw, A History of Cornish Methodism, p. 117; H.W. Holland, The Education Question in relation to the citizenship of Wesleyans (London: Nonconformist Committee, 1873), p. 9.
97. D.A. Hamer, The Politics of Electoral Pressure: a study in the history of Victorian Reform Agitations (Hassocks: Harvester, 1977), p. 123; Wes. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), May 1870.

The accuracy of the closing judgment is seen in the failure of the agent of the National Education League to raise the education question in the Truro by election of 1871.⁹⁸

In the 1874 General Election there was, nonetheless, considerable discussion of the working of the Education Act. In East Cornwall, the Liberal candidate sought to defuse the issue by asking for it to be given a fair trial. Noting the strength of feeling on this issue, the Western Daily Mercury reported,

At one time it was feared that the Nonconformists would withhold their support on the ground that neither Sir Colman nor Mr. Kelly were in favour at present of the repeal of the twenty fifth clause, but when it was seen how strong was their support of the Burials Bill and how much more favourable to their cause the Liberal candidates were,... they resolved to vote on the Liberal side.

The Liberals still lost a seat in the division. In West Cornwall, both the Liberal candidates, Sir John St. Aubyn, and A.P. Vivian, were unopposed. Even so, they deemed it prudent to declare themselves in favour of repealing the offending twenty fifth clause.⁹⁹

The two West Cornwall M.P.s were also lobbied by a deputation from the Nonconformist Association of Penzance, which had recently been formed and which included ministers and laymen from Methodist and non-Methodist denominations. They expressed their desire that the unity and strength of the Liberal Party be preserved, but pressed for compulsory school boards everywhere, arguing that the conscience clause was inoperative in many rural areas. They were given appropriate assurances, but reminded that M.P.s represented others besides Nonconformists.¹⁰⁰ That there was a degree of concern in

98. C.R.O., DDPV (290) 16; W.B., 14 September 1871; R.C.G., 2, 9 September 1871; cf. D. Hamer, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

99. R.C.G., 7 February 1874; W.M.N., 2 February 1874
W.D.M., 14 February 1874.

100. W.D.M., 3 February 1874; W.B., 12 February 1874.

Nonconformist circles in Cornwall over the education issue is clear. That Nonconformists in Cornwall were growing in influence and that the political leaders in the county were aware of this is also evident.

Board schools proved to be popular in Cornwall. The number of Wesleyan day-schools in the county remained about the same in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and, numerically, their contribution was small. In the years after 1870, there were hotly fought battles in the School Board elections. Sometimes arrangements were made between the contending groups, but often this was not the case. In these contests, Methodists of all denominations, but especially the Wesleyans, played a leading role.¹⁰¹

The long drawn out struggle for control over the Trevilson Charity at East Newlyn illustrates Anglican-Methodist antipathy over education. There was no Methodist school in the parish, but it was estimated that professing Wesleyans and Bible Christians constituted 80% of the population. They objected to the way a charity, which had become wealthy through mineral royalties, and which was created for the benefit of the whole parish, was being administered by the local vicar and churchwardens to finance a Church school. Their fear was of Anglican indoctrination of their children. An acceptable compromise was only reached after many years and the subsequent elections of trustees of the charity were fiercely fought.¹⁰²

101. for examples of this, see R.C.G., 24 January, 7 February, 14 March 1874; an analysis of educational provision in Cornwall can be found in the Truro Diocesan Kalendar, 1902, p.128; in 1899/1900, there were 135 Anglican and Parochial, 2 Catholic, 2 British 17 Wesleyan and 181 Board schools in Cornwall.

102. C.R.O., DDPV 8.

The religious problems of elementary education in these years hinged upon two issues. Firstly, there were those places where the Anglican minister was Anglo-Catholic or antagonistic to Nonconformity, and where these were attempts, covert or overt, to enforce the attendance of pupils in the schools at Anglican Sunday schools. Secondly, there was the functioning, or non-functioning, of the conscience clause. In Cornwall, only a handful of children were ever withdrawn from religious instruction. It was argued by some that this low number was due to parental fears of clerical reprisals or of forcing their children to stand out in school. The more cynical took it as evidence that the agitation over the religious clauses was confined to a few fanatics.¹⁰³

But the Wesleyan contribution to education did not stop at Sunday and day schools. Although Cornwall was not well endowed with secondary schools, or perhaps because of this, four schools were established in the county by the Wesleyans, catering for what they unashamedly called "middle class education".¹⁰⁴ Wesleyan and indeed Methodist, influence was also present in the provision of technical education, important in a mining area. Piper considers Methodism to have been one of the most important factors in stimulating the development of technical education in the 1850's. The ethos of Methodism engendered a sense of responsibility in a large section of the population, which was able partially to offset the adverse effects of emigration, and Methodism also provided men, like the Helston Free Methodist, R.G. Rows, and the Camborne Wesleyan Captain Josiah Thomas, who had a keen interest in this aspect of

103. Truro Diocesan Conference Reports, 1888, B7;
D. Ebbington, 'The Nonconformist Conscience',
pp. 229-30.

104. There were two boys schools, Dunheved, Launceston (founded in 1879) and Truro (1880), and two girls schools, Redbrooke, Camborne (1879) and West Cornwall, Penzance (1883)

education.¹⁰⁵

Education, then, was a subject of concern to Methodists, and one in which they were involved through Sunday Schools and because of their own children's education. The Wesleyan position was complicated by its decision to build elementary schools and its support of denominational education, implicit in the acceptance of state aid for those schools. However, as the number of Wesleyans schools in Cornwall and elsewhere were small, antipathy to Anglican-dominated education grew and Wesleyan attitudes became similar to those of other Methodists and Nonconformists, though Wesleyans remained divided on the subject. The controversial issue in education was the type of religious teaching to be given in schools and by whom it was to be given. This and the increasing involvement of Government in the provision of education brought Methodists once more into politics.

Methodism, Nonconformist Grievances and Politics.

Wesleyan Methodism, originating as it did from within the bosom of the Church of England retained a lingering affection for the Established Church. But Methodist "self-sufficiency" and the rise of Anglo-Catholicism in the Mother Church meant that Wesleyanism detached itself from Anglicanism, but did not fully identify itself with Nonconformity. The Wesleyan Conference, aware of the ambiguity of its position, commented,

Concerning the Protestant sections of the Church of God, whether Espiscoplain, Presbyterian or Independent, our motto has been 'The friends of all, the enemies of none'... By many our catholicity has been reckoned our infirmity if not our sin;

105. L.P.S. Piper, 'The development of technical education in Cornwall from the early nineteenth century until 1902' (Unpublished M.ed. thesis: Univ. of Leicester, 1977), pp. 23, 215, 217.

and hence the censures that have been heaped upon us because of our independent position with respect to the Established Church on the one hand and to the different classes of Dissenters on the other.¹⁰⁶

This meant in political terms that the Wesleyans were more reluctant than other Methodists to campaign for the abolition of Nonconformist grievances. In 1848, for instance, answering a question on its attitude to disestablishment, the Wesleyan Conference said, "Our reply to them is this - that our spiritual charge is too absorbing and at the best too imperfectly filled, to allow of our entering on such a course". Hence, in 1868, when Irish disestablishment was an election issue, the Royal Cornwall Gazette reminded Wesleyans that Wesley held the Established Church in great respect.¹⁰⁷

The Wesleyan middle-of-the-road position can be seen by contrasting their views on an issue like disestablishment with those of the Bible Christians. The prospect of Irish disestablishment was greeted with enthusiasm. The Bible Christian Conference was "fully convinced that the Church of Christ owes nothing to its connection with the State, but on the contrary, has had its progress retarded, its power for good lessened, and its character misrepresented by being subject to State Control".¹⁰⁸

As the nineteenth century progressed, Wesleyans became more willing to join Nonconformist campaigns to alter the laws concerning marriages, burials and the acquisition of chapel land. The Cornwall District Synod of Wesleyans called the compulsory attendance of

106. M.M., 1840, pp. 111-12.

107. M.M., 1848, p. 121; R.C.G., 22 October 1868.

108. R.C. Mins., 1868, Res. XIX.

registrars at marriages in chapels "unnecessary and inconvenient" and recommended Conference to take action. A number of Liberal candidates, like many Wesleyans, would not go so far as to support disestablishment, but in trying to secure the Nonconformist vote they campaigned for an alteration of the Burials law. The question of land for chapels sometimes arose with regard to the personal actions of political candidates. John Tremayne, for instance, standing as a Conservative in East Cornwall in 1874, was taken to task for his alleged refusal to allow Wesleyans to acquire land for a chapel at Marystow.¹⁰⁹

There is little evidence of Methodist ministerial involvement in Cornish politics in these years. Occasionally ministers were reported as being present at Liberal meetings. But when a M.N.C. minister confessed that he had done a little canvassing in the 1880 election, the Royal Cornwall Gazette considered this "a remarkable statement for a Methodist minister to make".¹¹⁰ It was usual for ministers to preface any political speeches they made by saying that they spoke only as individuals and by defining the issue as a religious or moral one.

The Methodist vote increased in size as the nineteenth century progressed. Not only was the franchise lowered, as in 1867, but Methodists were also rising in the social scale and the older traditional influences were declining in effectiveness as the electorate expanded. However, in the years before 1885, there was only an occasional Nonconformist or Methodist candidature.¹¹¹

109. M.M., 1873, p. 199 (marriages), 1875, p. 716 (burials), 1885, p. 190, (chapels); Wes. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), May, 1869; R.C.G., 12 March 1880; W.D.M., 6 February 1874.

110. R.C.G., 2 April, 1880.

111. Identifiable Nonconformist M.P.s in this period are Sir Charles Reed (long. M.P. for St. Ives 1880-1) and Samuel Gurney (Quaker M.P. for Penryn and Falmouth, 1857-65). Edward Jenkins, the son of a Presbyterian minister, was the unsuccessful candidate in the Truro

Sir Francis Lycett, a wealthy Wesleyan philanthropist, fought the Liskeard by election of 1869 against the Adullahmite Liberal, Edward Horsman. These two, both Liberals, were the only candidates. Surprisingly, the Nonconformists did not rally behind Lycett. The West Briton reported,

No one party or section of the electors seems to have gone thoroughly on either side. Sir Francis Lycett had very considerable support from the Wesleyans, though not to the extent anticipated. The ministers of the Free Wesleyan Methodists, of the Primitive and Bible Christian bodies voted for Mr. Horsman, while their flocks generally voted in opposition. The Nonconformists distinct from these bodies were generally in favour of Mr. Horsman.¹¹²

Lycett was well beaten, mainly because the Conservatives in the borough supported Horsman, but Sir Francis found it hard to believe that there had not been at least some electoral corruption behind the result.

Lycett was also the Liberal candidate at a by election in St. Ives soon after the General Election of 1874. By this time he was in his seventies. In his views he reflected Wesleyan concern over the Contagious Diseases Act and general Nonconformist grievances. On this occasion he was given the wholehearted backing of the chapels and of the temperance enthusiasts. His opponent, C.T. Praed, belonged to a family owning property in the constituency. He was a staunch Anglican, but denied the charges of ritualism levelled at him. Both sides canvassed hard. The Royal Cornwall Gazette complained, "Every dissenting preacher on the register was brought to the poll from whatever distance he might have itinerated and put to preach to and canvass his former beloved friends". Lycett had been given the

by election of 1871, and J. Passmore Edwards, the unsuccessful candidate at Truro in 1868, was a Cornishman of Baptist stock. They all stood in the Liberal interest.

task of distributing the class tickets, symbols of Methodist membership, and this caused one writer to write that he was sick of "chapel electioneering".¹¹³

Praed still won, but became the object of ninety six charges of corruption. Sufficient evidence was forthcoming for the election to be declared void. When the two candidates fought again in a re-run of the contest, Lycett was the loser once more. Although the claims of broken pledges may have had some validity in a seat where landlord and mine influence was still powerful, Lycett yet again found the electors' rejection of him difficult to accept.¹¹⁴

Launceston in 1874 was the scene of a Liberal assault on the influence of Werrington in the borough. It failed, but Liberal charges of corruption were upheld. The Liberal candidate selected to challenge the ousted member's son was a local Wesleyan banker and solicitor, John Dingley. The Liberal candidate defeated in the General Election stood down, describing Dingley as "A local gentleman of high standing and greatly esteemed in the borough and an earnest and thorough Liberal - one of the class who have sometimes been termed the 'backbone' of the Liberal Party". The election, however, was a quiet affair and while Dingley managed to cut into the Conservative majority, there is no evidence on this occasion of large scale Methodist activity.¹¹⁵

There were occasional references to leading Wesleyan laymen coming into the county as potential Liberal candidates. In 1874, for instance, Alexander McArthur¹¹⁶ sounded out the possibility of standing at Liskeard. When

113. W.B., 31 December 1874; R.C.G., 2 January, 6 February 1875.

114. R.C.G., 20 February 1875; W.B., 25 February 1875; for further details on Lycett and these contests, see below p. p. 157-8.

115. W.B., 2 July 1874; see also Alfred F. Robbins, op. cit., p. 365.

116. W.B., 19 January 1874; he was the father of W.A. McArthur, M.P. for St. Austell, 1887-1908.

W.C. Pendarves was defeated by the Conservative candidate at St. Ives in 1881 after a Liberal victory in 1880, one explanation put forward was that a number of voters were disgruntled that S.D. Waddy, a prominent Wesleyan, had not been the Liberal candidate, as was at one time hoped.¹¹⁷

The only Methodist to be elected before 1885 was the Liberal, D.J. Jenkins, who in 1874 was successful at Penryn and Falmouth. This had as much to do with his own shipping interests as with his religious affiliation. Methodism on its own was not a sufficiently large or unified base from which to launch a candidature. It is notable that Wesleyan and Nonconformist candidatures occurred in the boroughs and nearly all took place after the Second Reform Act. It is also interesting to note that these candidatures were all in the Liberal interest.

The only potential Wesleyan Conservative candidate in these years was Henry J. Atkinson. He was adopted as the Conservative candidate for West Cornwall in February 1884. This division had never seen a contest since its inception and only once had returned a Conservative Atkinson engaged in a tour of the constituency. At some of his meetings adverse votes were recorded and others ended in confusion. A recurrent theme was the apparent incongruity to many of his listeners of Atkinson's Wesleyanism and Conservatism.

At Newlyn, for example, Atkinson's speech was interrupted with the cry "We are Wesleyan!" Atkinson replied that he too was a Wesleyan, but "he separated his politics from his religion". When the heckling continued, Atkinson insisted upon the validity of his Wesleyanism and regretted that "some Wesleyans while claiming their right to their political opinions denied

117. W.B., 14 April 1881; R.C.G., 1 April 1881

that he should have his opinions". He also revealed that at least one Cornish Wesleyan had told him that Conservatism was unscriptural.¹¹⁸

Another confrontation took place at Redruth. At a crowded meeting Atkinson outlined his view before facing some stiff questioning. It was when it came to closing the meeting that matters became confused. More time was demanded for questions, but Atkinson was called away by special telegram. George Smith, a respected Wesleyan, a Conservative and son of Dr. George Smith, sought to propose a vote of thanks. But Alfred Lanyon, another Wesleyan and President of the Redruth Liberal Association, tried to amend this into a vote of no confidence in Atkinson. A hagggle ensued as no vote of confidence had been proposed. At this point many of the Conservatives on the platform began to disappear by a back door. Eventually, the no confidence motion was passed and the meeting concluded with still another Wesleyan voicing his personal regard for Atkinson as a man, but not for his political opinions. This summed up the views of those still remaining at the meeting.¹¹⁹

Redruth had been the culmination of Liberal Wesleyan opposition to Atkinson. While his candidature stung the Liberals into action, it also provides evidence of how unthinkable the idea of being a Methodist and a Conservative was to many Cornish Methodists. As one newspaper noted, "It is a significant fact.... Mr. Atkinson has received the greatest provocation from persons of the same religious persuasion as himself".¹²⁰

Further evidence that in the period after the Second Reform Act Methodists were regarded in the main as being Liberal comes from the Royal Cornwall Gazette. In the contest at Likeard in 1874, when the local Wesleyans favoured the more advanced Liberal, L.H. Courtney to

118. C.R.O., DDPV (290) 27.

119. W.B., 13 March 1884.

120. C.R.T., 16 May 1884; C.R.O., DDPV (290) 7.

Edward Horsman, it taunted,

On the Sunday before the election the Wesleyans prayed and prayed earnestly like good and loyal citizens... that the BEST man might be returned as Member of Parliament for the borough. Well, would you believe it? Such is the waywardness and ungratefulness of human nature - that since the return of Mr. Horsman they have not offered up public thanks for the answers vouchsafed for their prayers.¹²¹

At the same election the liberal West Briton took Falmouth Wesleyans to task. It reported,

For many years the majority of the voters among the Falmouth Wesleyans have been consistent, conscientious and earnest supporters of the Liberal Party and not a few have stood out in boldest relief in their uncompromising opposition to the Tories... But unpleasant rumours are rife that some conspicuous members of the Wesleyan body are likely to withdraw themselves from the party of progress and reform and to partially, if not entirely, identify themselves with the party of obstruction and inaction. And what is the cause of this defeat? O Sir! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon! For £50 given by Mr. R.N. FOWLER TOWARDS THE REBUILDING OF WESLEY, CHAPEL THEY ARE SAID TO HAVE TAKEN SUCH A COURSE.¹²²

Filthy lucre did not in fact win the day, it must be added, as Fowler's Liberal opponents defeated him at this election. But it demonstrates that both parties were alive to the value of the Methodist vote, whether in the form of large conspicuous contributions to chapels, like Fowler, or in the selection of Methodists as candidates. Jenkins was one of Fowler's opponents.

Nicholas Downing, a Penzance Wesleyan, remarked at an election meeting as early as 1868,

although the great Wesleyan body throughout the kingdom was in no sense, in a public and aggregate capacity, a political body, yet it had been a great pleasure to him to see for a great number of years

121. R.C.G., 21 February 1874.

122. W.B., 2 February 1874.

past that Liberal opinions had been making very distinct, and rapid progress among its individual members.¹²³

This would seem to sum up the party affiliation and preference of Cornish Wesleyans as their political power and political awareness increased.¹²⁴

The thorough Liberal allegiance of the Bible Christians, like that of other non-Wesleyan Methodists, was more openly acknowledged. One speaker at the Bodmin District Meeting of the Bible Christians in 1878 mentioned the need for Christians to be actively interested in politics, without making a craze of them. Referring to some of the issues of the day, he concluded, "As liberal Christians we must be on the alert. We dare say there are 'Conservative' Christians, although it requires an effort of charity on our part to believe there are". The Bible Christian Annual Address in 1880, noting the Liberal victory, commented, "We record with unmeasured delight the fact that at the late general election the preference of the English people for truth, integrity and peace, in the counsels of the realm was so triumphantly declared".¹²⁵

Conclusions.

It is possible to be confused by the labels used to describe the different branches of Methodism. The secessionists often used the term "liberal" when describing themselves, and the W.M.A. and the Wesleyan Reformers, after uniting in 1857, were called the United Methodist Free Churches. It implied by this less

123. R.C.G., 2 July 1868.

124. More evidence of the strength of Liberalism among Cornish Wesleyans can be seen by analysing the political opinions of the lay representatives sent from Cornwall to the Wesleyan Conferences from 1879 to 1884. Out of 37 different names recorded the political affiliation of 19 has been traced; 18 of them were Liberals, some being leading Liberal activists.

125. B.C. Mag., 1878, p. 449; B.C. Mins., 1880, p. 28.

connexional control and more power in the hands of the laity. It did not mean political or theological liberalism. Sometimes the term "reformed" was used instead of "liberal". Similarly, this carried no Calvinistic doctrinal implications. Kent uses the terms "high", referring to those who emphasise the "Connexional Principle" and the authority of Conference, and "low", meaning those who stress the role of laymen and local elements.¹²⁶

The importance of such semantics rests in the fact that models of Methodist voting behaviour have been built upon a correspondence between political beliefs and doctrines of the Church and Ministry. According to Taylor, for Methodists, "...the guiding principle of their political allegiances must be sought in their ecclesiastical doctrines and government. "Hence, those who held high views of the role of the ministry tended to be Tories, and those holding to anti-clerical notions tended to be Liberals in politics. Again to quote from Taylor,

As Methodism become more Nonconformist it became more Liberal. Its desertion from an authoritarian system of Church government, and its progressive adoption of democratic ideals and a democratic constitution (especially in its 'schismatic' branches) were accompanied by a change of political allegiance from Toryism to Liberalism.

One can infer, not only in Taylor's account, but also in the writings of Wearmouth and Edwards, the belief in Kent's words "that Wesleyan Methodism fulfilled its destiny by becoming gradually closer to the Liberal Party."¹²⁷

126. J. Kent, The Age of Disunity, pp. 67-68

127. E. Taylor, op. cit., pp. 14,16,17; J. Kent, op.cit., p. 127; see R. Wearmouth, The Social and Political Influence of Methodism, p. 253 and Maldwyn Edwards, After Wesley: a Study of the Social and Political Influence of Methodism in the Middle Period (1791-1849) (London: Epworth, 1935), p. 59 and also his Methodism and England, p. 165; Wearmouth suggests a model emphasizing a move from Tory through Liberal to Labour, whereas Edwards substitutes 'Radical' for Labour.

One objection to Taylor's analysis is on the grounds that there were too many exceptions to the rule for it to hold good.¹²⁸ This is partly true in Cornwall. Prominent Cornish Wesleyan laymen, like Dr. George Smith, Thomas Garland and Charles Thomas, all staunchly supported the Wesleyan Connexion in its time of internal dissension over the Wesleyan Reformers, helping to minimise their effect in the county. Yet, all three were active Liberals in politics.

On the other hand, Rosevear, the driving force behind the W.M.A. secession at Camelford, had become involved in politics in the years prior to the disruption. Indeed, in Camelford, when the town hall became the temporary home of the W.M.A., it was dubbed "the Political chapel". Likewise, when the M.N.C. established itself at Truro as a result of a split in the Wesleyan ranks, the Superintendent minister wrote to Bunting alleging that one of the causes was "the existence and influence of a base democratical spirit which has spurned at order and designated it tyranny, for Sawle and nearly everyman of his party are Radicals and sworn enemies to our discipline". There does seem to have been some positive correlation between attitudes towards church government and political belief.¹²⁹

Turner and Hill have observed, on this issue,

One of the dangers of equating and connecting the liberal element in Methodist theology with voting for or adhering to a specific political party is that it has to assume a basic identity between political preference and political attitudes... A transition from a conservative to a socialist identification on the part of a religious community may in fact be simply a new form of political expression for the same political content.

128. J. Kent, op.cit., p. 96.

129. Thomas Shaw, Methodism in the Camelford and Wadebridge Circuit, 1743-1963 (Truro: 1963), p. 91; W. Ward, Early Victorian Methodism, p. 67.

This is the view they hold of nineteenth century Methodism, arguing that Methodist political beliefs are remarkable for their continuity rather than progressive evolution and characterised by a moral approach to political issues.¹³⁰

The two models are not necessarily incompatible. The Taylorian correlation between, on the one side, the rise of democratic ideas in politics, and, on the other side, the growth of non-Wesleyan Methodism and of anti-clerical Wesleyans, involves a change of belief in the doctrine of the Church and in the Methodist constitution. The definition of political issues in moral terms is not affected by this.

A weakness of Turner and Hill's argument, however, is that it does not sufficiently take into account changes in Methodist thinking. As one Primitive Methodist wrote at the time of Methodist union, for instance, "Frankly, many of us don't believe what John Wesley believed".¹³¹ It is also necessary to remember that while the moral approach to politics may have remained the same, what is included in that approach may alter through time. The example of attitudes to poverty is a case in point.

When building models of voting behaviour the changing context of politics must also be borne in mind. The views of Wesley and Treffry on politics, coloured by the corruption of their day, became less applicable as the nineteenth century progressed. Circumstances where many members are enfranchised may lead to a greater degree of political involvement than a situation where only a few possess a vote. Times of unrest seem to have provoked from Methodists a different response to times of prosperity.

130. B. Turner & M. Hill, 'Methodism and the Pietist Definition of Politics', p. 161.

131. Quoted in J. Kent, op. cit., p. 21

Just as Methodism affected the environment in which it took root, so changes in that environment influenced Methodism.

Much of the debate on the political effects of Methodism in the mid-nineteenth century revolves around the "no politics" rule. Taylor isolates the factors contributing to the official Wesleyan neutrality in politics as being,

Its hierachical government, its fear of the French Revolution, its hatred of Radical Atheism, its dread of the spiritual fate which had befallen such Dissenters as had become deeply implicated in political affairs, its respect for the wishes of its founder, and its desire for reunion with the Church of England....

It is important to remember, however, that the "no politics" rule was not confined to the Wesleyans. Non-Wesleyan Methodists, including the Bible Christians, all had similar rules.¹³²

Criticism of this rule is often levelled on the grounds that it made Methodism into a conservative force by default, if not by active consent. In the case of Wesleyans, it is argued that they preached neutrality and yet practised Toryism. As Holland put it,

Political neutrality, to be real, must be neutrality all round, and not a silence imposed upon all parties but one. A political neutrality which means the activity of one party is not neutrality. Neither is the do nothing party. To do nothing is to render essential service to the party in the State which wishes to keep things as they are....¹³³

In a sense, this is to miss the point of the rule. As Kent has observed, the object of the "no politics"

132. E. Taylor, op. cit., p. 114; J. Kent, op. cit., pp. 130 ff.

133. H. Holland, op. cit., p. 16.

convention was to prevent internal dissension which would hinder Methodism from achieving its primarily spiritual aims. Although the rule was broken quite often, the intention of the rule was agreed upon by all.¹³⁴

A rule like this is easily criticised by those who find themselves prevented from achieving their ends by it. It is also open to misuse by those who want to employ it to prevent opponents from accomplishing goals to which they object on political rather than religious grounds. There is a danger, too, that historians, looking back with hindsight, may disapprove of the rule because it prevented Methodism, in Kent's words, from choosing "the social and political issues which later generations have felt they would have chosen as fields of action."¹³⁵ There is a difference between the aim of the rule, its administration (or rather maladministration), and its effects.

The emphasis of Methodism on evangelism and holiness means that Methodist sources in Cornwall which survive largely ignore political topics. It is not always easy to trace individual Methodist political involvement, but the absence of Methodist agitation on controversial political measures, like the Great Reform Act and Free Trade, is clear, as is its non-involvement with anything as radical as Chartism. This contrasts with Methodist involvement in other issues, upon which Methodism was united and in which Methodists took part as Methodists.

The most persistent religious issue in these years was Anti-Catholicism, evident in Methodist opposition to Roman Catholic Emancipation and to the endowment of Maynooth. It also emerged in the education question and in the divergence of paths of Wesleyanism and the Church of England, because of the rise of Puseyism. Moral issues,

134. J. Kent, op. cit., p. 132.

135. Ibid., p. 116.

like slavery, were those in which Wesleyans took a prominent part, while individual upright conduct was the governing force in their electoral behaviour from the time of Wesley.

Although Wesleyanism gravitated towards the position of Old Dissent, Wesleyans were never completely synonymous with Nonconformity in the way that non-Wesleyan Methodists, like the Bible Christians, were. Wesleyans were not enthusiastic campaigners against the Established Church, but they were suspicious of Anglican influence in education and possessed a hearty dislike of the existing laws on matters like Burials and Marriages. In party terms, redress was only likely to come from one party.

To look for party affiliation is to do what Wesleyanism, with the help of the "no politics" rule, tried not to do. Wesleyans specifically eschewed party politics. The Toryism of early nineteenth century Wesleyanism has perhaps been exaggerated.¹³⁵ What evidence there is of party affiliation in Cornwall relates mainly to the years after the Section Reform Act and this clearly points to a preference for the Liberal Party. In earlier years, Methodism was all but ignored in election contests. When roused Methodists proved themselves able to wage a powerful, if not always successful agitation. As the century progressed, their influence and involvement increased.

136. J. Vincent, Pollbooks: How Victorians voted, p. 67.

CHAPTER FOURMETHODISTS AND TEMPERANCE.

Harrison has claimed of the temperance movement that it was "one of several transitional organisations channelling religious energies into party politics..."¹ The aim of this chapter is to investigate to what extent the different branches of Methodism in Cornwall became involved in temperance work in its various aspects and to see whether this led them to become more involved in politics, and, in particular, if it was a means of attraction toward the Liberal Party. Temperance is also worthy of study as a key issue in the Methodist social conscience.

Early Temperance Movements.

The views of John Wesley on this subject are important, for in this matter, as in many others, much of the later debate amongst Methodists was a discussion, not always friendly, of what Wesley really believed. It is clear that Wesley had no truck with drunkenness. For this he had expelled members and indeed once wrote a tract on the subject in which the drunkard was labelled "a fit tool for the devil" and "an enemy to God". One of the evidences of a desire for salvation included abstention from "drunkenness, buying or selling spiritous liquors, or drinking them unless in cases of extreme necessity".²

Yet Wesley distinguished between ale and spirits. Hence he advised preachers, "After preaching take a little

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1. Brian Harrison, Drink and the Victorians: the Temperance Question in England, 1815-1872 (London: Faber, 1971), p. 31.
 2. John Wesley, Works (1872 rpt., Grand Rapids, Mich.:

lemonade, mild ale or candid orange peel. All spiritous liquors at that time especially are deadly poison". Wesley was an eighteenth century temperance reformer. Addressing himself to the problems of his day, he condemned the drinking of ardent spirits in the heyday of the gin shop, but not the consumption of beer, which at that time was considered to be a temperance drink.³

In Cornwall, heavy drinking had given rise to the saying that "if there were but three houses together, two of them shall be ale houses". The smuggling of spirits into the county, equally condemned by Wesley, exaggerated the problem of drunkenness. The problems associated with drunkenness were so great that various societies briefly sprang up at the beginning of the eighteenth century seeking to check these excesses.⁴

An important legislative change took place in 1830 with the passing of the Beer Act. This removed the tax on beer and cider and allowed anyone who paid two guineas to the excise offers for a licence to retail beer. This led to a multiplication of beershops throughout the country, which caused the Act to be given a bad press.⁵

In Cornwall, Rev. Richard Polwhele drew up a petition to Parliament on behalf of the clergy and the magistrates seeking a repeal of the Act. It was claimed

Zondervan, 1958), ix, pp. 160-71; George T. Brake, Drink: Ups and downs of Methodist attitudes to Temperance (London: Oliphants, 1974), p.1.

3. G. Brake, op. cit., p. 1.

4. Quoted in A. Jenkin, op. cit., p. 158; J. Pearce, op. cit., p. 115; Evidence of concern over drunkenness can be seen in material in the C.R.O., e.g. AD 55/29, DDR 5580, DDP 68/8/1, p. 35, FS 3/270.

5. Sidney & Beatrice Webb, The History of Licuor Licensing in England principally from 1700 to 1830 (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1903) p. 116; A. Jenkin, op. cit., p. 203.

that the Act had "opened a wider door to excesses of almost every description than we have heretofore witnessed - drunkenness, gambling, debauchery". In 1835 it was reported that so alarming had the conduct in "those pests of the mining districts, the beershops" become, that in order to preserve the peace many of the mine agents had been sworn in as special constables. Many of the attacks on beershops came from biased sources, but they could only have exacerbated a problem already causing concern.⁶

Despite the increase in the number of beerhouses, they were not the target of the first national temperance movement. This was instead an "anti-spirits" movement, originating in Ireland and Scotland, where more spirits were drunk than beer. Although it predated the Beer Act, it was not fully launched in England till 1831 with the establishment of the British and Foreign Temperance Society.⁷ One of its agents Rev. G.W. Carr, an Irish clergyman, arrived in Cornwall in April 1832.

Speaking at Truro, Carr outlined the object of the movement as being "to diminish the destructive habit of excess in the use of ardent spirits". After the meeting forty people indicated their intention of becoming members. Carr went on to tour the county, addressing meetings in many of the towns, and in this way a number of temperance societies were quickly established throughout Cornwall.⁸

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6. C.R.O., AR/C/75; H.L. Douch, Old Cornish Inns: and their place in the social history of Cornwall (Truro: Barton, 1966). p. 105; B. Harrison, op. cit., pp. 83-85.
7. B. Harrison, op. cit., p. 105.
8. W.B., 20 April, 4 May 1832; by 1834 the B.F.T.S. had 7,550 members in Cornwall, the highest ratio of members per 1,000 population of any county in England and Wales (B. Harrison, op. cit., p. 109)

The emphasis rested on personal example and responsibility. The pledge taken by members of the Truro society was one of total abstinence as far as ardent spirits went and one of moderation in the use of fermented liquors. It was left to an individual's conscience to decide what constituted moderation. The suppression of drunkenness was seen as the primary objective and even moderate use of ardent spirits was condemned as encouraging by example drunkenness in others. These societies, however, had their critics. Polwhele, for instance, had little respect for them or their "sleek, sherry drinking Presidents".⁹

An examination of the leading members of these societies from newspaper accounts shows that they were eminently respectable organisations. Prominent among the leading members were ministers of the different churches, Anglican and Nonconformist. One of the most active local temperance workers at this stage was Rev. E. Clarke, the Baptist minister at Truro, and Truro itself became the centre of the early temperance movement in Cornwall.¹⁰

It is clear that Methodists were involved in these temperance societies. Indeed, the Wesleyan chapels were sometimes the venue for their meetings, where Methodist ministers gave addresses encouraging support of the societies' aims. Leading Wesleyan laymen were also active in these societies, notably the Bodmin Wesleyan, Dr. Henry Mudge.¹¹

However, Methodist support for these societies was not unanimous. Looking back at the formation of the Bodmin Temperance Society at a later date, Mudge recalled that many Methodists, including himself, had signed the

9. W.B., 20 April 1832: C.R.O., AR/C/75.

10. Cornubian, 8 May, 25 December 1832.

11. Cornubian, 30 October 1832.

membership pledge, but were told by the preachers that it was not necessary for Methodists to sign because it was already embodied in their rules. Mudge commented, "This appeared odd; as if the rules DID contain the obligation of abstinence from ardent spirits, no one thought of keeping them or of enforcing them, and so there arose the appearance of insincerity".¹²

Mudge was writing from the committed position of a teetotaler. Yet it seems that a number of Methodists at this time had adopted a lax interpretation of Wesley's rules. The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, noting this, observed, "Though the Wesleyans of the present day are a temperate people, we cannot affirm that the rule in question (Wesley's opposition to the buying and selling of spiritous liquors) is either generally enforced or generally kept, in its literal and obvious meaning". The aim of the article was not to encourage Methodists to join temperance societies, "but simply that, by keeping our own rule, they should redeem the Connexion from the charge of inconsistency". Nonetheless, the hope was expressed that Methodism would be more fully identified with the cause of temperance.¹³

This illustrates the ambiguity of attitude adopted by some Wesleyans to ardent spirits, but overall in Cornwall Wesleyans supplied many recruits to these temperance societies. The editor of the Cornubian encapsulated the feeling of his Wesleyan brethren in the county when he wrote "Respecting the utility of these societies we presume there can scarcely be two opinions. The evil they would remove is too widely spread and deeply felt to admit of denial".¹⁴

12. Cornwall & Devon Temperance Journal, January 1847.

13. Wes. Meth. Mag., 1836, pp. 904.

14. Thomas Garland, Memorials, Literary and Religious (London: 1868), p. 131.

The Origin of Teetotalism in Cornwall.

As Douch has commented, "The obvious reaction against those who advocated 'beer unlimited' was the rise of a movement with the platform 'beer prohibited'". To an extent, therefore, teetotalism can be seen as the product of the excesses produced by the Beer Act of 1830. Indeed, it is only a short step from abstinence from ardent spirits to total abstinence from all intoxicating liquors, and in beer and cider drinking areas, like Cornwall, the temperance societies had not made much impact on the problems of drunkenness.¹⁵

Preston was the centre of the early teetotal movement, but opinion was ripe on the question elsewhere. In Cornwall, for instance, Dr. Henry Mudge was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the work of the Bodmin Temperance Society. He wrote to the teetotalers' Preston Temperance Advocate,

My resolution is taken. On Monday next, our monthly meeting night, I mean to press the old society to adopt or reject the teetotal pledge... Several young men have applied to me wishing to engage in the work; and (without boasting, sir) I seem to have a call to go before them. My fear is standing alone at first.....

Hence, on 15th May 1837 a teetotal society was established at Bodmin. Mudge, although engaged on a busy local medical practice and a Wesleyan local preacher, still found time to visit various places, advocating teetotalism, and forming teetotal societies.¹⁶

At the beginning of 1838, on Mudge's invitation, James Teare, a Methodist and teetotal missionary, came

15. H. Douch, op. cit., p. 107; B. Harrison, op. cit., p. 114.

16. B. Harrison, op. cit., pp. 117, 139-40; Mudge quoted in Peter T. Winskill, The Temperance Movement and its Workers: a record of social, moral, religious and political progress (London: Blackie, 1891-2), ii, p. 47.

to Cornwall. This marked the launching of teetotalism in the county on a large scale. At two meetings held in Bodmin in January, Teare spoke with such effect that two hundred people put their names in the pledge book. He produced similar results almost wherever he went in Cornwall. In May 1838, the Royal Cornwall Gazette commented, "the total abstinence principle continues to work wonders in the west. It runs from the towns into the villages and hamlets, like wildfire, pursuing the drunkard even into his most obscure haunts".¹⁷

The early teetotalers at the beginning faced opposition from various sources. At a meeting in Truro, according to one press report, Teare "was powerfully opposed by Rev. T.F. Jordan, who on the part of the Temperance Society, repeatedly but unavailingly challenged Mr. Teare to a discussion of the merits and demerits of their respective principles". A month later the two clashed again at a teetotal meeting held in the Bible Christian chapel. The press report was brief, not containing a full description of the proceedings, "further than that they commenced with prayer and a hymn and ended with something very like a riot". The account concluded, "Differing as they do to the MEANS of effecting a common good, we cannot but indulge the hope that they will, ere long, perceive and appreciate each other's honesty".¹⁸

Sometimes opposition came from Methodists. John Jennings, a Wesleyan who had been engaged as a teetotal agent for instance found the chapel at Roche closed to him by a "malting trustee", even though the minister was a teetotaler. More direct opposition came in the form of disturbances at meetings. This happened in the Methodist

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17. Peter T. Winskill, The Comprehensive History of the Rise and Progress of the Temperance Reformation from the earliest period to September 1881 (Crewe: 1881); R.C.G., quoted in H. Douch, op. cit., p. 108.
18. R.C.G., 2 February, 2 March 1838.

chapel at St. Agnes, where the interruptions were said to be caused by a person "interested" in the beer trade.¹⁹

The Cornish newspapers did not devote much space to the new movement, but when they did, they tended to be sympathetic and complimentary. The Royal Cornwall Gazette, summing up the effects of Teare's visit to Camborne noted the improvement in the morals of the labouring classes, adding,

The beershops are almost forsaken; and the miners instead of rolling about the streets drunk in the evenings, as too many of them were heretofore wont to do, make a point of repairing to their respective homes, sober and betimes.²⁰

The initial success of teetotalism can be seen in a report sent in by Henry Mudge to the Temperance Intelligencer. It read, "the teetotalers already, that is in nine months, muster more than 18,000 or one-seventeenth of our whole population; the largest societies are Penzance 5,000 and St. Ives 2,500". On 24th August 1838, therefore, it was decided to form a "Cornwall Teetotal Association" and to publish a monthly journal. The terms of membership were to pledge to totally abstain from all intoxicating drinks, except for medicine and the sacrament.²¹

There was a noticeable absence of gentry, farmers and ministers of religion from the ranks of the county's leading teetotalers. The Cornwall Teetotal Journal in

19. Cornwall Teetotal Journal, June 1839, December 1840.

20. R.C.G., 13 April 1838.

21. Quoted in P. Winskill, The Temperance Movement, ii, p. 48; Falmouth Teetotal Advocate, October 1838; the teetotal movement produced a number of journals in Cornwall: in 1838, the Falmouth Teetotal Advocate and Cornwall Moral Reformer and the Western Temperance Luminary were published. The Cornwall Teetotal Journal of the County Association superseded these in 1839, but changed its name in 1843 to the Cornwall Temperance Journal and Rechabite Recorder and against in 1844 to Cornwall and Devon Temperance Journal, Rechabite Recorder and Peace Advocate.

its first issue commented on this, with particular reference to Camborne,

Very few have yet joined us of those who from their stations both in civil and religious society possess much of that influence which we seem reasonably to expect should be used in favour of the moral improvement of the people.²²

It is evident that the teetotal movement, in contrast to earlier temperance societies, did not have much support from the upper echelons of society.

If the early temperance movement was noted for the prominence of ministers of religion, the teetotal movement gained its support from laymen. There were only a few ministers from the Established and Nonconformist churches who supported the teetotal cause. Amongst Quakers in Cornwall, however, particularly at Liskeard, there was strong support.²³

Evidence of the close connexion between teetotalism and the Christian churches can be found in the Cornish Temperance Journals. An analysis of the obituaries in these Journals from 1838 to 1848 reveals a total of forty two deaths. Fourteen of these were Wesleyan members, four others were called "Methodists", three were W.M.A. members and another two belonged to the Bible Christian denomination. A further eight were "Christians" of unspecified denomination, leaving only eleven cases where nothing was said of religion.

A report from Penzance stated that at the end of 1838 the membership of all the total abstinence societies was 6,800, including six to eight hundred Wesleyans, of whom twenty were local preachers and forty were class leaders.

22. Cornwall Teetotal Journal, January 1839.

23. P. Winskill, The Temperance Movement, ii, p. 49; Thomas Hudson, Temperance Pioneers in the West: personal and incidental experiences (London: National Temperance Publication Depot, 1887), pp. 253, 257.

Similarly, at St. Ives, the Wesleyan secretary of the local society stated that on its first anniversary there were in St. Ives itself 2,227 members and a further 1,300 in adjoining areas. These totals included five Primitive Methodist preachers and two local preachers, twelve Wesleyan local preachers and thirteen class leaders.²⁴

Indeed, it would seem that, for a time at least, the teetotalers succeeded in revolutionising parts of the county. The danger of exaggeration in their reports must be remembered and they seem to have included in the numbers returned all who had taken the pledge rather than those keeping it. But the strong link between teetotalers and religion is evident, and, even if the leading Wesleyans were not teetotalers, in Cornwall at least, Wesleyans were prominent among the leaders of the movement.

The St. Ives Division

The fact that teetotalism was largely a lay movement caused problems in some of the churches as the debate between moderationists and teetotalers was fought out. The Bible Christians, for instance, were among the most enthusiastic of Methodist supporters of the teetotal cause. But even they were aware of the potential divisiveness of the issue among their members.²⁵

It was, however, amongst Cornish Wesleyans that the issue proved most explosive. Brake has written that

24. Falmouth Teetotal Advocate, December 1838; Cornwall Teetotal Journal, March 1839.

25. B.C. Mins., 1840, p. 19; it was calculated that 32 out of 33 ministers and 14 out of 17 laymen present at Bible Christian Conference of 1840 were total abstainers (C. Christian, op. cit., p. 220); see also, B.C. Mins., 1844, p. 15 and B. Harrison, op. cit., p. 180; cf. B.C. Mins., 1838, p. 13.

amongst Wesleyans the need for temperance was not disputed, but not all by any means were prepared to adopt the principle of total abstinence. Indeed, the early editions of the Cornish Teetotal Journals frequently aimed their exhortations at Wesleyans. In 1839, a correspondent to one of them asked, "Can it be believed that we have scarcely an itinerant Wesleyan preacher in the district enrolled in the Total Abstinence Society? - Nearly the whole of them either drink spirits, wine or ale!"²⁶ What was noticed in Cornwall was noticed throughout the Wesleyan Connexion and teetotalism became the subject of a pamphlet war.²⁷

In spite of the lack of support from Wesleyan ministers and the opposition to the teetotal cause manifested in some Wesleyan chapels, both Henry Mudge and James Teare stated their beliefs in the middle of 1841 that the situation was improving. Ironically, it was that October that the Wesleyan Conference passed three resolutions, which caused a great disturbance throughout the Connexion and especially in Cornwall. They were, firstly, that no unfermented wines were to be used in the administration of the Sacrament; secondly, that no Wesleyan chapels were to be used for the meetings of the temperance societies; and thirdly, that no preacher was to be allowed to go into another circuit to advocate teetotalism without the consent of the

26. G. Brake, op. cit., p. 3; Cornwall Teetotal Journal, March 1839.

27. Even in Cornwall itself many tracts were published e.g. Benjamin Carvosso, Drunkenness, the enemy of Britain, arrested by the hand of God in teetotalism, a sermon.... (Liskeard: Hill, 1840) and (Francis Carne), Wesleyan Methodism as it respects the Temperance Question agreeably to the writings of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M. and the rules of society with valuable selections from the work of Adam Clark, LL.D and others (Falmouth: Harris, 1839); further pamphlets survive in the B.M. in a collection entitled, Tracts on alcohol and its evil.

Superintendent Minister of the circuit to which he had been invited.²⁸

Dr. Jabez Bunting had pleaded that "the Teetotal business would not start a new controversy". The Warrenite agitation over the Theological Institution, which ultimately led to the formation of the W.M.A., was still fresh in everyone's minds. But this was to prove a vain hope, for in Cornwall, and particularly at St. Ives, strong feelings had been roused by the decision, so much so that a wit at the Conference enlivened proceedings with his remark that "Cornish Methodism was in a state of fermentation on the subject".²⁹

At St. Ives tension had existed for some time between Wesleyans who were teetotalers and their non-teetotal ministers. Thomas Payne, for instance, who was the Superintendent of the St. Ives circuit when teetotalism was first introduced, was sent some hemlock by a group of teetotalers. The message attached to it was that "as he persisted in taking alcoholic poison, they advised him to take the HEMLOCK, as that would do the business more effectually". A religious revival had taken place in the St. Ives circuit and the question of whether teetotalers had been a help or a hindrance in this had become another bone of contention.³⁰

The precise course of events at St. Ives after the Conference decision is not easy to determine. Both sides published rival accounts. It seems that the minister despatched to the circuit, Rev. Johnathan Turner, had been given clear instructions that the Conference decisions were to be implemented and it appears that he

28. Cornwall Teetotal Journal, March, September, October 1841.

29. G. Brake, op. cit., p. 4; T. Shaw, A History of Cornish Methodism, p. 80.

30. M.S. Edwards, 'The Teetotal Wesleyan Methodists', Proc. of the W.H.S., 33, Nos. 3-4 (1961), p. 64; Cornwall Teetotal Journal, May 1839.

needed little encouragement to do this.³¹

Going to chapel on 19th September 1841, Turner was annoyed at seeing notices for teetotal meetings to be held in the chapel posted without his knowledge. After the sermon, he therefore announced that the teetotal meeting would not be held. Immediately, a large portion of the congregation stood up to leave. Turner then offered to discuss the question the following day. At this meeting tempers were lost. William Docton, the secretary of the teetotal society, alleged that the Conference decisions had been swayed by brewers and Turner was angered by Docton's impertinence in making such remarks.

Turner eventually offered the teetotalers the use of the chapel on certain conditions. In return, he offered his influence in raising money for a Temperance Hall. This offer was withdrawn when Docton made it clear that the ordering of a barrel of beer to be delivered to his home by the second minister in the circuit was going to be discussed at the next teetotal meeting.

When the teetotalers met together, they decided that instead of building a Temperance Hall they would build a chapel. Subscriptions of over £100. were immediately

31. see Jonathan Turner, Teetotalism illustrated by facts; including a brief view of teetotal sayings and doings in St. Ives and the West of Cornwall (London: 1842); cf. (John Sherer), A Vindication of the case of the Teetotal Wesleyan Methodists of St. Ives, Cornwall, with an incidental exposure of the domination of the Wesleyan priesthood (Penzance: Vibert, 1842), (John Sherer), A Lancet for a knife, or Jonathan Turner, Wesleyan minister, bled to death (Penzance: Paddy, 1843) and Thomas S. Burgan. The practicality and necessity of teetotalism shewn by the sayings and doings of the teetotalers of St. Ives and the West of Cornwall, intended as a defence against the attacks of the Rev. J. Turner's tract (Penzance: Paddy, 1843); the account is based on a synthesis of these sources.

forthcoming. However, they also offered terms of agreement to Turner, which Turner rejected on the grounds that their demands went against Conference resolutions.

At a Quarterly Meeting held a few days later Turner argued that the teetotal principle was tantamount to "charging our Saviour with immorality". Further attempts at reconciliation were made, but the teetotalers were set upon their course of action. About 250 Wesleyans at St. Ives seceded and 150 more from the surrounding neighbourhood. In this way the Teetotal Wesleyan Methodists emerged, Wesleyan in doctrine and discipline, except in their attitude to intoxicating liquors, where the teetotal line was taken.

The agitation was not merely confined to St. Ives, but was felt throughout the whole of the West of Cornwall. A month after the St. Ives division occurred, a meeting took place in Penzance, where about one hundred Wesleyan teetotalers, including many officials in the West Cornwall circuits, discussed the St. Ives case. They expressed sympathy with their St. Ives brethren and approbation of their conduct given the circumstances. Penzance had the largest teetotal society in the county, but the Superintendent of the circuit, William Burt, managed to avert a large separation on the issue by continuing to allow the teetotalers the use of the chapels, thereby ignoring Conference decisions.^{31^a}

The three Wesleyan resolutions received much criticism in the Cornish Temperance Journals, notably from Henry Mudge, who wrote a commentary on each of them. In a sense,

31.^a P. Winskill, The Temperance Movement, ii, p.57; Cornwall Teetotal Journal, December 1841; M.S. Edwards, 'The Teetotal Wesleyan Methodists', p. 65.

the crux of the dispute, as Mudge pointed out, was the second resolution banning the use of the chapels by the teetotalers. In the towns teetotalism could be independent of the chapels, alternative buildings being available, but in many country areas the chapel was the only convenient meeting place. To Mudge, as to many other teetotalers, it seemed that the Wesleyan Conference was waging war against them. But teetotalers were not to be overawed easily. As Mudge wrote, "let no one vainly imagine that we shall give up one jot of our teetotalism".³²

The 1841 Conference resolutions and the consequent St. Ives secession give an interesting glimpse of nineteenth century Methodism. But as M.S. Edwards has commented, "The separation of 1841 was no more caused by teetotalism than the separation of 1834 by a theological institution. Behind both was the question of the Pastoral Office, with its ominous power of converting differences into divisions". The role played by the Wesleyan doctrine of the ministry is highlighted by the sub-title of the teetotaler's Vindication, which was "an incidental exposure of the domination of the Wesleyan priesthood". It is significant, too, that there had been no Warrenite split at St. Ives, while there had been one at Penzance.³³

Turner had no doubt on this point. He argued,

The key to their final decision is the fact that the RINGLEADERS of this teetotal FACTION are thorough-paced RADICALS and had long been disaffected to the institutions of Wesleyan Methodism. It is well known that several of them would have made a separation when Dr. Warren visited St. Ives, had it been in their power, and that they had ever since been preparing to carry their purposes into effect the first opportunity that might occur.

Teetotalism was the "stalking horse" behind which they achieved their goal of separation.³⁴

32. Cornwall Teetotal Journal, November 1841.

33. M.S. Edwards, 'The Teetotal Wesleyan Methodists', p.70.

34. J. Turner, op. cit., p. 31.

It is true that some of the teetotal leaders were "radicals" in a political sense. The outstanding example of this was William Docton, the Wesleyan tailor and original secretary of the total abstinence society. He was often to be found on the hustings in support of radical candidates at elections. Yet it must be remembered that the secessionists did not decide merely to join the W.M.A., but remained Wesleyans. Elsewhere in the county, some did leave the Connexion for the Association simply because of the 1841 resolutions.³⁵

Even more teetotalers decided to remain within Wesleyanism. Henry Mudge gave an explanation for this. Defending his decision to remain a Wesleyan, he wrote,

I find the doctrines they preach profitable for my instruction in Righteousness; and the discipline they exercise useful for my restraint and the field of labour opened up by membership affording much room for employment, while I have also enjoyed liberty of speech and have been able to follow the dictates of my own conscience.³⁶

Many Cornish Wesleyans agreed with him.

The St. Ives case also illustrates one of the greatest paradoxes of the temperance movement, namely its intemperate advocacy. Turner's writings are a prime example of the viciousness of phrase employed by opponents of teetotalism. He described Docton as "this depraved and malignant scribbler" and his conduct "such a compound of egotism, pride, obstinacy, radicalism, impertinence, overbearing dogmatism, and coxcumbry as I never before witnessed". It is not perhaps so surprising therefore that when Turner's pamphlet reached Newlyn West, it was resolved that "the town crier, in the absence of the hangman, should burn the product of his brainless skull", a resolution both carried and put into effect.³⁷

35. Cornwall and Devon Temperance Journal, June 1847.

36. Ibid., April 1847.

37. J. Turner. op. cit., pp. 27-28; Cornwall Temperance Journal, January 1843.

The intemperance of teetotaler's advocacy of their cause was equally undeniable. Mudge, when commenting on the Conference resolutions, was unable to deny the allegation that unbecoming things had been said at teetotal meetings held in the chapels. The Bible Christian minutes, after praising the work of temperance societies, when on to say,

We would also caution those of our friends who may advocate the cause of Temperance to guard against intemperate expression; as we fear that some of the arguments which have been employed in support of total abstinence, are more likely to injure than to promote its interests.³⁸

Teetotalers and their opponents utilised many arguments to justify their cause. The basic argument of the "moderationist" was expressed in a letter to the Royal Cornwall Gazette. A correspondent wrote, "In the lawful use of these gifts which God has bestowed upon us there is no evil; but only in the abuse or excess. He giveth us all things richly to enjoy".³⁹

Against this was the view expressed by William Mewton, a temperance supporter who became a teetotaler. To his mind the question was whether teetotalism or temperance was the better remedy for drunkenness. Observation had led him to conclude that teetotalism worked and temperance did not. In his view, although the Bible did not prohibit drink, expediency demanded it.⁴⁰

Three years later, Mewton had changed his mind. His main argument against teetotalism was that it was being placed above the Gospel. In teetotal circles, Mewton

38. Cornwall Teetotal Journal, October 1841; B.C. Mins., 1838, pp. 13-14; see also Henry Mudge, The Fruits of Teetotalism: a discourse on Philippians 4: 8 (Falmouth: 1839).

39. R.C.G., 7 December 1838.

40. Cornwall Teetotal Journal, April 1839; see also, William Mewton, Teetotalism: an essay on the impropriety of making and using intoxicating liquors in which the subject is fully discussed morally and physically on the grounds of reason and scripture (Falmouth: Harris, 1839).

was anathematized, but his objections were similar to those of Turner. Turner was not arguing against total abstinence itself. Indeed, in some cases he believed it to be justifiable. But his complaint was against the manner in which the teetotal cause was advocated, and the attacks made on Christians and ministers solely because they refused to become teetotalers.⁴¹

Teetotalers saw their cause as a handmaid of the Gospel. The Falmouth Teetotal Advocate warned Wesleyans,

The principles we invite you to espouse are of vital importance, the awful realities of eternity are connected with it, we do not think that teetotalism itself can convert a sinner but we do say... that we deem it to be an AUXILLARY to the great cause of religious truth....

The claim was made by teetotalers that the propagation of total abstinence principles was often followed by conversions to the Christian faith.⁴²

The battle for the Bible was keenly fought out between teetotalers and moderationists. Teetotalers were sometimes charged with distorting the scriptures. They certainly devised ingenious explanations for difficult scriptural passages. For instance, the words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy on taking a little wine for his stomach, according to one teetotaler, clearly meant that Timothy was to apply the wine to the stomach outwardly, rubbing it in like a lotion.⁴³

Moderationists objected to being placed by teetotalers in the same category as drunkards. But this is where a change of emphasis can be seen in the definition of the nature of the problem. Harrison has commented, "For the moderationist, the drunkard had failed to exert

41. Cornwall Teetotal Journal, May 1842; J. Turner, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

42. Falmouth Teetotal Advocate, May, July 1838.

43. Mark G. Pearse, The Ship where Christ was Captain: Stories of Cornish Methodism (London: Epworth, 1926), pp. 16-17.

his willpower and deserved denunciation; for the teetotaler the drunkard's will had been paralysed by alcohol and he deserved sympathy. "According to the Cornwall Teetotal Journal, "Drunkenness is only the effect of a cause; drinking, however moderately, is the root of the evil and so long as this cause exists, drunkenness must follow". Hence, the moderate drinker was a prime target of teetotalers, for "though the man is better the example is worse". This helps to explain also why the battle between the two sides was so bitter.⁴⁴

After the St. Ives Case.

The Teetotal Wesleyans continued their separate existence for about twenty years. By 1842 they were said to number 600, including twenty four local preachers. The problem they faced was an inability to sustain a regular ministry. They were dependent upon unattached or visiting ministers, and it was this desire for a more settled ministry which led some of the Teetotal Wesleyans to join the W.M.A. in 1848, with the explicit provision that the only itinerants appointed to their circuit would be total abstainers. In 1860, facing disintegration, the Hayle and Penzance societies joined the U.M.F.C., while those at Penzance joined the M.N.C. This was surprising as the M.N.C. was less committed to teetotalism than the Free Methodists, but the same conditions were made concerning ministers.⁴⁵

Within the Wesleyan Connexion, the number of teetotalers slowly increased as the century progressed. Hostility between those who were total abstainers and those who were not flared up every now and again. In 1847, for instance, the Cornwall District Synod

44. B. Harrison, op. cit., p. 115; Cornwall Teetotal Journal, March 1839; H. Mudge, The Fruits of Teetotalism, Appx.

45. M.S. Edwards, 'The Teetotal Wesleyan Methodists', p. 70.

blamed the prejudicial effect of teetotalism for the decline in members during the year. That same year Cornish Wesleyan teetotalers were upset by the duplicity exercised at the Connexional Kingswood School, where, what was once entered clearly in the accounts as expenditure upon malt and hops, became misleadingly classified as "provisions".⁴⁶

In 1848 the Wesleyan Total Abstinence Union was formed. The pledge was to total abstinence and included a promise not to withdraw from the Connexion over the teetotal issue. In 1868 the Methodist Temperance Magazine was founded and by the following year had 80,000 monthly readers. A nucleus of leading Wesleyan ministers promoted the teetotal cause throughout the Connexion and thus teetotalism became firmly established at all levels of Wesleyanism.⁴⁷

The 1870's saw the formation of adult temperance societies in the circuits and of Bands of Hope linked to Sunday Schools in Wesleyanism. Whilst for the Band of Hope total abstinence was central, in the adult societies there were two pledges. Either one agreed to abstain from all intoxicating liquors as beverages, or one merely agreed to exert oneself in seeking to suppress intemperance. The Conference believed that the most effective temperance work required the co-operation of abstainers and non-abstainers. It was not until 1892 that adult societies could be formed on the total abstinence pledge alone.⁴⁸

It was argued that Sunday School scholars were not becoming members of the Connexion largely because of the prevailing drinking customs. The Bands of Hope were to be

46. Wes. Meth. Mins (Cornwall Dist.), May 1847; Cornwall Temperance Journal, April 1847.

47. Cornwall and Devon Temperance Journal, January 1848; G. Brake, op. cit., p. 16.

48. M.M., 1873, p. 193, 1877, p. 454; G. Brake, op. cit., pp. 19 ff.

a "barrier" to these customs and had as kindred objects regular chapel attendance and the inculcation of moral duties. It was hoped that the Bands of Hope would serve as a counter attraction to public houses, but the aim was primarily evangelistic.⁴⁹

Temperance societies faced a serious problem of overlapping. Methodist Temperance Secretaries frequently complained that the temperance statistics did not reflect the true strength of temperance feeling. This may have owed something to exaggeration on their part, but it was more likely, as the reports themselves hinted, that many of the leading Methodist teetotalers were already committed to other temperance organisations. The multiplicity of temperance societies with their slightly different aims may have weakened the temperance movement by dissipating its energy. Aspirations that the various groups would unite were often voiced, but came to nothing.⁵⁰

The strength of teetotalism among Bible Christians was evident from the earliest days. But it was only in 1882 that they formed their own denominational society. The pledge for their adult societies was much broader than that of the Wesleyans, including not only total abstinence, but also to discountenance the use and sale of intoxicating liquors. For the Bible Christians support for teetotalism was "based on Gospel principles and promoted by Gospel motives". Other non-Wesleyan Methodists shared this concern and interest in temperance matters.⁵¹

In the second half of the century the Church of England also established its own Temperance Society, (C.E.T.S.). A branch of this was formed in the Truro Diocese in 1877. The

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49. M.M., 1877, pp.418, 515ff.; G. Brake, op. cit., pp 21-22.
 50. M.M., 1884, pp.375-6; Devon and Cornwall Temperance Journal, 1869, p. 25.
 51. B.C. Mins., 1882, pp. 47-49, 1884, p. 42: the first B.C. Temperance Society had been founded as early as 1837.

basis of the Society was "Union and co-operation on equal terms between those who use and those who abstain from intoxicating drinks".⁵²

It seems that, in the Truro Diocese at least, C.E.T.S. was never very strong. The Bishop expressed his fear that sometimes "the mere existence of Diocesan organisation is regarded as a substitute for real earnest effort". He named C.E.T.S. as one example of this. At the 1889 Diocesan Conference the temperance report echoed this view, commencing "that the support accorded was not commensurate with the importance and needs of the cause".⁵³

In the Truro Diocese, C.E.T.S. was largely run under upper class patronage. It was also a temperance as opposed to a teetotal society. Just as at the beginning unfavourable comparisons were made between non-Wesleyan support for teetotalism and Wesleyan opposition, the distinction to be made at this stage was between Nonconformist and Anglican. The teetotal cause was strongest in the ranks of the Bible Christians, increasing in strength amongst the Wesleyans as the century progressed, but gaining only tepid support from Anglicans.⁵⁴

Methodist Influence on Teetotalism in Cornwall.

There is a similarity between the experiences of the early teetotal pioneers and those of the early Methodist itinerant preachers. Both faced hardship and persecution, and both showed great dedication to their task.⁵⁵ The

52. Truro Diocesan Kalendar, 1883, p. 193.

53. Ibid., 1887, p. 11, 1890, p. 236.

54. W.B., 5th September, 1878, 19 November 1885.

55. B. Harrison, op.cit., pp. 130-1.

parallel between the early teetotal movement and Methodism is not surprising, because often the leaders of the nascent total abstinence societies were Methodists.

Hence, hymns and prayers generally formed part of the teetotal meeting. At Falmouth, teetotalers organised thirty six speakers on to a "plan" and thereby systematically supplied eight places with speakers. At St. Ives, the distribution of tracts on a loan system was undertaken and open air meetings were held. These all reflect Methodist activities of the time, while at Boscastle the Bible Christian influence may be detected in "the occasionally calling into public exercise the effective eloquence of the softer sex".⁵⁶

The work of Sunday schools, Bands of Hope and Teetotal societies overlapped. They often organized festivals and processions through towns and villages. Good use was also made by them of the railways for day trips. An early, memorable excursion on the West Cornwall line was to Hayle in 1852 by the Redruth and Camborne Temperance societies. Three locomotives were employed to pull the seventy six mineral trucks which served as carriages. As they travelled, the passengers sang a specially composed song:

Happy Camborne, happy Camborne,
Where the railway is so near;
And the engine shows how water
Can accomplish more than beer.

Ironically, on the return journey the engines ran out of steam. They stopped opposite an orchard and, before the journey was continued, the teetotalers from unknown motives swarmed like locusts round the orchard leaving it bare of fruit.⁵⁷

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56. Cornwall Teetotal Journal, February 1839, April 1841; Falmouth Teetotal Advocate, June, July 1838; Cornwall and Devon Temperance Journal, July 1845.
57. Quoted in David Thomas, A Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain: I, the West Country (London: Phoenix House, 1960), p. 104.

Many of the teetotal societies had short or fluctuating histories. After the initial enthusiasm of 1838, there was a loss of impetus and direction when the moral revolution anticipated failed to happen overnight. Hence, in April 1848, a temperance advocate noted in Launceston, "In this town there was once a good society numbering more than a thousand members; but how are the mighty fallen; how is the fine gold become dim? no committee, no funds, no meetings!" He continued, "Experience confirms me in the belief that hundreds in this county have broken their pledge..."⁵⁸

It was in East Cornwall, where agriculture was the more important and where the Bible Chritisans were strongest, that teetotalism continued in any strength. Early in 1849, the East Cornwall branch of the original County Association in a rationalisation scheme united with the British Association for the Promotion of Temperance. The committee for West Cornwall was apparently no longer in existence.⁵⁹

Indeed, in some parts of Cornwall the number taking the pledge over the quarter of a century following the start of the teetotal movement exceeded the resident population. The problem was not in persuading people to take the pledge, but rather in getting them to keep it.⁶⁰ Teetotalers sought to do this not only by the activities of the teetotal societies, but also by attacking and seeking to change the drinking customs of the day which made it so hard to keep the pledge.

One of the first areas to come under teetotal scrutiny were the mines. The miners were often only able

58. Cornwall and Devon Temperance Journal, January 1844, April 1848.

59. Ibid., March, April, May 1849.

60. Devon and Cornwall Temperance Journal, November 1868.

to cash wages, which were paid in large cheques, in beershops near the mines. The teetotalers noted that no sooner did mining begin in an area than

a beershop is almost immediately opened for the very purpose of inducing the honest but thoughtless miner to expend his money...to draw these unsuspecting poor fellows into these haunts of vice, frequently at the back of the house is a kayle alley, and quoits; where they may also engage at pitch and toss, wrestling or other gamblings.

Against these snares, teetotalism was recommended on the simple grounds of being a means of saving money. The chapel was suggested as an alternative to leisure hours spent in the beershop.⁶¹

Teetotalers often attacked popular customs which involved drinking. Thomas Tregaskis, the Bible Christian miller, believed the Padstow Hobby Horse ceremony was merely an excuse for drunkenness. He therefore offered to supply the people of Padstow with a bullock for seven successive years, provided the Hobby Horse ceremony was given up. As good as his word, on the appointed day he drove a bullock into the town, only to be driven out again by a crowd who left no doubt as to which they preferred.⁶²

In some areas where they sought change, there was a coincidence of interest between chapel folk and teetotalers. The rites of passage had become opportunities for indulging in alcoholic festivities, sometimes to excess. Hence, the Marazion total abstinence society ensured that their weddings, christenings and funerals were teetotal. At Gweek, one Methodist couple went further still, including in their marriage vows the pledge to be teetotal forever.⁶³

There were other ways in which temperance reformers tried to influence the society in which they lived. One

61. H. Douch, op. cit., pp.105-6; Cornwall Teetotal Journal, August 1839 (Supplement).

62. T. Shaw, A History of Cornish Methodism, p.93

63. Cornwall Teetotal Journal, January, July 1840.

of the most popular of these was the establishment of teetotal coffee houses and temperance hotels. Less popular perhaps were teetotal doctors who sought to treat ailments without recourse to the widespread practice of prescribing alcohol. Also allied with the teetotal societies were local friendly societies, like the Independent Order of Rechabites. In Cornwall there were even attempts to organise a Teetotal Building Society.⁶⁴

As the century progressed, other forms of counter attraction to the public house developed. Wealthy philanthropists, like John Passmore Edwards, established numerous public institutions,⁶⁵ and local government also provided increasing facilities. These did much to increase alternative cultural and recreational activities in society.

For all their effort it does not seem at first sight that the teetotalers achieved much. Changes were slow in coming and hard to document. But what they were able to do was to awaken people's consciences to the problems and excesses surrounding alcohol, and to make it easier for a teetotaler to survive. They showed, contrary to popular opinion at the time, that a teetotal existence was feasible. Teetotalism, like chapel, became a way of life, and the two tended to be complementary.

Temperance as a Political Lobby.

There has always been a close connexion between the temperance movement and legislation, because of the importance of licensing. The Beerhouse Act of 1830, for instance, was responsible, in part at least for the teetotal reaction. There was, too, in the eyes of

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64. Falmouth Teetotal Advocate, May, June 1838; Cornwall Teetotal Journal, August 1839, January 1841; Cornwall and Devon Temperance Journal, July, August 1845, May 1847.
65. see John Passmore Edwards, A Few Footprints (London: Watts, 1906), p. 72.

magistrates and teetotalers a link between drink and crime. From the outset temperance reformers were active at the Licensing sessions. Cornish teetotalers argued the need for a stricter licensing system and also for a reduction in the number of licensed houses in the county, adding to this a demand for the vigorous enforcement of the law.⁶⁶

The original temperance societies were appalled by drunkenness at elections. Hence, following the 1835 contest, the Bodmin Temperance Society appointed a committee to investigate the best means of avoiding drunkenness at elections. It was estimated that at this last election £4,000 had been spent in the borough.

in cramming the maws and soaking the sides of gourmands and sots. It is notorious that many electors were brought to the poll in a state of beastly intoxication... Many respectable females unable to resist the temptation were seen lying about the streets inebriated and some of them almost in a state of nudity. The disgraceful scenes witnessed here... infinitely surpass any of those which so signalled the pot-walloping constituencies in this county in the by-gone days of Borough-mongering.

Various recommendations were made in order to prevent a repeat performance at the next election.⁶⁷

The aims of teetotalers at this stage were to purify elections of drunkenness and to enable teetotalers to survive an election with their pledges intact. They were not promoting particular policies. Indeed, the early teetotalers almost eschewed politics completely. Mudge, writing in 1838, had warned, "Care must be taken not to mix teetotalism with politics and the duties attached to

66. Cornwall Teetotal Journal, March, October 1839, March 1840; Cornwall and Devon Temperance Journal, August 1848 March 1849.

67. Cornish Guardian, 23, January 1835; R.C.G., 7 March 1835

our station in life must be prudently discharged".⁶⁸
 It was perhaps with the desire to clean up local politics that a number of leading teetotalers successfully entered municipal elections.⁶⁹

W.G. Peace, a Cornish temperance agent, writing on the licensing laws, observed,

To accomplish the great objects of the Temperance Reformation, it is necessary that an intelligent, a deep and universal conviction of the immoral nature, hurtful tendency and destructive effects of the traffic in strong drink and the certain iniquity of licensing men to injure and destroy their fellow men should be produced.⁷⁰

This he and his fellow teetotal advocates laboured to do. But once the emphasis was shifted from drunkenness itself as the main problem to the trade in drink, and when it became apparent that the "bacchanalian fortresses" were stronger than the initial enthusiasm of the teetotalers, it was only a short step to turn to parliament for legislation to secure the abolition of the drink traffic.

In 1851 the state of Maine introduced prohibition. From the United States the idea travelled to Britian where it led in 1853 to the formation of the United Kingdom Alliance. Initially its aim was to encourage unity in the temperance ranks, crusading for prohibition of the liquor traffic on the grounds that it was morally wrong for the state either to protect or to regulate such a harmful trade. From 1857 onwards, it focussed attention on what was called the Permissive Bill. This Bill gave to the ratepayers of a locality the power to ban the sale of intoxicating liquors, provided that two thirds of the ratepayers desired this. The details of

68. Western Temperance Luminary, December 1838.

69. e.g., Mudge was Mayor of Bodmin and Docton became Mayor of St. Ives, while Richard Hingston and his son, Andrew, both Wesleyans, served as Mayor of Liskeard.

70. Cornwall and Devon Temperance Journal, January 1847.

the Bill were flexible, since what was important was the principle of prohibition. To many teetotalers the Permissive Bill was a symbolic rallying point.

It was from this time onwards that teetotalers in Cornwall, as in the country at large, began to organise themselves into a political pressure group. Hence, in the 1857 election teetotalers were active in some of the Cornish seats. Before the East Cornwall contest, for instance, Dr. Mudge gave notice in the local press of two test questions he proposed to ask the candidates on prohibition. In effect, it was merely a publicity stunt, as both candidates were returned unopposed. Similar test questions were posed at Helston.⁷¹

Mudge had also been active in his own town of Bodmin. The teetotalers had met together to decide on their tactics. All four candidates for the borough's two seats were questioned. The Alliance News declared itself pleased with the election results as the two candidates returned both favoured an inquiry into the drink traffic. What it did not say, however, was that all four candidates had given the same answer to that question. Mudge had tried to organise the temperance vote. He estimated that seventy out of the 390 electors were favourable to the Maine Law, but confessed, "It cannot be said that they are yet so far on as to be prepared to sacrifice all else to this point".⁷²

By 1859 the temperance issue had become more widespread. The Alliance agent for Devon and Cornwall, Rev. S. Annear, issued a circular to all U.K.A. friends containing a test question on the Permissive Bill to ask parliamentary candidates. Annear actively sought to raise interest in the measure and to galvanise its

71. W.B., 27 March, 3 April 1857; Alliance News, 28 March, 11 April 1857; Alliance News was the journal of the United Kingdom Alliance (U.K.A.).

72. Alliance News, 23 April 1857; cf: W.B., 3 April 1857.

supporters into action.⁷³

At Penryn and Falmouth the temperance forces marshalled behind the Liberal candidates, Gurney and Baring. Gurney, a Quaker, was said to be a generous Alliance supporter. Baring, however, refused on principle to be pledged, but declared himself to be an opponent of the drink trade, to whom he attributed an election defeat earlier in his career. The Conservative candidates had the backing of the publicans, giving rise to allegations of corruption and being in itself a justification of temperance opposition. Hence, the Alliance News was jubilant that the Liberals won. The willingness of the teetotalers to vote for Baring, who had not in fact fulfilled their conditions, illustrates the problems encountered in organising a bloc of temperance votes, when many were already inclined towards the Liberals.⁷⁴

Not all Liberal candidates, however, were friendly towards the Permissive Bill, even when standing in places where the temperance vote was believed to be strong. At St. Ives in 1859, for instance, the Liberal candidate, Geissler, declared that he was unable to vote for the Bill as it went against the principles of free trade. This led to an altercation with Docton, the Teetotal Wesleyan and a leading Liberal. When Geissler confessed that he was accustomed to drink wine and refused to give it up, Docton simply replied, "Then you're a Conservative". Geissler retorted. "So I am - a Conservative of that at all events".⁷⁵

The most controversial fight of the 1865 election took place at Helston. The Conservative candidate, Major

73. Alliance News, 16 April 1859.

74. Ibid., 23 April, 14 May 1859.

75. R.C.G., 6 May 1859.

Grylls, had declared himself against the Permissive Bill, but the Liberal, Adolphus Young, was a brewer who favoured it. It was reported that at the Star Hotel, where Young had his committee rooms, free beer was being distributed day and night. This was understandable from a brewer, but not, it was argued, from a supporter of the Permissive Bill.⁷⁶

Young won the contest by a mere ten votes. Grylls petitioned against the result. Among other claims, it was alleged that drunkenness was rife at the election, that drunkards had been brought to the poll and opponents detained in public houses. It was even rumoured that there were cases of attempted abduction and the use of laudanum. Young was unseated. His opponents had succeeded in proving one instance of bribery by Young's agent, though Young apparently pleaded guilty to this as his counsel had informed him that they were unable to defend the charge of treating.⁷⁷

Although many of the allegations were unsubstantiated, the behaviour of the teetotalers was odd. It becomes more understandable when one examines other issues in the contest, notably franchise reform. In many cases, temperance enthusiasts were not monomaniacal. It was also one of the weaknesses of temperance political campaigns that in General Elections the issue of temperance was easily pushed to one side by more important national questions. This happened in 1865 with schemes for franchise reform and again in 1868 with Gladstone's policy of disestablishing the Church in Ireland.

In spite of the fact that the majority of candidates favouring temperance reforms belonged to the

76. R.C.G., 7 July 1865.

77. R.C.G., 21 July 1865; W.B., 20 April 1866.

Liberal Party, in Cornwall and nationally, there was an attempt by temperance reformers not to commit themselves to one political party. In 1868, therefore, the Devon and Cornwall Temperance Journal stated,

In these columns we have nothing to do with either Liberalism or Conservatism as such... We are all at one in believing that no opportunity should be lost to impress the candidates for electoral honours with the importance of Temperance legislation and in particular of the Permissive Bill... other things being equal those who most heartily identify themselves with our convictions... have the highest claim to our support.⁷⁸

It was easier for teetotalers to be heard at a by election and evidence of teetotal activity can be seen in the contest at Liskeard in 1869. There were two Liberal candidates for the seat. At the nominations, the proposers of Edward Horsman alleged that his opponent, Sir Francis Lycett originally held no view on the Permissive Bill, but had now become a keen supporter of it. To Horsman, the eventual winner, Lycett's conversion was an example of the rapid progress of the education question. The leader of the local temperance forces voted for Lycett, but his party was divided, some mistrusting the authenticity of Lycett's views, while others regarded it with the eye of faith. However, almost with exception the licensed v~~it~~tuallers and beehouse keepers voted for Horsman. Lycett had thus alienated the publicans without securing the whole temperance vote.⁷⁹

This also happened in the Truro by election of 1871, when Bruce's first Licensing Bill was before the House of Commons and therefore a key issue. This Bill

78. Devon and Cornwall Temperance Journal, 1868, p. 129.

79. W.E., 6, 13 May 1869; see above, p. 114.

was more sweeping than the measure eventually passed and provoked strong opposition from the drink trade because of its clauses restricting licenses and increasing inspection. The Liberal candidate sought a compromise on the question, but the Conservative made it clear that he was against the Permissive Bill and Bruce's Licensing Bill. The Tory won easily. The West Briton believed that the largeness of the Liberal defeat to be partly attributable to the opposition of the drink trade. Once again, the temperance issue proved capable of producing a stronger reaction against the reformers than they were able to muster themselves.⁸⁰

Temperance was also prominent as an issue in another by election at St. Ives soon after the 1874 General Election. The Liberal candidate was the Wesleyan, Sir Francis Lycett. This time there were no doubts over his commitment to the temperance cause. He had the support of William Docton, who proposed his nomination, and J.P. Uran, an Alliance agent. The candidates' views on temperance were clearly different. While Lycett declared himself in favour of the Second Reading of the Alliance Bill, C.T. Praed, the Conservative, was against it.⁸¹

In spite of an apparent majority of pledges, Lycett lost and immediately protested. His election petition included ninety six charges, seventy of which were alleged cases of treating. Praed was said to have indulged in a widespread policy of "open houses". The occurrence of treating was substantiated and the election declared void. The West Briton considered the evidence to be such that had not Praed's counsel thrown up the case as indefensible so early, Praed would not have been allowed to stand again. As it was, he did stand and again won.⁸²

80. B. Harrison, op. cit., pp. 262ff.; W.B., 7, 14 July 1871; 58 out of 60 publicans opposed the Liberal candidate.

81. W.B., 17, 24, 31 December 1874.

82. R.C.G., 20 February 1875; W.B., 25 February, 11 March 1875; see above, p. 115.

At Liskeard there was a strong leadership link between temperance supporters and Wesleyans. Men like J.C. Isaac and Dr. Andrew Hingston were keen teetotalers and leading Wesleyans. It was from this group that Edward Horsman, who had defeated Lycett in 1869, faced continuing opposition. Hence, a few days before the 1874 General Election, some of these dissident Liberals selected L.H. Courtney as their own candidate. Oddly, enough Courtney did not believe in the Permissive Bill. Nevertheless, he gained the temperance vote, while Horsman retained the allegiance of the borough's licensed victuallers, including the Wesleyan brewer, Daniel Venning. Horsman held on to the seat by five votes.⁸³

In 1876, on Horsman's death Courtney returned to Liskeard to contest the seat against another Liberal, Lt. Col. Sterling. Both were against the Permissive Bill, but Courtney again had the support of the temperance lobby and won quite easily. It emerged in the Alliance News that there had been some attempt at organising a temperance bloc of voters at the election. It was said that out of 150 temperance voters, a number had abstained because of the candidates' attitudes to the Permissive Bill.⁸⁴

The Liskeard correspondent to the Alliance News argued afterwards, that temperance reformers needed to agree upon their policy beforehand and where necessary to withhold their vote, even though this often caused annoyance and division. In fact, as Hamer has pointed out, this contest is an example of how the policy of abstention increasingly divided Liberal temperance reformers. It highlights again the dilemma facing

83. W.D.M., 30 January, 6 February 1874; W.M.N., 2 February 1874; see also De. Hamer, The Politics of Electoral Pressure, pp. 186-7.

84. Alliance News, 30 December 1876; W.E., 28 December 1876; according to the former there were 12 abstentions, while the latter stated that there were only 5.

Liberal temperance enthusiasts, when a candidate they may admire as a Liberal is rather weak on the temperance issue.⁸⁵

From 1864 onwards, Sir Wilfred Lawson had regularly attempted to pass the Permissive Bill through the House of Commons, without success. In 1878 there was a change of strategy. Instead of the Bill, Lawson tabled a "local option" resolution. This called upon the Government to introduce a measure granting to the localities powers to deal with the licensing question. Local option was a more flexible approach to the question than the all or nothing veto and, as a basis for temperance legislation, gained more support.⁸⁶

The greater freedom Lawson's local option resolution allowed is illustrated by the conduct of the Bodmin M.P., Hon. E.F. Leveson-Gower. He told his constituents in 1880,

They knew that formerly he could not vote for the Permissive Bill, but there had since been a sort of compromise on that question. Sir Wilfred Lawson had consented to be content with a Resolution offering the principle of the ratepayers having control with regard to licenses of the public houses, and it gave him great pleasure to be able to vote for that, because he was anxious to promote the cause of temperance.

Gower won his fifth election for the borough. On each occasion he had successfully walked a tightrope, satisfying the teetotalers without unduly committing himself.⁸⁷

A year before the 1880 election, the East Cornwall Temperance Electoral Association was formed, seeking to co-ordinate temperance electoral action. It adopted a pledge which omitted a direct reference to the Permissive

85. Alliance News, 6 January 1877; D. Hamer, op. cit., p. 202.

86. D. Hamer, op. cit., p. 223; B. Harrison, op. cit., p. 198.

87. W.B., 25 March 1880.

Bill, in order to maximise temperance forces. When the election occurred, candidates were questioned and their answers scrutinised, particularly in the East Cornwall division.⁸⁸

Here, the Electoral Association declared the views of the Liberal candidate, T.C.A. Robartes, satisfactory, while those of the Conservative, John Tremayne, were not considered so. At this stage they were the only two candidates for the two seats, but nonetheless a resolution was passed to the effect that, if there were to be a contest, the Association's supporters would abstain from voting for Tremayne. Second candidates were eventually found. The Conservative, Digby Collins, emphatically stated his opposition to what he termed the suppression of drink. The Liberal, W.C. Borlase, like Robartes, supported local option. The two Liberals were given wholehearted temperance backing. They were also both elected.⁸⁹

The 1880 election results not only illustrate Liberal strength in Cornwall, - ten Liberals and only three Tories were returned - but they also show the strength of temperance support. Nine M.P.s favoured local option. Only four opposed it. However, behind those figures of support there were different degrees of commitment. Looking at party allegiance, the association of temperance with Liberalism was almost complete. The nine local option supporters were all Liberals. Its opponents were the three Conservatives and Courtney, who described Lawson's resolution as a trap. Courtney was a thorn in the flesh to temperance enthusiasts, especially considering that they had voted for him. But with a Liberal victory at the polls in 1880, the new Parliament accepted Lawson's local option resolution for the first time.⁹⁰

88. D. Hamer, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-16.

89. Alliance News, 3, 17 March 1880; R.C.G., 26 March 1880.

90. Alliance News, 17 April 1880; D. Hamer, *op.cit.*, p. 223.

The Cornwall Sunday Closing Movement.

One cause which was particularly strong in Cornwall was opposition to the opening of public houses on Sundays. As Bebbington has commented, "The question successfully yoked the newer temperance attitudes with the entrenched Evangelical sabbatarianism of mid-century, and so drew a considerable volume of petitions from Wesleyans...." Indeed, this was one aspect of the temperance movement in which the Wesleyans were unmatched in their zeal.⁹¹

Sunday closing had already been enacted in Scotland and Ireland, and in 1881 in Wales. As well as for the whole of England, there were attempts to persuade Parliament to allow it for individual counties and Cornwall was one of these. In 1881, a Sunday Closing Association for Cornwall had been formed, which combined aristocratic and Anglican patronage with the zeal and numbers of Cornish Nonconformists.⁹²

A Private Member's Bill was first introduced to Parliament in March 1882 by the Cornish Liberal M.P., A.P. Vivian. It was the same Bill as the one which had passed for Wales and sought to close all licensed premises in Cornwall, except railway refreshment rooms. However, the Second Reading was delayed until August, because of the opposition of Warton, a Conservative M.P. and inveterate opponent of temperance legislation, in collusion with an Irish Nationalist M.P. called Callan.⁹³

In the Second Reading, Vivian dwelt on the extent of support for the proposed Bill. There was a petition

91. D. Bebbington, 'The Nonconformist Conscience', p. 61; B. Harrison, op. cit., p. 181.

92. George B. Wilson, Alcohol and the Nation: a contribution to the study of the liquor problem in the United Kingdom from 1800 to 1935 (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1940), p.170; see C.R.O. DPPV (290) 24 and 29 for a detailed account of the Cornwall Sunday Closing Movement, on which much of the following is based.

93 see W.B., 30 March 1882 for further details of this.

for it containing the names of 100,000 inhabitants of the county over the age of sixteen. All the Mayors in the county, with one exception, supported the Bill, as did eleven of the county's thirteen M.P.s. As Vivian put it, "Without doubt, this matter has been taken up by every class throughout the county, without distinction of politics or religion". Although it passed the Second Reading, the Bill was lost through lack of parliamentary time.⁹⁴

In the next session, in February 1883, the Cornwall Sunday Closing Bill was again proposed. At Gladstone's suggestion, it was introduced in the House of Lords by the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe. The Marquis of Salisbury, opposing, shrewdly commented of the Bill's supporters, that their action was like "the taking down brick by brick of a wall which you are not strong enough to knock down at once, and that they hope to extend this to the whole of England". When it came to the vote, the result was a tie, which meant that the Bill was lost.⁹⁵

In May 1884, the Bill was again before the Commons. Vivian once more reiterated the extent of support in Cornwall for the measure. A rival petition of the Victuallers was discredited. A test of parts of it had revealed widespread forgeries. But for all the evidence brought forward the Bill was still talked out. It re-surfaced a few days later in the House of Lords. In spite of the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bill was lost yet again. This was the last occasion on which it made any serious progress.⁹⁶

Although in parliamentary terms this Bill was a minor

94. Hansard, 3rd S., vol., 273, cc. 1650, 1667.

95. Ibid., 3rd S., vol. 282, cc. 917, 921-2, 925.

96. Ibid., 3rd S., vol. 288, cc. 383-7, 393, vol. 289, cc. 567-70, 579.

episode, it does illustrate some interesting points about the temperance movement and politics. It shows the weakness of even united temperance efforts in seeking legislative change. With the full backing of the churches. Nonconformist and Anglican, and in a House of Commons with a Liberal majority, the Bill was still unable to gain acceptance. With the Government already pressed for time, it was not too difficult for Warton to block a Private Member's Bill.

The Bill was undoubtedly popular in Cornwall. The Victualler's petition highlighted the paucity of opposition to it. Salisbury, however, was right in seeing in it the "thin end of the wedge". For the supporters of Sunday closing this was one step towards achieving a national goal and it therefore brought into opposition two rival forces which were not really concerned with the situation in Cornwall.

The purpose of the Bill was not one that its advocates clearly defined. It was not primarily seeking to reduce drunkenness for there was precious little of that on Sundays in Cornwall anyway. There were from 1879 to 1881 only thirty two arrests for drunkenness on Cornish Sundays and only fourteen of these were Cornish residents. The Bill's opponents argued with Lord Bramwell that "if the people of Cornwall really wanted the public houses to close on Sundays, they simply had to stop attending them".⁹⁷

In Cornwall at meetings in support of the Bill arguments in its favour were numerous. At one of these W.H. Solomon, the Wesleyan Mayor of Falmouth, declared

97. Ibid., 3rd S., vol. 273, c. 1661, vol. 289, cc. 571-2.

that the opening of public houses on the Sabbath was antagonistic to the work of the churches and the Sunday Schools. At another meeting, Truro's Wesleyan Mayor voiced the feelings of many when he remarked, "He could not see why one class of traders should be protected by law in carrying on business on the Sabbath whilst other traders were not allowed to do so". Another Wesleyan spoke in terms of liberating the publican and his family.⁹⁸

For Wesleyans, however, the basic motive for seeking Sunday closing was concern for the sanctity of the Sabbath. But therein lay the main problem facing the supporters of the Bill. Their action stemmed from a conviction that Sunday was the Lord's Day and that the fourth commandment was still relevant and binding.⁹⁹ But many people did not share this view, and hence the justification of the Bill in Parliament and elsewhere on the grounds of its empirical benefits or of majority rule, rather than as a moral imperative. The problem was how to justify God's commands to those who deny the authenticity and authority of those commands. It was a problem they did not solve.

An indirect consequence of the Cornwall Sunday closing movement was to give a new impetus to the temperance movement. The Rev. S. Wilkes of Falmouth recalled, "The Cornwall Blue Ribbon Union is the outcome of the agitation for the Sunday Closing Bill". A campaign was organised throughout the county from January 8th to May 2nd 1883. All together 332 meetings were held with an aggregate attendance of 168,000 people. A total of 31,700 people "donned the blue", a blue ribbon being the badge of abstinence, 17,100

98. W.M.N., 6 March 1880; W.B., 12 February 1883.

99. M.M., 1868, p. 404.

of whom were adults.¹⁰⁰

This mission clearly demonstrated once again the connexion between temperance and religion. The East Cornwall Blue Ribbon Gazette wrote of the basis of the work,

If God is to bless our endeavours, all real Christians will agree that the promotion of His glory must be our first consideration and that in all Temperance Addresses the Gospel should occupy such a prominent position that no loophole should be left for any critical listeners such as would justify them in asserting that Temperance was being preached as a religion.

But, like earlier temperance campaigns, after an initial burst of enthusiasm, the mission lost momentum.¹⁰¹

Conclusions

A key issue when examining the question of drink and temperance is the definition of the nature of the problem. To the authorities it was a matter of social control and drunkenness as a threat to this. But, for Methodists, from Wesley onwards, the essential problem was that of drunkenness.

It was in the third decade of the nineteenth century that rival opinions developed as to the best way of achieving this end, the abolition of drunkenness. Those who advocated moderation were faced with the antagonistic doctrine of teetotalism. These early total abstainers in their zeal captured the word "temperance" for themselves. While moderationists were perhaps more realistic in their aims, teetotalers proved that their ideas worked in practice. As the century progressed, a

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100. C.R.O., DDR (3) III:3; at Falmouth alone after a two week mission, there were said to be 642 old abstainers, 632 new and 861 juveniles. In Truro, the figures were 596 old abstainers, 742 new and 873 juveniles (H. Douch, op. cit., p. 114).
101. East Cornwall Blue Ribbon Gazette, 24 March, 19 May

further important division of opinion occurred between those who identified the problem as being the drinking of intoxicating liquors and those who confined it to the traffic in drink.

There was always in Cornwall a connexion between religion and the temperance movement. Methodists were involved in it from the earliest days. The temperance societies in the early 1830's were largely run by ministers of religion from all the denominations. The first teetotal societies to emerge in the county, while drawing support from lower ranks of society and notably lacking in ministerial backing, nonetheless included a good sprinkling of Methodists.

It was the distinction between Methodist lay support for and ministerial opposition to teetotalism that was behind the secession at St. Ives, coinciding as it did with the existing conflict within Wesleyanism over the respective roles of laymen and ministers. The temperance movement was stronger in the non-Wesleyan branches of Methodism than in the Old Connexion, but even at its strongest amongst the Bible Christians, there were still a few opposed to teetotalism. At first the Wesleyan Conference came down against total abstinence as a divisive and radical doctrine, but by the last quarters of the century teetotalism in Wesleyanism had gained considerable support. However, while legislative demands were not ignored, the aim of Wesleyan temperance societies was much wider, emphasizing what was called "moral suasion".¹⁰²

There were several reasons for Methodist support of the teetotal cause. A number of Methodists were falling away through intemperance. Teetotalism was seen as a means of preventing this. It became expedient for the

9 June 1883.

102. T. Shaw, Methodism in the Camelford and Wadebridge Circuit, p. 174; G. Brake, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

sake of others to sign the pledge. Brake has argued that there developed a link between temperance and sanctification, especially for the Bible Christians.¹⁰³ Furthermore, teetotalism was seen not only as a means of reclaiming the drunkard, but also of converting sinners. Drunkenness and public houses were seen as obstacles and rivals to the Gospel.

The temperance movement was, moreover, an expression of the Methodist social conscience and of simple humanitarianism. The narrowness of their vision has been assailed with the benefit of hindsight, but in an age of self-help, Harrison's comment on the prohibitionists is equally applicable here: they "were doing their best to relieve the miseries which surrounded them in the only way that they knew".¹⁰⁴

Concern for the young was another reason for involvement in temperance work. As Livesey put it, "It is a mercy to save a man at the eleventh hour, who has become a slave to his insatiable appetite, but it is much more so to induce such a one to abstain before the appetite is matured".¹⁰⁵ Bands of Hope, working in close connexion with Sunday Schools were the expression of this concern.

Wesleyans were slow off the mark in their connexional endorsement of teetotalism, but other churches never espoused the cause with enthusiasm. The C.E.T.S., for instance, in the Truro Diocese had little "grass roots" support and was not particularly militant in its temperance demands. But, as Brake has remarked, "In both

103. G. Brake, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

104. Brian Harrison, 'The British Prohibitionists, 1853-1872: A Biographical Analysis', International Review of Social History 15 (1970), p. 412.

105. Henry Carter, The English Temperance Movement: a study in objectives (London: Epworth, 1933) p.p. 43-44.

the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church imbibing alcohol is an acceptable custom"¹⁰⁶
Teetotalism was largely a preoccupation of Nonconformity.

Equally, there were a number of reasons why some Methodists remained aloof from the movement. To some, the teetotalers were in danger of placing teetotalism above the Gospel in importance. Others, particularly at first, were offended by the intemperance of some of the remarks of early teetotal advocates about Wesleyans and the churches. There were also those who believed that alcohol was included in the God-given gifts for man to enjoy and thus they thought it to be an interference with individual liberty to seek to stop its consumption. There were, too, a number of Methodists who simply enjoyed drinking and did not feel constrained to abandon the habit. A few were even involved with the drink trade.

The temperance movement initially made a great impact on Cornwall, and, comparatively, Cornwall became a temperance stronghold. However, in a similar way to revivals, the original enthusiasm soon waned. In a number of areas teetotalism did take root. In West Cornwall it had a great influence on the fishing ports, notably St. Ives and Penzance. In the more agricultural eastern half of the county, the temperance cause firmly entrenched itself at Bodmin and Liskeard.

The origin of the temperance movement can be explained by the problem of drunkenness. As Harrison has commented, "Extreme temperance policies were, and are, a natural response to excessive drinking". The beershops, springing up in large numbers after 1830, according to contemporary opinion exacerbated an

106. G. Brake, op. cit., p. 133.

already troublesome problem. In Cornwall in the early years of the nineteenth century the problem of drunkenness was further enhanced by the expanding mining community. Mining districts were known for their higher rates of drunkenness.¹⁰⁷ Teetotalism also appealed to some of the working classes as a means of escaping poverty. Emigration in the county also established a link between Cornwall and the United States, where prohibition originated. This may also have strengthened temperance sentiment in the county.

The role of Methodism must also be considered a key factor, especially that of the Bible Christians, in sustaining the temperance movement in the middle decades of the last century, and providing the basis of its strength in the second half of the century. Teetotalism became the "circumcision of Nonconformity". Throughout Cornwall there were temperance societies associated with the chapels and chapel folk prominent in the multifarious temperance organisations.

The lasting effects of the temperance movement are hard to ascertain. In one sense it failed. To quote Harrison, "The movement had insulated an elite from temptation; it had produced no nationwide temperance 'reformation'". It did, however, succeed in influencing and altering some of the customs of the day and ideas surrounding drink. But, above all, drunkenness came to be accepted as intolerable. In their extreme demands the teetotalers may not have been able to prise many away from their pint in the pub, but they did make the drinking of too many pints unacceptable to public opinion.¹⁰⁸

Temperance in the first half of the nineteenth

107. B. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, p. 363; House of Lords Select Committee on Intemperance, Fourth Report (1878), Appdx. R, p. 584.

108. B. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, pp. 318, 365.

century did not lead to political involvement at all. The early teetotalers had little to say on politics beyond grumbling at electoral corruption and the licensing system. Theirs, like many of the Methodists in their ranks, was a "quietistic" approach to the question, partly because many of them did not possess the vote at this stage and partly because teetotalism was seen as an alternative to political action. It was mainly through the United Kingdom Alliance that teetotalers began to look to parliament for a solution. There was some Methodist support in Cornwall for the Alliance, though there was at first no overt link between teetotalers and the political parties.

The Permissive Bill became a rallying cry for temperance reformers. Just as they had pledged themselves to total abstinence, so they sought to extract pledges from parliamentary candidates to vote for temperance measures. Alliance supporters failed to appreciate the difficulties involved in altering the status quo and did not think clearly how the Bill would work in practice. They also underestimated the electoral strength of the drink trade, which retained a commodity which could be decisive in elections and which formed an easily mobilised lobby.

In Cornwall the temperance reformers were strong enough in most seats to create a commotion. It was in some of the smaller boroughs that they were most active and ambitious. From early on Liberal candidates were more likely to identify themselves with the cause than their opponents, but tension existed between the Liberal inclination of many temperance electors and their support of the Permissive Bill. This is typified by the support they gave to Courtney at Liskeard, in spite of his limited commitment to temperance legislation. Not all Liberal teetotalers were willing to place their loyalty to the Permissive Bill above their loyalty to the

Liberal Party. This greatly weakened teetotalism as a political force.

The policy of extracting pledges from candidates was not very fruitful. Many of those pledging themselves did so simply to win the temperance vote, though perhaps believing that the Permissive Bill would be a useful starting point for legislation. The change to a local option resolution was a recognition of this. The whole process of pledge taking was in a sense an encouragement to candidates to be dishonest and deceitful.

In political terms, temperance enthusiasts in Cornwall found that it was Hobson's choice. To the extent that Methodist or other voters were influenced by the temperance issue, they would be inclined to vote Liberal. Temperance had become such an important issue that Conservative candidates, regardless of their view of the Permissive Bill, felt obliged to include in their election addresses a declaration of their abhorrence of drunkenness.

For all their effort, the legislative reward of the temperance lobby was small. The failure of the Cornwall Sunday Closing Bill, which combined temperance and sabbatarianism, Nonconformist and Anglican support, shows how difficult it was to pass even popular legislation on this subject. With the exception of Sunday Closing, Wesleyans at this stage tended to become involved with temperance legislation mainly because they were teetotalers rather than because they were Wesleyans. For Bible Christians, however, wide ranging temperance reforms were a major part of their political creed and their identification with the Liberal Party.

The creation of denominational temperance societies and Bands of Hope meant that information about the

temperance cause was being constantly brought to the attention of Methodists. They were, therefore, more likely to be sympathetic to that cause than previously. Obelkevich concluded in South Lindsey, "The Wesleyans brought the temperance cause to more people than to any other denomination, but did so less compellingly than the Primitive Methodists or the separate temperance organisations".¹⁰⁹ This was equally true in Cornwall, provided that for Primitive Methodists, one reads Bible Christians.

109. J. Obelkevich, op. cit., p. 209.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODISTS AND THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1885 IN CORNWALL

The General Election of 1885 is an appropriate date for examining the political orientations of Methodists. Some Methodist historians have argued that the predominance of support for the Liberal Party within Methodism had clearly emerged by this date.¹ Furthermore, this election was the first to be held after the extension of the franchise in 1884 and the redistribution of seats the following year. The former meant that Methodist voting strength increased considerably and the latter caused another big adjustment to the parliamentary representative of Cornwall.

Methodism and Politics.

Methodists continued to regard the franchise as a sacred trust, as did most Nonconformists at this time. The Bible Christian Annual Address in 1885, for instance, commented, "We urge you touse this trust which will be placed in your hands on the side of truth and righteousness and purity and liberty". The right to vote was one to be exercised conscientiously and for which a person was answerable to God.²

While Methodists welcomed the Reform Act, it was characteristic of the various Connexional Minutes to warn against expecting too much from political change. As the M.N.C. Conference Address put it,

While we hail this change as one demanded alike by justice and policy, let our expectation of resulting benefit be sobered by the necessary

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1. Maldwyn Edwards, Methodism and England, p. 168.
 2. see above, p. ; E.C. Mins., 1885, p. 27; see also D. Hamer, The Politics of Electoral Pressure, pp. 76. 14-15.

dependence of social well-being upon truth and righteousness. However liberal the arrangements under which men live, however full and undisputed their political power, it can be well with them only in the measure in which they fear God and keep His commandments always.³

The Address continued with what perhaps exemplifies the evangelical attitude to politics then found in Methodism. It commented, "All human interests are worthy of care, but those which are religious and spiritual demand supreme solicitude. Political and social improvements are to be valued chiefly as they tend to promote the Salvation of men".⁴

It is possible by examining the pronouncements of the different Methodist Conferences and Connexional Magazines to distil a common set of Methodist attitudes to the political issues of the day.⁵ Methodists were still agreed that the pulpit was not the place from which to engage in party politics. The "no politics" convention remained in force.

The Methodist attitude to peace was summed up in the motto "Peace at a proper price". It was not the pacifist position of peace at any price, but rather a strong resolution not to be involved in "unrighteous" wars. This statement was declared in the context of international troubles developing in Afganistan, Egypt and Russia.⁶

Support for the Social Purity movement was strong amongst Methodists. This movement had as its target the Contagious Diseases Acts. The campaign against these Acts drew into its ranks many Christians, particularly Quakers.

3. M.N.C. Mins., 1885, p.58.

4. Ibid, p.58; see also P.M. Mag., 1885, pp. 64, 189,704; U.M.F.C. Mag., 1885; pp. 801-2, M.M., 1885, p. 185.

5. see, for instance, M.T., 5 November 1885; cf. B.C. Mag., 1885, pp. 468-71.

6. see also, M.N.C. Mins., 1885, pp. 31-32; U.M.F.C. Mag., 1885, pp. 807-8.

Wesleyans were also actively involved. It was one issue which could be mentioned from the pulpit, as it did not divide Methodists and as it was an issue of moral principle rather than of party politics. Liberals were more likely to be against the Acts than Conservatives and it has been argued that this encouraged Methodist support for Liberal candidates.⁷

By 1885 the Social Purity movement was concerned with another moral issue as well. A series of articles in the Pall Mall Gazette by W.T. Stead displayed the ease with which it was possible to procure young girls for immoral purposes. Most Methodists followed the line taken by the Primitive Methodist Magazine, which whilst disagreeing with Stead's methods of obtaining his information, supported his opposition to this traffic in young girls. The Bible Christian Magazine commented, "Most of us were ignorant how like Sodom London had become". Stead's campaign was instrumental in persuading Parliament to raise the age of consent.⁸

Other areas of Methodist political interest were concern for the "abject poor", free education and better housing, as well as preventing the adulteration of food. Free education was an issue upon which Wesleyans were divided, because of the ramifications it would have upon their own schools. But Wesleyans were alive to the importance of promoting better housing for the working classes, believing that this was one of the most important issues to be dealt with by Parliament.⁹

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7. M.T., 8 October 1855; these Acts made compulsory a medical examination every three months of all prostitutes living within 15 miles of a town where members of the Armed Forces were stationed. They were passed in the 1860's and were condemned on the grounds that by regulating prostitution, the Government was in fact condoning it, and also because the Acts made it appear that men were less blameworthy than prostitutes (D. Bebbington, 'The Nonconformist Conscience', pp. 52-55.
8. P.M. Mag., 1885, p.762; B.C. Mag., 1885, p.444; M.M., 1885, p.292.
9. M.M., 1885, p. 293; see also Wes. Meth. Mag., 1885, pp. 740-6, 831-6.

With respect to the temperance question, two measures were deemed needful at this stage, namely, some form of control of the liquor trade and Sunday closing. Upon this all Methodists were agreed. Sunday closing was linked to growing concern over the attacks on the sanctity of the Lord's Day. The question of Sabbath observance was commended to all Methodists in the light of continuing campaigns from some quarters for the opening of museums and art galleries on Sundays.¹⁰

Disestablishment, although not referred to in Wesleyan records, was favourably viewed in some of the non-Wesleyan magazines. The Primitive Methodist Magazine, for instance, drew a definite distinction between the Church of Christ and the Church of England, and commented optimistically, "We have hope of living to see Disestablishment a fact in our national life".¹¹

The Wesleyan Committee of Privileges had been authorised by Conference to act on other matters of religious equality. Firstly, it was asked to introduce into Parliament a Bill to relieve all Nonconformists of the presence of a registrar at their weddings. Secondly, the Committee was urged to support a measure to facilitate the acquisition of sites for places of religious worship. Henry Broadhurst, a Wesleyan M.P., had a Bill before Parliament to accomplish this. Thirdly, the Committee had also been briefed to seek a Bill to reduce the length of notice required for the burial of Nonconformists to take place. There were grievances facing all Nonconformists, from which Methodists were not exempt.¹²

10. M.M., 1885, pp. 251, 255-7; see above, p. 162ff.

11. P.M. Mag., 1885, p.763; see also U.M.F.C. Mag., 1885, p.806.

12. D. Bebbington, op. cit., pp.38-39; M.M., 1885, p. 190.

The Methodist press continued to stress the importance of electing "men to rule over us who have the fear of God before their eyes".¹³ The issues which Methodist leaders discussed and enjoined upon their members were limited to an enunciation of religious (essentially Nonconformist) grievances, a strict sabbatarianism, a social concern expressed mainly through the temperance movement, though with an awareness of other issues, and a capacity to be roused on moral questions. These were the areas of political concern as defined by Methodists themselves in 1885.

Politics in Cornwall.

It is necessary first to examine how the electoral reforms affected Cornwall. Prior to 1885, Cornwall returned thirteen M.P.s. With the redistribution of seats, Cornwall's representation was cut to seven. The Redistribution Act favoured the creation of new seats by combining small boroughs with parts of the old, surrounding county divisions. With the exception of Penryn and Falmouth, which remained a borough seat but lost one of its two M.P.s, this was the experience of Cornwall.

The old county division of East Cornwall was divided into three seats. The new Northern division incorporated the old borough of Launceston and the North East of the county. The South East division included the old boroughs of Liskeard and Bodmin, who fought between them for the honour of giving their name to the seat.¹⁴ Mid-Cornwall or St. Austell was the third of these seats. In the far west of the county the Western or St. Ives division was formed, which was largely dominated by Penzance. Instead of enlarging the existing boroughs of Truro and Helston, however, a compact Mining Division centred on Camborne

13. M.T., 5 November 1885.

14. Eventually, the seat became known as the Bodmin division, although party offices were located at Liskeard.

was formed and Truro and Helston were joined together. This idea was adopted in spite of vigorous opposition, especially from Liberals who saw it as a piece of Tory gerrymandering.¹⁵

The Reform Act extended the household suffrage operative in borough seats since 1868 to the counties. This meant that many agricultural labourers were enfranchised, but about two-fifths of the adult male population were still without the right to vote. The registration requirements adversely affected a number of professional groups, including Methodist ministers. A triennial change of circuit was a custom of which Wesleyans in particular made use. All the ministers who had changed circuits at the Conference of 1884, as well as those who had been moved at the Conference of 1885, were unable to fulfil the residential qualifications. Sixteen hundred Wesleyan ministers and two-thirds of the 4,500 Methodist ministers in Great Britain were said to have been disfranchised because of this.¹⁶

Turning to the election of 1885, the Cornish seats are examined in the order in which they polled, beginning with the small borough seat of Penryn and Falmouth which voted first. Pelling has written of it,

By contrast with other parts of Cornwall, its Conservatism was already strong in 1885, but in so small a constituency elections seemed to be strongly influenced by personal factors and rarely showed much reflection of the national tide of opinion.¹⁷

David Jenkins was the senior of the two sitting Liberal M.P.s before redistribution and he was selected to stand again in 1885. A self-made West-countryman, he had formed a successful shipping company and was an authority on naval and shipping matters in Parliament.

15. R.C.G., 13 March 1885; Hansard, 3rd S., vol. 296, cc. 1552 ff.

16. Neal Blewett, 'The Franchise in the United Kingdom', Past and Present, 32 (December 1965) p. 26; Christian Journal, 18 November 1885.

Jenkins based his election address on his record over the past eleven years in Parliament and as a staunch Gladstonian Liberal.¹⁸

Not only was Jenkins well able to appeal to the shipping interests of his constituents, but he was also a Wesleyan Methodist. When he had been first introduced to the division in 1874, the West Briton had noted with approval that he was the brother of Rev. Ebenezer Jenkins, a popular Wesleyan preacher well known in Cornwall.¹⁹ Jenkins was on friendly terms with the local Methodists and just prior to the election he was invited to chair an evening meeting in Falmouth at Wesley Chapel's harvest festival. Jenkin's brief address is interesting for the glimpse it gives into early nineteenth century Methodism. He said,

He had been brought up in the strictest school of Wesleyan Methodism... When he was a lad he had to get up every Sunday morning at six-o'clock and was marched off to a prayer meeting at a chapel a mile away from his home. At nine-o'clock he was at the Sunday School and at various other services throughout day until late in the evening. He believed the training he thus received though it appeared somewhat strict and irksome had been the cause of the success he had been able to secure in after life.²⁰

It was an address which, bearing in mind the lessons impressed upon Methodists about the importance of the character of M.P.s, appealed to his hearers.

According to an enthusiastic Liberal correspondent, Jenkins had excellent support from local Nonconformists. Describing Jenkins' Committee Room in Penryn at the end

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17. H. Pelling, Social Geography of British Elections, 1885-1910, p.166.
 18. W.M.N., 17 November 1885.
 19. W.M.N., 6 November 1885; W.B., 9 October 1874.
 20. W.B., 26 October 1885.

of polling day, he wrote,

At the hearty call of all present, the Rev. M. Brokenshire (B.C. Minister) took the chair and spoke for about twenty minutes. The Rev. J. Coad (P.M.),...and others spoke. After the speaking came the singing and, Sir, for an hour and a half the vast concourse of people joined in singing Sankey's and other "sacred songs", and not till the result of the poll was declared at 1.30 a.m. did the melody cease. Religion and Politics! Yes Sir, or rather politics christianised.²¹

But even so, while the local Nonconformist and non-Wesleyan ministers could be seen on Jenkins' platform at some of his meetings, Wesleyan ministers were conspicuously absent.²²

Jenkins' opponent was a young, politically inexperienced Conservative with aristocratic connexions, W.G.C. Bentick. His nomination, however, created a storm in Methodist circles. About a week after news of his candidature was published, the Methodist Times thundered,

Methodists are very numerous at Falmouth and we hope every Methodist there will realise that it is his duty not only to refuse his vote to Mr. Bentinck, but to use every legitimate influence to prevent Mr. Bentinck from becoming member for Falmouth.

The objection to Bentinck was that he was an enemy of the Social Purity movement, supporting the Contagious Diseases Acts.²³

A fortnight later it was realised that the Conservative candidate at Falmouth was not their antagonist but his son. Undeterred, the Methodist Times maintained, "the son of such a father should be very closely cross-examined as to whether he intended to walk in the footsteps of his father's

21. W.D.M., 30 November 1885.

22. W.D.M., 23 November 1885.

23. M.T., 15 October 1885.

career". It was not an auspicious start to the campaign and the charge was repeatedly levelled at the Conservative Candidate.²⁴

Bentinck's election address was not particularly explicit. The Western Morning News called him "a Progressive Conservative". Like Jenkins, he wooed the sizeable naval and military vote in the borough. It was believed that the campaign was running in favour of the Liberal candidates, but that Bentinck would poll well. This forecast was accurate. The Liberal victory by 101 votes (4.6%) was the most marginal in the county.²⁵

The Launceston division was next to poll. The Liberals adopted as their candidate C.T.D. Acland, who had been an M.P. for East Cornwall since 1882. Acland's family owned some property in the division. He was also a committed Anglican. As one newspaper said of him, "Mr. Acland follows Mr. Gladstone in Churchmanship as well as politics".²⁶

At his meetings Acland drew support from a number of ministers from various denominations, including Anglicans and Wesleyans. He kept an open mind on disestablishment, although he had apparently promised not to vote against it. This satisfied some of the more militant Nonconformists. As one local Free Methodist minister put it, "if all Churchman had treated Nonconformists as Mr. Acland had done, very little would be heard about disestablishment".²⁷

Like Jenkins, his election address was based on his past conduct as a loyal Gladstonian. For the election Acland had written a pamphlet entitled, "What is the use of the vote to agricultural labourers and to

24. M.T., 29 October, 5 November 1885.

25. W.M.N., 12, 18 November 1885.

26. W.M.N., 29 September 1885.

27. W.M.N., 11 November 1885.

village artisans?" After a catalogue of Liberal legislative achievements, it led to the perhaps predictable conclusion that the function of the franchise was to vote Liberal. The new Launceston division was predominantly an agricultural one.²⁸

Acland's opponent was a barrister by the name of T.N. Lawrence. Much was made by Conservatives of the fact that he was a Cornishman by birth and, like Bentinck, he was classified as a "Progressive Conservative". Much of his election address was written in general terms. Sensitive to the question of Social Purity, sympathetic to Nonconformist grievances over weddings and the provision of chapel sites, and a supporter of a Cornwall Sunday Closing Bill, more than one person alleged that he was out to catch the Nonconformist and temperance vote.²⁹

The Liberals disliked his campaign style and accused him of being a Tory dressed up as a Liberal. But on one set of issue there was a clear difference of opinion between the two candidates. Lawrence was firmly opposed to the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England, the removal of the Bishops from the House of Lords and free education. His campaign was also aimed at Anglicans in the constituency.³⁰

Observers were confident that Acland would be the victor. Family influence was one important factor, but it was believed that the Nonconformists in places like Bude, Camelford and Stratton would swell Acland's vote, preferring his attitude on the disestablishment question. The town of Launceston was virtually the only place where Liberals were not believed to be in the majority. It was a cause of some amusement when it was disclosed that a Conservative elector in Bude had received a telegram

28. W.D.M., 25 November 1885; C.R.O., DDPV (290) 36.

29. W.M.N., 14, 17 November 1885; W.B., 5 October 1885.

30. W.D.M., 26, 30 November 1885; W.M.N., 17 November 1885.

with the wording, "Awake to righteousness and sin not. Vote for Acland".³¹ When the result was announced the verdict was clear-cut. Acland had won by a majority of 2,281 votes (34.4%), a sufficiently large margin to deter the Conservatives from challenging the seat for the remainder of his parliamentary career.

In the South East division, the merger of the two old boroughs caused the Liberals more than a little trouble. Both seats had returned Liberals in 1880. It had to be decided which one of them was to stand for the new division. The Hon. E.F. Leveson-Gower had been the member for Bodmin since 1859. Leonard Courtney had only represented Liskeard since 1876, but had proven himself to be a brilliant, though independent, member. The battle for the nomination was partly territorial. Bodmin Liberals preferred Gower and those in Liskeard supported Courtney. Eventually a decision was made in Courtney's favour.³²

Two local Liberals continued to oppose Courtney's selection. John Abraham, a Liskeard Liberal and Congregationalist, was particularly upset by the discovery that Courtney had addressed a meeting on proportional representation on a Sunday. The second, more serious objection came from John Carhart of Bodmin. He argued that some of Courtney's actions, notably his inopportune resignation from Gladstone's Government when it emerged that proportional representation was not one of the electoral reforms to be implemented, highlighted a lack of party loyalty and responsibility. There was an eleventh hour reconciliation, however, between Courtney and the dissidents prior to the election.³³

Courtney, whose life is a classic example of Victorian self-help, was a disciple of Bentham and Mill.

31. W.M.N., 18 November, 1 December 1885.

32. W.W.M., 3, 24 January, 16 May 1885.

33. W.W.M., 31 January 1885; W.D.M., 13 October, 23, 30 November, W.M.N., 1 December 1885.

He was variously described as a "moderate", "cautious" or "advanced" Liberal. He was decidedly in favour of free trade, proportional representation and woman suffrage. He considered it necessary to maintain the union with Ireland and in foreign affairs was "a strong opponent of anything bellicose". His declaration on temperance that he preferred "to have people both free and sober" made him unpopular in some quarters, particularly because of his lack of support for local option.³⁴

On disestablishment, Courtney followed the Gladstonian line. He argued, "The Church as a spiritual body is beyond the reach of Parliaments...I should regard the subject as being outside the mandate of the coming Parliament". In short, he sidestepped the issue, but he was drawn by a Bible Christian minister into admitting that he would support disestablishment in Scotland.³⁵

Courtney's opponent was the Hon. C.E. Edgcumbe. Although unknown to public life in Cornwall, he was the only brother of the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, Lord Lieutenant of the county and owner of a large estate in the division. It was said of his political views that he was "a staunch supporter of the old institutions of the realm". Edgcumbe's election address was characterised by measures to which he was opposed, though in attempt to discomfit his opponent, he made known his support of the Medical Relief Bill, a Liberal measure which Courtney had opposed.³⁶

But it was in his opposition to disestablishment that the Conservative candidate waxed most eloquent. He regarded the Church of England as "the most powerful organisation in the world, for the promotion of Christianity and morality". Deplorable results were

34. G.P. Gooch, Life of Lord Courtney (London: Macmillan, 1920), p. 213; W.M.N., 13,14,21 November 1885; W.D.M., 14 October 1885.
 35. W.M.N., 14 November 1885; W.D.M., 2 November 1885.
 36. W.M.N., 28 October, 19, 21 November 1885.

predicted if disendowment of the Church took place. Such a view was perhaps only to be expected from the brother of one of the leading Churchmen in the county.³⁷

In its election forecast in the division, the Western Morning News considered the Conservatives to have a majority in the Fowey and Saltash areas attributable to the disestablishment issue. Bodmin and Liskeard were Liberal strongholds. It was thought that Courtney

will have practically the solid vote of the Nonconformists and that in itself will mean a considerable preponderance in places like Looe (East and West), Polperro and Lerrin. In the more scattered parishes...although it will not mean a preponderance of votes it will still mean a considerable following.

The report hinted further that many Liberals in the division would probably prefer a more radical Liberal, especially on the question of disestablishment.³⁸

On polling day the Conservatives tried to revive the old Liberal divisions by circulating a comment Abraham had made ten months previously in which he had stated his opposition to Courtney's Sunday lectures. However, the Liberals countered this with another statement from Abraham in which he confirmed his disapproval of Sunday lectures, but went on to say that he opposed even more strongly the Sunday opening of public houses. It was an effective rejoinder for Courtney also opposed this, while Edgcumbe supported it. The result of the contest was another clear victory for the Liberals. Courtney had been given a majority of 1,153 (15.6%).³⁹

The St. Austell constituency included the china clay districts around St. Austell and extended from Padstow and Newquay on the north coast to Mevagissey on

37. W.M.N., 19 November 1885.

38. W.M.N., 18 November 1885.

39. W.M.N., 2 December 1885.

the south. The new Liberal Association for the division asked W.C. Borlase to be their candidate. He had been one of the successful Liberal candidates for the old East Cornwall division in 1880.⁴⁰

In his election address, Borlase wrote, "Of the social reforms of the day I hold with Cobden that temperance reform lies at the root of them all". Not only was he a sponsor of the Cornwall Sunday Closing Bill, but he also supported Sunday closing for the whole country. He favoured local option and considered the creation of grocer's licences to have been one of Gladstone's few mistakes. The Western Morning News said of Borlase that he was very sound on the temperance question, and "in the eyes of the philanthropists this thoroughness may well cover a multitude of sins".⁴¹

In fact, Borlase was an advanced Liberal, who took up matters of local interest as well. He supported the need for a reform of mine leases. He also made known his opposition to the payment of dues to those owning tin and china clay land.

Borlase had made plain his support for the admission of Bradlaugh to the House of Commons. By a process of guilt by association, not confined to St. Austell, rumours began to circulate about his own religious views on the eve of the election. He combatted these at a meeting at St. Dennis, commenting "They must be very hard up when their tactics assumed that form". A similar charge of atheism had been levelled against him in the 1880 election, but had backfired.⁴²

On disestablishment, Borlase's opinions were widely known. He believed that it would not only relieve Parliament of the necessity of passing ecclesiastical

40. W.M.N., 17 October 1885; W.W.M., 3 January 1885.

41. W.B., 5 November 1885; W.M.N., 14 November 1885.

42. W.D.M., 2 December 1885.

legislation, but also that it would be beneficial to the Church to control her own affairs. It was not an issue he pressed, although he made it clear that if the issue came up he would vote for it.⁴³

Borlase came from an Anglican family which publicly disowned his views on disestablishment and politics. His election platform included the rectification of Nonconformist grievances and he gave a high priority to the Social Purity movement. He had the staunch support of many Nonconformist ministers in the division and was a popular guest at their chapels to chair meetings and to open bazaars.⁴⁴

The Conservatives in the division had difficulty in finding a candidate. Eventually, J.H. Johnstone was selected. He was the son of a Cornish clergyman. He made Gladstone's policies at home and abroad the target of his attacks, but there is a similarity between his campaign and that of Lawrence at Launceston. Both in some ways "poached" Liberal policies and Johnstone, like Lawrence, opposed disestablishment while making a bid for the Nonconformist vote in the division.⁴⁵

According to the Western Morning News

Moderate Liberals may have been alienated by the opinions advanced on the disestablishment question but the new voters are chiefly Nonconformists and appear quite prepared to accept the advanced Radical programme, the reform of the House of Lords, free education and land reform being held in strong favour by them.⁴⁶

When the result was announced, the majority for Borlase of 2,281 votes (34.4%) was the biggest in the county.

43. W.D.M., 19, 26 November 1885.

44. W.D.M., 26 November 1885; W.M.N., 4 November 1885; W.B., (Supp.), 15 October 1885.

45. W.M.N., 5, 11, 23 November 1885.

46. W.M.N., 5 December 1885.

Borlase isolated the opposition to his candidature as emanating from three sources, "every parson, every protectionist, and every publican". But the support of these groups for Johnstone, even including the presumed switch of some erstwhile moderate Liberals, was no counter to the strong Liberalism of the newly enfranchised voters. Johnstone's campaign was more of a political apprenticeship than a serious contest.⁴⁷

The formation of a Truro-Helston division also caused problems in the selection of candidates. In the Liberal case, William Bickford-Smith had been chosen to fight Helston in 1883, while at Truro one of the two M.P.s before redistribution was the Liberal E.B. Wilyams, who had a long parliamentary career behind him. Bickford-Smith had no parliamentary experience. It was essentially a territorial battle between Liberals at Helston and Truro, and, to the surprise of the Liberal press, the Helston Liberals forced the issue in their favour.⁴⁸

Bickford-Smith was the son of the well known Camborne Wesleyan and Methodist historian, Dr. George Smith. He followed in his father's footsteps in both politics and religion. He had been a local preacher for many years, was a Vice President of Truro Wesleyan College and a generous donor to Wesleyan chapels.⁴⁹

In his political views, Bickford-Smith was not an advanced Liberal, but rather favoured "judicious progress and reform". In some respects, his election address was what might have been anticipated from a Wesleyan candidate. To both the opening of museums and public houses on Sundays he was opposed. He desired to see a further advance in the Burial Laws and supported the raising of the age of consent to eighteen. He also

47. W.D.M., 26 November, 2 December 1885.

48. W.B., 21, 25 May 1885.

49. W.M.N., 16 November 1885.

favoured local option and free education.⁵⁰

He went beyond official Wesleyan attitudes in his support of disestablishment. The fact that he was a contributor to the funds of the Liberation Society was published in the Royal Cornwall Gazette. His opinions on disestablishment were straightforward: "He did not see why any Church and not the Church of the majority, but the Church of the minority, should be singled out for any special advantages".⁵¹

In his campaigning there was a tendency for Bickford-Smith not to refer to his Wesleyanism at all. But often those speaking in support of him mentioned it. For instance, R.G. Rows, a Helston Free Methodist, remarked

Some people had insinuated that Mr. Bickford-Smith being a Nonconformist was a barrier to his election. That in a Cornish constituency was a mere impertinence...if the Methodists allowed Mr. Smith to be defeated it would be a standing disgrace and reproach to them as long as they lived.

The Congregationalist minister at Truro was reported as saying, "This was a Methodist county and it was right that Cornwall should have one Methodist representative in Parliament".⁵²

The Conservatives also had problems in selecting a candidate. Their first choice, Sir James McGarel-Hogg, one of Truro's M.P.s since 1871, preferred to stand for a Middlesex seat. Their second choice, the Wesleyan, H.J. Atkinson, also declined the offer. It was only then that William Molesworth St. Aubyn, the M.P. for Helston from 1880-5 was adopted. Like Johnstone, he was a barrister and the son of a Cornish clergyman. But as the West Briton noted he was "not the strongest candidate imaginable".⁵³

50. W.M.N., 16 November 1885; W.D.M., 19 October 1885.
 51. R.C.G., 20 November 1885; W.D.M., 19 October 1885.
 52. W.D.M., 19 October 1885; W.B.(Supp.), 30 November 1885; see also W.B., 22 October 1885 and W.L.M., 30 November 1885.

The Conservative campaign was not a particularly active one. In a cathedral constituency, fighting a Liberationist opponent, his main tactic was to emphasise his opposition to disestablishment. Thus, at one meeting he asserted, "the Church was a divine institution against which the gates of hell themselves shall not prevail".⁵⁴

It was not thought that St. Aubyn's prospects were bright. Bickford-Smith had picked up support with his pronounced views on disestablishment and temperance. One election report suggested,

The electors have been greatly influenced by the meetings of the Liberal Party which have strengthened their faith in Liberal principles and in their Nonconformist opinions. The majority of the electors are dissenters and in Mr. Bickford-Smith they have a candidate they believe in.

Liberal strength lay in the rural areas, where Nonconformists were strongest, but at Truro the Conservatives were said to have the Church party behind them "almost to a man".⁵⁵

The election forecasts again proved accurate. Bickford-Smith was returned with a majority of 993 (14.0%). It was considered to be an important Liberal victory. The Western Daily Mercury jubilantly called it "the most reeling blow ecclesiasticism has received in the west...".⁵⁶

The new Camborne Mining Division proved to be a thorn in the flesh of the Liberals. It was not that defeat at the hands of the Tories was feared. The seat had been carved out of the Liberal stronghold of West Cornwall and working miners formed one third of the

53. W.B., 27 April, 7 December 1885.

54. W.D.M., 14 November 1885.

55. W.M.N., 18 November, 4 December 1885.

56. W.D.M., 5 December 1885.

new electorate. Indeed, no Conservative candidate was forthcoming.

The trouble centred round Arthur Pendarves Vivian, who had been one of the Liberal M.P.s for West Cornwall since 1868. The problem facing Vivian in 1885 was that after the redistribution the only seat in Cornwall for which he could offer himself was the Mining Division. This he did early in the year, but it was seen in some quarters as an attempt to foist himself upon the new seat.⁵⁷

When the Liberals were sufficiently well organised to choose a candidate, there were three serious contenders. In addition to Vivian, the names of C.A.V. Conybeare, a London barrister, and a Mr. Barker from Bradford were proposed. A meeting was then held to select one of them, although Conybeare, who sent his supporters along, made it known that he would not be tied by the result of the Liberal gathering. It was, as a letter to the press commented, "verily a case of heads I win, tails you lose". When Vivian received the required number of votes on the second ballot to become the official candidate. Conybeare immediately declared his intention of going to the poll. Barker, seeing Conybeare's example, decided to follow suit. All efforts to heal the divisions in the Liberal ranks were to no avail.⁵⁸

Some confusion was understandable, perhaps inevitable, since this was the first time that a "caucus" system on the Chamberlain model had been used in Cornwall. Yet there was evidence that some influential Vivianties tried to ensure the selection of their man by means not altogether above suspicion. It

57. W.W.M., 21 February 1885; W.D.M., 4 March 1885; cf. C.R.O., DDPV (290) 7, Sir John St. Aubyn to Vivian, 11 July 1880.

58. W.M.N., 16, 19 May 1885; Cornish Telegraph, 30 July 1885; W.B., 18 June, 1 October 1885.

was equally clear that a number of Liberals had determined not to accept Vivian. In Conybeare they found a vociferous champion of their cause. Both sides were aware that, in the absence of Conservative opposition, the Liberal nomination was tantamount to being elected.⁵⁹

There was no doubt that Vivian was a staunch Liberal, and during his parliamentary career he had supported all the progressive measures which the Liberals had introduced. He supported disestablishment and local option, as well as being one of the leading sponsors of the Cornwall Sunday Closing Bill. Furthermore, with a view to Methodist support, he spoke out in favour of the abolition of tithes, against the Sunday opening of museums and also against the compulsory presence of the registrar at a Dissenter's wedding.⁶⁰

Some of Vivian's reforming zeal seems to have been in response to his opponent's radicalism, but the Conybeare campaign to label him an indolent and politically ignorant Whig was far from the truth. Vivian widely circulated a comment made about himself by Joseph Chamberlain, who had written to an elector, "I do not know whether he calls himself a Whig, but if all Whigs were like him, I do not see that Radicals would have much reason to complain".⁶¹

Conybeare was fighting his first election contest, although he made it clear from the outset that he was "an out and out Radical" and a Chamberlainite. Subsequent to the election he published a book to demonstrate that his views were not more, nor less, than those of the acknowledged leader of the Radical Party. The radical programme to which Conybeare declared his adherence included extensive proposals to reform

59. W.D.M., 17 October 1885; Cornish Telegraph, 30 July 1885.

60. W.D.M., 5 October 1885; W.M.N., 20 November 1885.

61. C.R.O., DDPV (290) 29.

Parliament, like triennial parliaments, woman suffrage and the payment of M.P.s, as well as the more run-of-the-mill reforms, such as local option, Sunday closing and amending the Burial Laws.⁶²

There were some issues which were of particular importance in Camborne and of general interest throughout the county. On the Game Laws and the reform of the land laws, Conybeare's stance was more advanced than Vivian's. Vivian, a managing partner in a South Wales copper smelting firm, was well acquainted with mining issues. However, Conybeare soon after his arrival in Cornwall showed his grasp of the subject by drafting and publishing a proposed Mines Leases Bill and a Miners Rights Bill.⁶³

It was both a clever election ploy and a genuine response to the needs of the miners. Vivian was quick to point out "the absurdity of any candidate drafting measures at random and placing them before the electors with the persuasion that he will speedily get them passed if only he obtains a seat in the House".⁶⁴ But it demonstrated the clear difference between Conybeare, the dashing man of action, and the cautious Liberalism of Vivian.

The Camborne contest was an acrimonious one. Conybeare, for instance, found charges of atheism were being levelled against him by some of Vivian's canvassers. This had also happened to him during the short time that he was a candidate at Wick, and the allegations had followed him to Cornwall.⁶⁵

The basis of this charge was that Conybeare, as well

62. W.M.N., 27 October 1885; C.A.V. Conybeare, The Mining Division of Cornwall: Reformed Parliament, 1886: election addresses of the Radical candidate... (Plymouth: Latimer, 1886).

63. W.M.N., 27 October 1885; see C.R.O., DDPV (290) 29, for copies of the two draft Bills.

64. W.M.N., 19 October 1885.

65. W.B., 26 November 1885; C.R.O., DDPV (290) 34.

as believing that museums should be open on Sundays, also gave "political" lectures on the Sabbath as part of his responsibilities as the honorary secretary of the Social and Political Education League. These lectures had been publicised in a journal produced by Bradlaugh and Besant. Furthermore, in the past Conybeare had also given political lectures in an institute run by Bradlaugh. The Western Morning News printed these stories and they were taken up with relish by Vivianites.

Conybeare did not deal with the issue wisely. For instance, when pressed on one occasion as to his religious views, he answered by talking at length about the orthodoxy of his forebears' religious views rather than expressing his own convictions. Conybeare took out a writ against the Western Morning News, but he was eventually satisfied when the paper printed an apology, admitting that the Social and Political Education League was a respectable body and withdrawing allegations that its lectures were atheistic, socialistic and blasphemous. These circulated the constituency in thousands. The Western Daily Mercury summed up the incident, saying "The fact is somebody has discovered a mare's nest".⁶⁶

Even so, the Vivianites did not let the matter rest. Although the initial charge of atheism could not be sustained, it was argued that Conybeare's lectures constituted desecration of the Sabbath. In the words of the doggerel of the day,

But as they're religious 'twere best to keep dark
Concerning those Sunday Harangues in the Park:
In a Chapel each Sabbath I'll duly appear,
They will think me converted said Carnaby Beer.

At several of Vivian's meetings individuals would rise to condemn Conybeare's behaviour. One Camborne elector declared that he would vote for Vivian "on religious grounds for he would support no man who

66. C.R.O., DDPV (290) 47; W.D.M., 4 July 1885.

would do the least thing to tamper with the sanctity of the Sabbath or put up the ten commandments to local option".⁶⁷

Few of the local ministers in the division became involved in such a bitter contest. In order to defend his own battered reputation for orthodoxy, Conybeare invited two friends from London, both Nonconformist ministers, to speak on his behalf. They defended his Sunday lecturing, although their admission that they did likewise only succeeded in adding a new twist to the story. Vivianites responded to this move by obtaining a large number of letters from Welsh ministers of various denominations explaining the high esteem in which Vivian was held there. The quantity of election ephemera produced on this one issue alone shows that so far as both candidates were concerned religious orthodoxy was an influential factor in the election.⁶⁸

There was a third candidate, Barker. In his political views he was a Radical, like Conybeare, but he also based his candidature on his Nonconformity. One election leaflet read,

It is enough to state that while not for a moment doubting Mr. Conybeare's good faith, Nonconformists, as a rule, on various grounds, would greatly prefer having the battle of religious freedom fought by men of their own way of thinking... It is enough to state that Mr. Barker is a Methodist and that Messrs. Vivian and Conybeare are Churchmen.⁶⁹

Barker eventually withdrew from the fray on grounds of poor health, which had kept him from campaigning. This allowed Conybeare time to consolidate his position, so that, had Barker gone to the poll, he would only have divided the Radical vote. Both sides had become so firmly entrenched that a compromise candidature, even one based on Nonconformity, was not possible.

67. C.R.O., DDPV (290) 47.

68. W.B., 26 November, 3 December 1885; W.M.N., 3 December 1885.

69. C.R.O., DDPV (290) 29.

Vivian's and Conybeare's election committees pursued different election strategies. The Vivianites, knowing their man was not the best of speakers and with much influential support on their side, set about a strict canvass, which led to persistent allegations of intimidation. The outstanding example of this was the dismissal of Josiah Luke, a Methodist local preacher, allegedly for speaking at one of Conybeare's meetings. Conybeare, making the most of the incident, organised a Luke Testimonial Fund. Captain Josiah Thomas, a Vivianite mine manager and Methodist, denied that Luke had ever been sacked. But, as one press report put it, the truth of the matter seemed to be that Luke had been dismissed, only to be reinstated when it was realised that this was a political mistake.⁷⁰

Conybeare's committee conducted a less strict canvass than Vivian, concentrating instead on well attended and lively meetings. Conybeare was a demagogue of some ability. However, many of his supporters were not voters. Vivianites alleged that Conybeare's men deliberately sought to disrupt Vivian's meetings. According to press accounts, it appears that on more than one occasion they were successful. This led to fears of widespread violence as polling day approached. Hence, troops were moved into the division on the day of the poll.⁷¹

It was clear that Conybeare was the more popular candidate. It was reported that the belief was widespread among the lower classes that success for Conybeare would lead to an increase in wages and a drop in rents. But it was also thought that Conybeare's campaigning style had alienated a number of voters. Amongst the electors, Vivian appeared to have the majority. However, after a peaceful polling day, it emerged that

70. W.D.M., 24,26 August, 18 November 1885.

71. C.R.O., DDPV (290) 47; W.D.M., 2,3,7 December 1885.

the Radical candidate had won by a majority of 349 votes (3.4%). Conybeare's wilder supporters celebrated their victory by breaking the windows in the homes of the more prominent Vivianites.⁷²

Vivian was privately indignant. His notebook on the election contains some harsh words on his opponents. Concerning his supporters' canvass he wrote,

So much for pledges which on a poll of 5,500 gave me a majority of over 1,000 and the poll had actually been 5,503!! In the most unfavourable parishes to me...our books showed a clear majority counting promises only... They (the miners) were told by C...to promise me and to get conveyed if they liked to the poll and to vote for Conybeare!!!!

Bearing in mind reports of miners frightened to be seen in Conybeare's carriages, the allegation was probably true.⁷³

The West Briton supported Vivian's belief that some of those canvassed had proved turncoats. It argued that the miners at Dolcoath and Wheal Agar, who had been wavering, at the last minute joined their more radical companions who worked at other mines. There is some evidence for believing that Conybeare also won the Irish vote and the support of a large number of Tories. Certainly, the Conservatives were not displeased with the result, sensing that in future contests their candidate would run well against an opponent as radical as Conybeare.⁷⁴

The main Conybeare tactic had been to play up class differences. The Western Daily Mercury pointed out that "the struggle had in effect become a trial of strength between the employers and the employed". The effect of this was summed up by one Vivianite, who asked

72. W.M.N., 18 November 1885; W.D.M., 7 December 1885; W.B., 10 December 1885.

73. C.R.O., DDPV (290) 16; cf. W.D.M., 7 December 1885.

74. W.B., 10 December 1885.

"Was it not a fact that before Mr. Conybeare came into that neighbourhood some of Mr. Vivian's supporters who are now held up as examples of tyranny were the men who were most respected by the working classes?" Hopes were expressed that after the election the split would heal quickly, but this underestimated the depth of feeling involved.⁷⁵

The final Cornish contest in the St. Ives division was an anticlimax. Sir John St. Aubyn was the Liberal candidate. He had been a Liberal M.P. for West Cornwall since 1858 and, living at St. Michael's Mount, possessed considerable local influence. He made it known that he was a moderate rather than an advanced Liberal, basing his campaign on his past record and support for Gladstone.⁷⁶

His Conservative opponent was C.C. Ross. He, too, was of Cornish origin and had been M.P. for the borough of St. Ives since 1881. Even so, he remained rather a dark horse and it is difficult to establish upon what platform he stood.

Free trade seems to have been more of an issue here than elsewhere. One local issue of importance was a controversy surrounding the financing of the building of Newlyn pier. Neither of the candidates satisfied the strong temperance lobby in the division, but both of them made good use of outside speakers. The Liberal candidate had the advantage of using victorious Liberals in the county, like Borlase and Courtney, both of whom were born in the area.⁷⁷

After an initially sluggish campaign, it appears that excitement mounted as the election approached. The Liberalism of the old electorate inclined the pundits to favour Sir John and, indeed, he won by a majority of 737 (12.6%). An angry Rossite crowd did not take kindly to this news, besieging the newly elected member in the

75. W.D.M., 2,5,7 December, 1885.

76. W.W.M., 7 March 1885; W.D.M., 25 November 1885.

77. W.D.M., 2 October, 26 November 1885; W.M.N., 4 December 1885.

public buildings of Penzance. However, the fact remained that the Liberals had won all seven Cornish seats.⁷⁸

Methodism and Politics in Cornwall in 1885.

When focussing on one aspect of an election it is easy to give insufficient weight to what were perhaps the more obvious questions of the day. In Cornwall in 1885, national issues, like the expenditure of Gladstone's government and the iniquities or virtues of Liberal foreign policy, were all discussed at length and important factors in the election. So too were local matters; for instance, shipping at Penryn and Falmouth and mining, especially at Camborne. The land laws and their reform was another question constantly being raised. But it is evident that the political debate took place in an environment influenced by religious opinions and in which certain religious issues were matters of political concern.

It has been said of this election that it was "the nearest point ever attained to the accomplishment of disestablishment". Early in the campaign Salisbury raised the cry that the Church was in danger and the issue gathered momentum as the election went on. It gave Conservatives a rallying call, whilst threatening to divide the Liberals. Gladstone sought to play down the issue by declaring that at that moment it was beyond the realm of practical politics. Although the Home Rule crisis was soon to overshadow the question, for the duration of the election, it occupied the centre of the stage.

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78. W.M.N., 18 November 1885; W.D.M., 8 December 1885.
 79. K.O. Morgan, Wales in British Politics, 1868-1922 (Cardiff: Univ. of Wales Press, 1970), p.64; see also Alan Simon, 'Church Disestablishment as a Factor in the General Election of 1885', Historical Journal, xviii, 4 (1975), pp. 791-820.

In this respect Cornwall was no exception. One newspaper wrote, "Whatever may be the case in other districts of England, it is certain that disestablishment is of absorbing interest in the west and threatens to become a test question at the election". At the Truro Diocesan Conference, disestablishment was a subject upon which the Bishop spoke at length. He believed it to be wrong before God and expressed the hope "that every clergyman would furnish his more earnest people with information as to the facts of the case". A number of clergy took the Bishop's plea to heart, and Church Defence meetings and lectures on Church history were organised with this aim in mind.⁸⁰

But by no means all Anglicans accepted the implication of the Bishop's advice to vote Conservative. One layman wrote to the West Briton, urging Liberal Churchmen to vote for Liberal candidates regardless of their opinion on disestablishment, as it was but one issue among many. Some argued that Tory interest in the Church was purely political, while the incumbent at Stoke Climsland bluntly announced, "Under no circumstances should I record my vote for a Conservative".⁸¹

In many cases the Cornish clergy did rally to support the Conservative candidates. It was not that this was a new phenomenon, beyond perhaps being more open and active. But the letter columns of the press show that some Anglican clergy and laymen disagreed with their Bishop and did not believe it to be a great danger. In fact, the disestablishment issue incidentally revealed the extent of the link between the Church of England and the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party was not merely a pressure group for Nonconformists.

Cornish Conservative candidates played up the threat of disestablishment in almost every division. They were

80. W.M.N., 4 November 1885; W.D.M., 8 December 1885.

81. W.D.M., 24, 27 November 1885.

unanimous in their opposition to it. But Liberal candidates only displayed varying degrees of support for it. The Wesleyan, Bickford-Smith and Churchmen, like Borlase and the two Camborne candidates, had no hesitation in declaring their views. But others preferred to support it at a distance, rejoicing that it was not in the realm of practical politics, while Acland only agreed not to vote against it. Yet the Liberation Society claimed all the Cornish Liberals as their supporters. It was not perhaps surprising that they failed to achieve their ultimate goal.⁸²

Disestablishment had the vocal support of many Methodists in Cornwall, notably the Free Methodists. Some Wesleyans responded to the fears roused in the Church of England by the issue with a combination of amusement, indifference and hostility, which was far from the official Wesleyan view. It was widely felt that the Church of England when released from its shackles would see a growth in strength of the Evangelical Party.⁸³

Cornish Methodists did take to heart Conference appeals on Social Purity. Support for Stead came from all quarters, and was not confined to Methodists. The Bishop of Truro and Nonconformist ministers in Truro worked together to ensure enforcement of existing laws relating to Social Purity. Unlike disestablishment, moral issues permitted a degree of co-operation between the different denominations.⁸⁴

Candidates showed an awareness of the strength of the Nonconformist vote in Cornish constituencies. The Conservatives, Johnstone and Lawrence, for instance, in their election addresses and campaign speeches paid much attention to matters to which the Wesleyan and other Methodist Conferences had drawn attention. In

82. Liberator, 1 October 1885.

83. W.B., 19 November 1885.

84. W.B., 8 October 1885; W.W.M., 8 August 1885; W.M.N., 5 November 1885.

this respect, within the narrow confines of political expectation which they set themselves, the Methodist bloc of voters was sufficiently large to influence both parties and their candidates.

In the heat of the election, too, agents were well aware of the damage that could be inflicted upon their opponent's or their own man's reputation by association with a celebrated atheist like Bradlaugh, by allegations of Sabbath breaking or by the casting of doubts about a candidate's religious orthodoxy. The case of Camborne springs immediately to mind, but Bentinck, Borlase and Courtney also found similar tactics being employed against them. Its influence may have been, in fact, overestimated, but there is no doubting the religious ethos to which politicians paid deference, and to which Anglicans and Nonconformists both contributed.

Cornwall was relatively well represented with Nonconformist candidates. The Methodist Times had reported that there were only thirty Methodist candidates in the whole realm. Bickford-Smith and Jenkins in Cornwall were two of them. Barker's attempted candidature at Camborne again shows the increased awareness of the Methodist vote. It would see, however, that it was easier to persuade Nonconformists to vote for a sympathetic Anglican, like Acland or Borlase, than it was to persuade Anglicans to vote for Nonconformists. Certainly, at this stage there were more Anglicans than Nonconformists with the time, inclination and wealth to enter Parliament.⁸⁵

There was also a degree of involvement of political candidates in Methodist event, such as harvest festivals, missionary meetings, the opening of bazaars and laying of foundation stones. Barker complained about an

85. M.T., 17 December 1885.

invitation Conybeare received to speak at a Bible Christian chapel to raise funds to reduce the circuit debt, commenting "When the names of certain gentlemen are mentioned as suitable speakers, the question put would seem to be not 'Is he converted?' but 'Can he be converted into cash?'" In 1885, these invitations seem to have been confined to Liberal candidates.⁸⁶

By this time Methodist described themselves, and were described in the Cornish press, as Nonconformists. Hence, when election reports spoke of newly enfranchised Nonconformist voters swelling the Liberal ranks, they meant by and large Methodists. Furthermore, Methodists indentifiable on candidates' platforms were almost invariably Liberals. Ministers, with the exception of a few vigorous non-Wesleyan Liberals, were not involved in the campaign.

The Gladstone-Chamberlain split represented at Camborne by Vivian and Conybeare appears also to have divided Methodists. Leading Wesleyans like Captain Josiah Thomas of Camborne and Alfred Lanyon of Redruth campaigned for Vivian, while others like H.T. Williams and Tom Moore worked for Conybeare. It was not therefore a simple cleavage between Wesleyans and non-Wesleyans. More likely, was a division of support between the labouring classes and the more "respectable" elements in society, especially those involved in mining, irrespective of denomination. But, even so, the fact remains that they were Liberals of one complexion or another.⁸⁷

The election did have an effect on the surrounding chapels. An irate correspondent wrote to the West Briton,

On Sunday last I visited the Wesleyan Chapel at Baldhu on the occasion of the harvest festival. I

86. C.R.O., DDPV (290) 29.

87. W.B., 26 November 1885; Some evidence of the Liberal proclivities and strategic importance of Methodists can be seen in the Redruth Liberal Association, which in 1884 had 25 Officers, at least 13 of whom were

was highly pleased with the day's proceedings with the exception of the latter portion of the evening service. Before the congregation left, a vote of thanks was proposed to the preachers, Messrs. Wasley and Hambly of Redruth. This was a course of procedure of which I never before heard. The proposition was put to those present, but I am pleased to say that only a few voted for it. The idea, Sir, of proposing a vote of thanks at a Sunday evening's service! It seemed more like a political meeting - stamping of feet and clapping of hands....⁸⁸

Perhaps an example of Christianity politicised, rather than politics Christianised.

It was in the Camborne division that the effects of politics on the chapels was most felt. A special correspondent to the Methodist Times reported,

Party feeling has run very high and many bitter personalities and recriminations have been indulged in. I fear the result in some of our societies in the Camborne and Redruth circuits, unless the parties have the sense and godliness, now that the fight is over to bury the hatchet and let bygones be bygones.

The surviving Methodist minutes keep a diplomatic silence on this matter. In fact they contain no political references at all, beyond querying whether or not Barker was a certified Wesleyan local preacher. This was of importance since he had spoken from a chapel pulpit one Sunday.⁸⁹

Politically, the 1885 election displayed the need for Liberals to learn how to co-operate. The system of choosing candidates by representative bodies had not worked too well in several seats. This can be attributed in part to the problems caused by electoral and boundary changes, but it also demonstrates the fractious nature

Nonconformists, including 7 Wesleyans and 4 Free Methodists (C.R.O., DDPV (290) 26). I am indebted to Mr. J. Probert for his help in this analysis.

88. W.B., 22 October 1885.

89. M.T., 17 December 1885; W.B., 8 October 1885.

of the Liberal Party, even before the Home Rule crisis. Liberalism was so strong in the county that Borlase asserted, with some truth, that Conservative candidates "only chance of success lay in the proportion of how near they approached to the Liberal standpoint". The Tory campaigns at Launceston and St. Austell illustrate this. The evidence of Cornwall is that the Methodist vote was one major factor in accounting for Liberal success and Conservative tactics. It was not, as Vincent has suggested that Primitive Methodists were primarily responsible for this. They were too few in the county. Nonetheless, it is accurate to affirm that the majority of Methodists were Liberals by 1885.⁹⁰

90. W.D.M., 2 December 1885; J. Vincent, The Formation of the British Liberal Party, p. 22.

CHAPTER SIX.THE LATE VICTORIAN YEARS, 1886 - 1901.Change and Continuity.

In the late Victorian era, new issues emerged in politics, like Home Rule and Imperialism, and fresh developments took place in longstanding issues, like temperance. But continuities also exist between the politics of these years and the politics of earlier decades in Cornwall. This can be seen, for instance, in the Methodist approach to politics.

In Methodist circles repeated emphasis was placed on the importance of being worthy citizens and of exercising one's political rights aright. Some idea of the Methodist ideal of the active citizen can be gained by studying the biographical sketches of leading Cornish Wesleyans printed in the Cornish Methodist Church Record. These show how a sense of civic duty combined with an outworking of social concern, itself an outworking of faith.¹

There was great scope for involvement in Victorian local government and Methodists took full advantage of this. In 1893, for instance, it was reported that all seven members of the Redruth School Board belonged to Redruth Wesley, that half the members of the Penzance Corporation worshipped at a Wesleyan Chapel, and that the four new municipal councillors at St. Ives were all Methodists.²

The creation of parish councils was seen by Methodists as "another channel of Christian service". However, the Cornish Wesleyan Methodist Council, which had been formed in 1894, stressed that such opportunities "could not be in

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1. see C.M.C.R., June 1893 (Alfred Lanyon), July 1893 (Tom Moore), September 1893 (John Vivian) and January 1894 (Alfred Chenhalls).
 2. C.M.C.R., June, December 1893.

any wise helped, but only hindered by the importation of party spirit, whether political, ecclesiastical or social into the coming parish meetings and elections". The "no politics" rule still applied.³

At a higher plane of local politics, the County Councils gave a further opportunity of service to Methodists. In rural areas, like Cornwall, non-contested elections were the norm, due to the absence of a conflict between the landed gentry and an industrial "bourgeoisie" or organised labour. An additional factor was the strength of and importance attached to representing local interests.⁴

But an analysis of the first Cornwall County Council still provides evidence for the old cliché that the Church of England was the Conservative Party at prayer. Anglican Conservatives formed the single largest bloc on the council. Wesleyans were substantially Liberal and were the biggest single component of Liberal representation. In all, half the council was Anglican and one third Nonconformist.⁵

Another continuity in Methodist political attitudes was the campaign to remove the last vestiges of discrimination against Nonconformists. Considerable dissatisfaction existed over the compulsory presence of the Registrar at Nonconformist weddings. A number of Bills were introduced by Wesleyan M.P.s to remedy this situation, but it was not till the late 1890's that one was successful. Even then not all Nonconformists were happy about it.⁶

It was not until the Burials Act of 1900 that the

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3. C.M.C.R., May, December, 1894, February 1895; cf. M.M., 1894, p. 381.
 4. cf. J.M. Lee, Social Leaders and Public Persons: a study of County Government in Cheshire since 1888 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), pp. 228-30.
 5. see below, p.234 for the full figures; Illustrated Special Edition of the West Briton, 20 June 1889.
 6. D. Bebbington, 'The Nonconformist Conscience', p. 39.

most common complaint of Nonconformists was resolved. This was the entitlement of clergy to fees for burials on consecrated ground, irrespective of whether or not they had officiated. One Cornish author recalled the occasion on which an eminent Wesleyan died and his friends, wanting to give him a big funeral, tentatively asked the vicar if he would read the burial service. His ready agreement surprised them :

"'But why should I not bury him?' asked the vicar. 'Well we thought you might not care to as he was a chapel man'. 'Tut, tut man', came the reply, 'nothing would give me greater pleasure than to bury the whole lot of you'".

This lighthearted illustration indicates something of the tension between Church and Chapel.⁷

The question of disestablishment never regained the importance it achieved in 1885, but it was notable that all the Methodist-Liberal candidates in Cornwall between 1885 and 1900 were committed to disestablishment. Nearly all of them specifically mentioned their support of disestablishment in England. Some Liberal Unionists in Cornwall tried to win support by adopting the tactic of supporting disestablishment while opposing disendowment. However, by the end of the century, the issue had become the preoccupation of the Welsh and the Scots M.P.s.

The importance of these comparatively minor political issues is that they continued to provide one good reason for Methodist adherence to Liberal candidates, because they were more likely to be sympathetic to these issues than were Conservatives. Hence, one Wesleyan minister wrote to the West Briton in 1895 and, quoting Wesleyan Conference resolutions on matters like burials and chapel sites, concluded that he could not vote for Lord Salisbury. In the non-Wesleyan branches of Methodism

7. Ibid., pp. 35-37; J.S. Flynn, Cornwall Forty Years After (London: Truslove & Hanson, 1917,) p. 63.

feeling favouring disestablishment was stronger and so, therefore, was their incentive to vote Liberal. Liberal M.P.s at St. Austell and Launceston were thought to gain substantially from non-Wesleyan feelings on this one issue.⁸

Conversely, Cornish Anglicans were perfectly willing to demonstrate en masse against disestablishment whenever necessary. The Church in the West, an Anglican journal for the Diocese of Exeter and Truro, consistently refused to comment on elections, beyond gauging the strength of disestablishment as a potential issue. Hence. it was concerned in 1886 lest disestablishment should creep in in the same way that Home Rule appeared to be, while in 1895 the fall of the Liberal Government and thereby the loss of the Church in Wales Suspensory Bill was greeted with relief.⁹

The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw a renewal of Anglicanism in Cornwall, epitomised by the creation of the Diocese of Truro and the building of the cathedral. Cornish Methodists were suspicious of this new Anglican vigour believing it to be aimed at seducing Methodists away from their chapels. Cornish Anglicanism, in reaction to Methodism, had become high church in orientation, and disestablishment was seen by some Methodists as the antidote to ritualism in the Church of England.¹⁰

A new development in the 1890's was the formation of Free Church Councils. Local Free Church Councils sprang up all over Cornwall.¹¹ One of the main impulses

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8. W.B., 18 July 1895; W.M.N., 20 May 1887; Launceston Weekly News, 6 August 1898.
9. Church in the West, 3 July 1886, 6, 13 July 1895.
10. M.T., 4 October 1900; C. Rogers, Wesleyan Methodism: is it a Church or a Sect? Plain Words for Cornish Wesleyans (Plymouth: Smith, 1877); H. Brown, A Century for Cornwall, pp. 4, 45, 47.
11. e.g. at St. Austell, Camelford and Delabole, Camborne, St. Columb, Hayle, Helston, Liskeard, Penzance, Truro, and Wadebridge.

behind the Free Church Councils in Cornwall came from a continuing doctrinal hostility to Roman Catholicism and Anglo-Catholicism. These subjects were often discussed at local councils. At Truro, for instance, which had one of the most active Free Church Councils in the county, there was an address on "Treason in the Church and the remedy". Another mainspring of support came from a growing desire for closer co-operation among the Free Churches and a number of joint enterprises were undertaken.¹²

One of the problems facing this movement was that to some, it was not sufficiently involved in politics, while to others the connexion was too close. It has been suggested that the fear of overt partisan political involvement was one reason why Wesleyans were not closely attached to the movement. It is significant that the leading Wesleyans in the West Cornwall Federation of Free Churches were all Liberals in politics. This may have been the dividing line between Wesleyans in their attitude to the Free Church Councils.¹³

Cornish Free Church Councils were active in the election of 1900. They adopted the tactic of sending each parliamentary candidate a list of set questions. These were on such topics as temperance and education, as well as the need to guarantee the Protestant nature of the Anglican Church. The candidates' answers were published in the local press. Although no recommendations were given as to which candidates were considered preferable, there was little doubt from the replies as to which party was the more sympathetic.¹⁴

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12. C.R.T., 13 October, 1899; W.B., 1 February 1900; E.K.H. Jordan, Free Church Unit: History of the Free Church Council Movement, 1896-1941 (London: Lutterworth, 1956), pp. 31ff.
13. D. Bebbington, op.cit., p.224; cf. W.B., 25 January 1900; C.M.C.R., July 1894.
14. W.B., 11 October 1900; C.R.T., 12 October 1900; R.C.G., 27 November 1900.

Nonconformists in these years retained their interest in the Social Purity movement. One of the campaigns waged to achieve this was against the music halls. The importance of this to Nonconformists can be seen in the candidature of the former Cornish Liberal M.P., R.B. Brett, at Bodmin. He protested against the puritanical nature of the attack made on London music halls by two Wesleyans, George Lidgett, the Liberal candidate for Plymouth, and John McDougall, a London councillor. This so upset local Nonconformists that it ended his connexion with the Bodmin seat. Ironically, McDougall was adopted in his stead.¹⁵

It was in the name of social purity that Sir Charles Dilke was hounded by Wesleyans like Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, once the court had accepted adultery as the grounds of his wife's divorce. Not all Wesleyans agreed with this. McArthur, the Wesleyan M.P. for St. Austell, went so far as to speak on Dilke's behalf at elections. The evidence as to the effect of this in his own seat is conflicting.¹⁶

An even more celebrated incident was the fall of Parnell, when he was cited in a divorce case. The Nonconformist view was put by Hughes, who thundered,

We love Ireland. We passionately desire her well being, but our first obedience and our highest devotion must be to God... We stand immovably on this eternal rock; what is morally wrong can never be politically right and we are certain that any politician who is the acknowledged enemy of God and Social Purity can, under no circumstances, be the true friend and rightful leader of men.¹⁷

Kent has suggested that behind the hostility displayed against Parnell was Nonconformist resentment of Irish Nationalists' influence in Parliament. But this is to underestimate the distinctively moral approach to

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15. C.R.O., AD 366/5; Cornish Times, 16 July 1892; on social purity, see above, p.p. 175-6.
 16. C.R.O., AD366/3, AD 366/5.
 17. M.T., 20,27 September 1890.

politics which Methodists consistently adopted and seen in the emphasis placed on choosing the right kind of men. This 'Nonconformist Conscience', as it was called, was not, however, the monopoly of Nonconformists. A glance at the Truro Diocesan Kalendar during these years displays a similar concern among many Anglicans for social purity.¹⁸

With the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts in 1886, Methodists turned their attention to the Imperial aspects of the problem. Even the Methodist temperance societies did not take a parochial view of their subject, but campaigned against the liquor traffic and opium trade all over the Empire. Nor did they confine temperance to drink, but dealt also with the related issues of gambling and smoking. In this way, the scope of social concern was slowly being widened.¹⁹

Indeed, the closing decade of the century was marked by growing awareness of the social problems of the day amongst Methodists. In 1890 the Wesleyan Conference noted,

The Evangelism of the day includes we rejoice to say, a deep interest in the material, the social and the economic welfare of the people. Missionary efforts and temperance agencies in times past, have dealt largely with effects; and many have overlooked some of the causes by which these effects have been produced. But at length we are widening our policy, so as to embrace not only the constitutional needs but also the environment of the people.²⁰

As this led to problems of political involvement, the 1894 Conference Address commented,

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18. John Kent, 'Hugh Price Hughes and the Nonconformist Conscience', in Essays in Modern English Church History in memory of Norman Sykes, edited by G.V. Bennett & J.D. Walsh (London: Black, 1966), pp. 182, 194; Truro Diocesan Kalendar, 1888, pp. 224-5.
19. M.M., 1886, p. 279; 1887, pp. 268-9; 1891, pp. 427-8.
20. M.M., 1890, pp. 346-7; see also, C.R.O., AD 366/3, AD 366/4.

New conditions bring new wants and new duties but the gospel of Jesus Christ is needed in every age... Many are looking for salvation to social changes, to the readjustment of economic relations; their supreme concern is not with the spirit, but with the form and herein lies their mistake and their danger... As a church we have no direct concern with the theories of economics; upon these Christianity does not pronounce: but with men and their salvation we have the most intimate and vital concern... Our great aim is to save the soul from sin; and if we can accomplish this, all other evil will naturally and necessarily disappear".

Social reconstruction was envisaged only through personal regeneration.²¹

Similar debates took place in the non-Wesleyan branches of Methodism and indeed in the Church of England. The Bishop of Truro speaking on current social issues in 1890 remarked, "May the Holy Ghost guide the Church as she thus tries to discriminate between Christian and Non-Christian socialism, between the socialism which asks 'how much may I give?' and the socialism which demands 'how much can I get?'" Increasing social awareness was interdenominational.²²

Inglis has argued that the main dividing line on social questions in the churches was not denominational, but doctrinal. As he put it, "The liberal and the Catholic in theology could each believe far more readily than the evangelical that his faith was congruous with social radicalism." Up to a point this is true. Yet the Bible Christians, for instance, were able to combine evangelicalism and social radicalism, while for Wesleyans some of their reticence on politics stemmed from a desire to maintain the Connexional peace. The Wesleyan Conference admitted, "Public action tends to become political and political differences are a standing menace to our unity".²³

21. M.M., 1894, pp.378-9.

22. Truro Diocesan Kalendar, 1891, pp. 254.

23. K.S. Inglis, Churches and the Working Classes in England (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), pp.304-5; M.M. 1900, p. 405.

However, evangelicalism did provide an ordering of priorities. As the Wesleyan conference again explained, "Social and political organisations apply the moral forces of a nation, but do little or nothing to create them... The prayer meeting is more powerful than the polling booth". The spiritual remained more important than the social or political, and to the evangelical, personal salvation was of the greatest importance.²⁴

Methodists, Home Rule and Unionists.

Leonard Courtney prophesied during the 1885 election, "There is a deep conviction in my mind that Ireland will interfere with some of the plans of the next Parliament". This was an understatement. The Irish question dominated politics for the next decade. The 1885 General Election had given Lord Salisbury, with Irish Nationalist support, a majority of two over the Liberals. Gladstone was happy to see the Irish question dealt with by the Tories and Parnellites with Liberal support from the Opposition benches, but the political situation was altered when Gladstone's espousal of Home Rule was leaked in December 1885. This opened the way for Gladstone's third Ministry and he soon introduced an Irish Home Rule Bill. It provided for an Irish Parliament and Executive at Dublin with powers over all but reserved subjects, Irish M.P.s were not to sit at Westminster, unless it was to revise the Home Rule Act, and, technically speaking, this proved to be a major stumbling block.²⁵

Methodist reaction to the proposals varied. The

24. M.M., 1892, p. 372.

25. G. Gooch, op.cit., p.233; R.C.K. Ensor, England, 1870-1914 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1936), pp. 94-101.

Free Methodist and the Bible Christian Magazine supported the Bill. The Methodist Times was sympathetic, but had reservations. The Methodist Recorder, however, was less impressed with Gladstone's achievement, remarking "We doubt the sudden and intelligent conversion of a statesman, who after fifty years of experience, propounds a gospel today which he has denounced for forty nine years". It wished upon the Bill a speedy demise.²⁶

The Home Rule proposals provoked especially fierce opposition amongst the 50,000 Irish Wesleyans. Apart from the Presbyterians, they were the largest non-Episcopal body in Ireland. The political atmosphere in Ireland ensured that the Irish Wesleyans were strong supporters of Protestant institutions. It is interesting to note, as Jeffrey does, that in Ireland "Protestants joined together not to co-operate on an ecclesiastical basis, but politically to resist the Home Rule they feared would mean Rome Rule".²⁷

In Cornwall, the Home Rule issue caused divisions in the ranks of the Liberal M.P.s. When the Bill came up for its second reading, Acland, Borlase, Conybeare and Jenkins were in the minority supporting it, while St. Aubyn, Courtney and Bickford-Smith opposed it. Gladstone's defeat made an election unavoidable.²⁸

Both at Launceston and St. Austell, the Liberals had won easily in 1885 and the split in the Liberal ranks in those seats was deemed too small to warrant running even a Liberal Unionist candidate. At St. Austell there were rumours that a former Cornish Liberal M.P., E.W.B.

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26. Free Methodist, 15 April 1886; B.C. Mag., 1886, pp. 233 ff., M.T., 15 April 1886; M.R., 14 May 1886.
 27. M.T., 21 January 1886; Fredrick Jeffrey, Methodism and the Irish Problem (Belfast: Christian Journals, 1973), p. 28; D. Bebbington, op.cit., p. 172.
 28. W.B., 10 June 1886.

Willyams, would stand as a Liberal Unionist, but this came to nothing and Borlase and Acland were returned unopposed. Acland was fortunate in having an Irish Methodist, Dr. Ralph, the principal of Dunheved College, as one of his leading supporters and champions of Home Rule.²⁹

The contest in the Mining Division was again a rough one. Conybeare supported Home Rule, but it was not as important here as it was elsewhere. As one Conybearite explained, "They wanted a man who would take up questions relating to mine leases and miners wages and obtain for the miners fortnightly settlements". On this occasion Conybeare stood as the official Liberal candidate. The Conservatives joined forces with leading Vivianites to oppose him, but they had difficulty in finding a candidate. Eventually, an outsider, J. Drew Gay, was selected. He owned several Californian gold mines. Conybeare was returned with a much increased majority. This was partly due to the distorted 1885 result, but also evidence of the continuing confidence of the miners in Conybeare.³⁰

At St. Ives, Sir John St. Aubyn gained the support of the Conservatives by voting against Home Rule. The Liberals were divided by his action. The Central Liberal Association voted to support him as the Liberal Unionist candidate, while Penzance Liberals decided to take no active part in the contest. The Liberal Home Rulers opted to fight and secured Samuel Barrow as their candidate. It was not a happy choice. On a low turnout, Sir John received the biggest majority in the county, 2,507 (58.6%).³¹

At a meeting of the South East Cornwall Liberal Association, a Bible Christian minister spoke out against

29. Launceston Weekly News, 24 June 1886; W.B., 24 June, 1, 8 July 1886.

30. W.B., 24 June, 1, 8, 15 July 1886.

31. W.B., 20, 27 May, 24 June, 1, 22, July 1886.

Courtney's re-selection, pleading for a candidate untouched by Whiggery. The Liberals passed an overwhelming vote of no confidence in Courtney. They set about looking for another candidate, but it was only at the last minute that they selected the Liskeard Congregationalist, John Abraham.³²

The rejection of Courtney led to the desertion of a number of leading Liberals, who joined with the Conservatives in rallying behind Courtney. An analysis of the platform supporters on both sides gives some evidence for believing that Bible Christians in particular supported Abraham, while a group of leading Wesleyan laymen campaigned for Courtney. Abraham's was a plucky uphill struggle, but he fell well short of Courtney's vote. It was estimated that Courtney had polled one Liberal vote to Abraham's three, as well as the Conservative vote.³³

Bickford-Smith's vote against Home Rule threw the Liberals in the Truro constituency into disarray. In spite of the eloquent advocacy of his principal Nonconformist supporters, he lost the Liberal nomination to Thomas Lough, a rare breed of Ulster Wesleyan who supported Home Rule. Nonetheless, when he was assured of Conservative backing, he decided to stand again. Indeed, the Anglican, Rev. Fraser-Frizell, an arch-opponent over disestablishment, proved on this occasion to be one of his chief supporters. On a reduced poll the surprise was not so much the result - Bickford-Smith's victory was expected - but the size of his majority, which had more than doubled.³⁴

It was equally clear which way the wind was blowing in Cornwall's only borough. In May the Liberal member

32. W.B., 17 June 1886; W.M.N., 30 June 1886.

33. W.B., 1, 15 July 1886; W.D.M., 5 July 1886.

34. W.B., 17, 24 June, 1, 8, 15 July 1886; cf. M.T., 1 July 1886.

had been asked to present a petition against Home Rule containing 800 names for the constituency, including those of some of his leading supporters. Although these "Unionist Liberals" decided not to run a third candidate, they also agreed not to vote for Jenkins. Defending a small majority, committed to Home Rule and in indifferent health, Jenkins opted to resign. When it was found that R.B. Brett, his former partner for the seat was unwilling to stand, Jenkins was persuaded to change his mind.³⁵

At the election, W.G.C. Bentinck, who had stood as a Tory in 1885, spared no expense. In the end, Jenkins majority of 101 was turned into a deficit of 91. The West Briton attributed defeat to the desertion of erstwhile staunch Liberals, notably Quakers. They had fulfilled their pledge to abstain from voting. Bentinck's vote increased by only twenty. Jenkins support fell by 172 votes.³⁶

Hence, Cornwall, represented by a solid front of Liberals in 1885, returned the following year one Conservative, three Liberal Unionists and three Liberals. The Conservatives won the most marginal seat in the county. Elsewhere, they actively supported the three sitting Liberals who had turned Unionist. The supports Kinnear's observation, "Most Liberal Unionist seats were those where the Liberal Unionist M.P.s chose to run after the split in the Liberal Party. "Gay, the one Liberal Unionist candidate not an M.P., was also the only one defeated. Two Liberal strongholds were left unopposed and in the third, mining questions and personal antipathy to Conybeare were potent factors.³⁷

The heavy swing towards Liberal Unionism in Cornwall was greatest at St. Ives. This has been attributed by

35. C.R.O., DDX 344/90; W.M.N., 28 June 1886; W.B., 10,17, 24 June 1886.

36. W.B., 8 July 1886; Falmouth & Penryn Weekly News, 3 July 1886.

37. M. Kinnear, op. cit., pp. 17, 20.

Pelling to "the strategic dangers of having an alien Power so close at hand to its exposed coasts - and the strongest feeling must have been among the large maritime population". One characteristic of this election, however, was the drop in turnout compared with 1885 and the fall of 21.1% at St. Ives was the largest in the county. Apart from the proximity of the last election, many fishermen in the division were away at sea, hardly indicative of great concern over the issue, and other voters seem to have opted out of voting through indecision on the merits of Home Rule.³⁸

The St. Ives result is explicable rather as the product of a combination of factors. The local prestige and popularity of Sir John St. Aubyn, a Liberal M.P. of many years standing, and given full Tory backing, goes a long way to account for the result. The weakness of his opponent was another factor. To this must be added a reaction amongst Methodists against Home Rule. Even the Primitive Methodists of the St. Ives circuit protested against the "Gladstonian" votes of their Conference and pledged themselves to do all they could against Home Rule.³⁹ As at Truro and Bodmin, there was a nucleus of leading Wesleyans gathered round the Liberal Unionist member.

Sir John is the best example in Cornwall of a member of Whiggish gentry, who followed Hartington's lead out of the Liberal Party. It deprived Cornish Liberals of some of their local leading supporters. It also took away from them one of their best sources of income.

Nationally, the Wesleyan Connexion was dismayed by breaches in the "no politics" rule caused by the Home Rule issue. One cause of dissension was the decision

38. H. Pelling, op.cit., p. 163; W.B., 22 July 1886; cf. M.R., 23 July 1886.

39. Cornishmen, 1 July 1886.

of some Irish Methodist ministers to join with clergy of the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches in touring Britian to speak against Home Rule. Such ministers appeared in Cornwall. Samuel Cowdy, an Irish Wesleyan minister at Dungannon, for instance, was the main speaker at a Loyalist gathering in Truro. Cornish Gladstonians were quick to counter these Loyalist speakers with their own imported speakers. Indeed, Cowdy faced disruptive opposition on this occasion from two Irish Nationalists.⁴⁰

Another bone of contention among Wesleyans was a widely circulated pamphlet by a former Wesleyan President of Conference, Rev. W. Arthur, which declared against Home Rule. Bickford-Smith stated that he had been influenced by it and it was much discussed during the Truro contest. Arthur's views as a respected Wesleyan carried considerable influence.⁴¹

Wesleyan attention in this election had been fixed on the Buckrose Division in Yorkshire, where a young Wesleyan-Liberal William A. McArthur, was challenging the local Tory incumbent. The Wesleyans were believed to hold the balance and both sides strove to win their favour. During the contest the Leeds Mercury published a letter purporting to come from Rev. Arthur, which advised a Wesleyan minister to support McArthur. Arthur's reply was swift and devastating. He wrote,

So far from recommending any human being to vote for a Wesleyan who supports the Home Rule Bill, I look upon anyone who does so as, however unconsciously, voting for the ruin of Ireland, for the flooding of England with Irish labourers as well as the beginning of disastrous convulsions in India and throughout the Empire.⁴²

40. D. Bebbington, op.cit., p.117; F. Jeffrey, op.cit., p. 28; W.B., 10 June 1886.

41. W.B., 1 July, 1886; Arthur's pamphlet was entitled, "Shall the loyal be deserted and the disloyal set over them? An appeal to Liberals and Nonconformists"; see Wes. Meth. Mag., 1886, p. 475.

42. C.R.O., AD 366/1.

To counteract this, letters of support were despatched to McArthur from eminent Methodist-Liberal ministers and within a few days a circular supporting Gladstone's proposals had been signed by 510 Wesleyan ministers. A number of others agreed with it, but declined to sign a circular. At this point, the current President of Conference sought to impose a pledge of Total Abstinence from politics by Wesleyan ministers, but his own position was compromised by a letter he had written in support of the Wesleyan Unionist candidate for Boston, H.J. Atkinson.⁴³

The Methodist Recorder attacked the idea of the circulating petition, but defended the conduct of Irish Methodist ministers by classifying Home Rule as a religious question. An equally indignant Methodist Times argued that if their Tory brethren spoke out, Liberals could hardly be expected to keep silent. It commented,

If Home Rule, involving the fate of Governments, is not a political question, there is no such thing as a political question. Moreover, Home Rule is to those who favour it quite as religious a question as it is to those who resist it...⁴⁴

McArthur won the Buckrose contest by one vote, but was unseated on petition. Although the Liberals were suspicious of this decision, McArthur had another chance of entering Parliament when he was selected to stand at St. Austell in 1887. Borlase had resigned because of ill health. The Liberal Unionists chose E.W.B. Willyams as their candidate. The fluidity of the party situation can be seen in that only a month before the contest, the West Briton believed Willyams to be a Home Ruler. Willyams, although absent at the outset of the contest, declared that he supported Hartington, and thereby secured the backing of the local Conservatives.⁴⁵

For the short duration of the by election, the St.

43. D. Bebbington, op.cit., pp. 119-20; M.T., 8,15 July 1886.

44. M.R., 16 July 1886; M.T., 15 July 1886.

45. W.B., 21,24 April 1887; C.R.O., AD 366/1.

Austell division was "deluged with political oratory". Willyams was consistently supported by W.S. Caine, the temperance reformer, and T.W. Russell, who was said to have "harped from first to last on an anti-Catholic string". McArthur, himself a capable speaker, received support from several Wesleyan-Liberal M.P.s. Rumours that some Irish Wesleyan ministers were intending to oppose McArthur drew from the Methodist Times the warning, "Several English Wesleyan ministers have signified their intention to go to Cornwall the moment they hear of an Ulster invasion". The Irish stayed away, but Home Rule remained the dominant issue.⁴⁶

McArthur won, but only by 211 votes compared with the 1885 margin of 2,281. Caine argued that 1,100 Liberal voters had turned against Home Rule. He also asserted his belief that McArthur himself had been partially converted on the issue. In his initial address, McArthur had stated, "there is no middle course between granting Home Rule to Ireland on the one hand and governing Ireland by brute force on the other". Yet two days before the poll he modified his views, conceding,

I do not support through thick and thin the Home Rule scheme of Mr. Gladstone...But I do support the principle of a Parliament in Dublin, subordinated to the Imperial Parliament and empowered to deal with purely Irish affairs and those only. This principle of self-government for Ireland is adopted and held today by Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Jesse Collings and Mr. Caine".⁴⁷

It is significant that a good candidate from a well known Wesleyan family, fighting in a Liberal stronghold, should come so close to defeat. But his opponent was a powerful, local candidate with excellent Liberal credentials and full Conservative backing. For some, the result indicated the strength of Liberal Unionist

46. W.B., 5, 19 May 1887; Liberal Home Ruler, 28 May, 1887; M.T., 5 May 1887.

47. W.B., 26 May 1887; Liberal Unionist, 25 May, 1887; cf. M.R., 26 May 1887.

feeling amongst Wesleyans. For others, McArthur's success was attributed to the loyalty of the Methodist vote.⁴⁸

The alternative to Home Rule pursued by the Conservative Government involved coercion. In the spring of 1887, Hugh Price Hughes attacked the Tory Coercion Act, which provoked a debate as to how representative of Wesleyanism Hughes' opinion was. R.W. Perks, a Liberal Wesleyan laymen, set out to discover the state of Wesleyan opinion by sending a circular to the 1,000 Conference delegates since 1878. The results were that 69% of them declared themselves opposed to the Tory Crimes Bill, while 16% said they supported it. The circular tested opinion on the Conservative Coercion policy rather than on Home Rule, and those refusing to commit themselves on political issues were more likely to be Unionists than Liberals. Thus, Bebbington concluded, "With a fair degree of confidence it can be said that far fewer than 30% of Wesleyan laymen were Unionists in 1887". However, in Cornwall, the figure may have been higher.⁴⁹

In 1889, Gladstone undertook a speaking tour in the South West, including Cornwall. The main subject of his speeches was the Irish question. His aim was to allay Liberal and Nonconformist fears over Home Rule. In the autumn, Chamberlain also visited the South West, but his objective was the opposite to Gladstone's. At Bodmin, he cited the views of the Irish Methodist

48. W.M.N., 20 May 1887; D. Bebbington, op.cit., pp. 174-5.

49. D. Bebbington, op. cit., pp. 111-12, 120, 153-5; an analysis of the 51 Wesleyan lay representatives to Conference between 1878 and 1887 in Cornwall revealed the party preferences of 31 of these: 3 were Conservatives before Home Rule, 9 were still Liberals after 1886 and 19 had become Unionists. Some of these later returned to the Liberal fold. In the sample, Liberal Unionism was strongest amongst the delegates from the Truro and Cambourne seats.

Conference and asked, "I have always understood that Cornwall was the stronghold of Methodism and I want to know what answer the Methodists of Cornwall are going to make to the appeal of their brethren, the Methodists of Ireland". Politicians were battling for the Wesleyan vote.⁵⁰

Indeed, one of the characteristics of the 1892 election was the Unionist emphasis on this aspect of Home Rule. The election addresses of the Cornish Unionist candidates stressed the doleful consequences facing the Irish nation if Home Rule were granted. This was particularly the case in the Truro division, where it was said, "'No Popery' is the leading cry, stated too by men who once posed as advocates of liberty of conscience in matters of faith". The ability of the Unionists to link all questions to that of Home Rule led the West Briton to compare Hartington's support of the Conservative Government to the Redruth woman, who had remarked on the opening of the West Cornwall railway. "Us don't keer where the train ez gwain; us ez a gwain by un wherever he goes".⁵¹

It was not surprising, therefore, that the Wesleyan "no politics" rule again came under threat. The Methodist Times reported, "We receive many complaints that Irish Methodist ministers are perambulating England in the interests of the Tory Party". At Truro, the Unionists billed an Irish Wesleyan minister to speak at one of their meetings, but were warned by the Cornish Wesleyan District Superintendent that this would break the "no politics" rule to which Wesleyan ministers in Cornwall so far had been adhering. His name was withdrawn, but elsewhere in the county this did not happen. However, these speakers did not always get a hearing, as some of

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50. D. Bebbington, op.cit., pp.175-6; A.B. Venning, 'Mr. Gladstone in North Cornwall, 1889', in Liberals West: a Centenary Tribute to Liberalism in Devon and Cornwall, 1877-1977, edited by R. Kirkup et al (Newquay: Quintdown Press, 1977), pp.2-3.
51. V.B., 16, 23 June 1892.

their Cornish brethren took it upon themselves to heckle or disrupt their meetings.⁵²

The Unionist candidate for Truro was J.W. Williams, a wealthy, young Cornishman and an Anglican. He was opposed by a Wesleyan, J.H. Lile, who was committed to Home Rule and the Newcastle Programme. This gave an added twist to the struggle for the Methodist vote. Williams was indebted to Bickford-Smith, who had retired because of ill health, and R.G. Rows, Bickford-Smith's Free Methodist lieutenant, for their assistance in the campaign. On the Liberal side, much was made of Lile's Wesleyanism. Lile himself believed that, though some of the leading Wesleyans in the division were against him, as a whole Wesleyans were with him. The Liberals had hoped to make good progress but, while they reduced the Unionist majority, it still stood at 1,511 (23%).⁵³

There was a tendency for Liberal candidates, campaigning on the Newcastle Programme, to focus on issues other than the Irish question. McDougall, the Wesleyan Liberal candidate for Bodmin, is an example of this. While sound on Home Rule, he concentrated on temperance and social reform. Bible Christian ministers prominently assisted him for the platform and a number of Liberal Unionists were known to have drifted back to the Liberal camp. Chief amongst these was John Pentybridge, a Bodmin Wesleyan who had been one of Courtney's sub agents in 1886. He was disillusioned with Courtney's stance on the temperance and opium questions, and became McDougalls' election agent.⁵⁴

Nonetheless, a group of leading Nonconformists in the division still adhered to Courtney. One of his

52. M.T., 30 June 1892; C.D.P., 9 July 1892; R.C.G., 14 July 1892; W.B., 7 July 1892; M.R., 14 July 1892.
 53. W.B., 2, 16 June 1892; W.D.M., 5 July 1892.
 54. W.B., 2 June 1892.

nomination papers was signed entirely by local Nonconformists, a practice which was to become standard in Cornish seats. As in 1886, Courtney's duties as Deputy Speaker hindered his campaigning. McDougall sliced Courtney's majority to 231 (3.2%). It was believed that it was only Courtney's personal reputation and ability which saved him from defeat.⁵⁵

The results at Truro and Bodmin gave the impression that Liberal Unionism was beginning to take root. At St. Ives this was even more apparent. T.B. Bolitho, who had stepped unchallenged into Sir John St. Aubyn's seat in 1887, was again returned unopposed. He was, however, respected in Liberal circles for his radicalism on issues other than Home Rule.⁵⁶

At St. Austell, the Liberals suffered a serious setback with the resignation of Lord Robartes, a hitherto staunch Liberal supporter, because he was no longer in sympathy with Home Rule. McArthur, the Liberal Wesleyan M.P., had not changed his views on the issue. He condemned the Tory policy, yet was careful to assuage Nonconformist fears. He argued, "I do not believe Protestantism is in danger. What I do believe is in danger is Protestant ascendancy, and the system which gives the largest proportion of positions of power and profit to the minority of the population". By this time McArthur had won his spurs with the electors, and he comfortably best off the challenge of the Unionist candidate.⁵⁷

At Launceston, yet another Wesleyan was standing. Acland had retired and Thomas Owen, a Bristol paper manufacturer was selected as his successor. His

55. Cornish Times, 9 July, 1892; W.D.M., 11 July, 1892; G.Gooch, op.cit., p. 260, fn.1.

56. W.B., 23, 30 July 1887, 30 June, 21 July 1892.

57. C.R.O., AD 366/5; W.B., 30 June 1892.

opponent was Sir Lewis Molesworth, a nephew of Sir William Molesworth, the Radical Baronet of Pencarrow. He had been a Liberal for fifteen years prior to the Home Rule split in 1886 and had nursed the seat for two years. The Liberal Unionists were making a strong bid in the constituency, although they had to scotch rumours that Molesworth was a Catholic. They succeeded in halving the Liberal majority of 1885.⁵⁸

In the other two seats, other influences than Home Rule were at work. At Penryn and Falmouth, the Conservative, Bentinck, was returned with a large majority, attributable in part to the death of Jenkins, the Methodist and former Liberal member, some time before the election. This took the steam out of the Liberal efforts. Although his successor, A.D. Serena, had the necessary shipping connexions, he did not seem able to inspire confidence or enthusiasm.⁵⁹

The Camborne contest again proved to be a severe one. Conybeare, who had been imprisoned in the summer of 1889 for aiding and abetting the Plan of Campaign, was accused of being more concerned about Ireland than Camborne. In fact, he had been active in matters relating to mining, being instrumental in passing the Stannaries Act of 1887 and engaging in a long battle over the question of mine leases with the leading representatives of Cornish mines. Their determination to oust him increased with time and one of them, Arthur Strauss, had been laying a determined siege to Conybeare's seat. Strauss was never officially nominated by the Unionists, but by an organisation of his own creation, the Camborne Parliamentary Association. In spite of comments on his German origin and his Jewish faith, Strauss was backed by the mining interests

58. C.D.P., 2 July 1892; W.B., 9 June, 14 July 1892.

59. W.B., 7 July 1892.

and a coterie of Wesleyan Unionists. He reduced Conybeare's majority by two thirds.⁶⁰

In spite of Liberal successes elsewhere, no Cornish seats changed hands in 1892. One characteristic of the election was the support which local candidates seemed to enjoy. To counter this Unionist advantage amongst the Cornish gentry, the Liberals tended to utilise Methodist candidates from up-country. Four of the six Liberal candidates in Cornwall were Wesleyans.

The 1892 election brought the Liberals once more into office. Gladstone introduced a second Home Rule Bill, which was the same as its predecessor, except that it allowed Irish M.P.s to sit at Westminster on matters of Imperial or Irish concern. Although the Bill passed through the Commons, the Cornish Liberal members dutifully supporting it, it was decisively rejected by the Lords in 1893. The Liberal Ministry then continued rather aimlessly in office until resigning in 1895.⁶¹

Having decided not to call an immediate election after the peers' veto of Home Rule, the issue did not figure prominently as an article of Liberal faith in the elections of 1895 and 1900. The Unionists, however, continued to play up the dangers of Home Rule. The Helston Free Methodist, R.G. Rows, for instance, campaigning for the Unionists at Truro in 1895, likened the danger of a separate Irish Parliament empowered to discuss its own affairs to a hostile fleet anchored in Falmouth harbour. This drew from the Liberal candidate, the Wesleyan H.T. Waddy, the Scriptural quotation, "Your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall see visions".⁶²

60. W.B., 2, 9 May 1889, 30 June, 21 July 1892; W.D.M., 14 July 1892; C.R.T., 15 July 1892.

61. R. Ensor, op.cit., pp. 210-12.

62. W.B., 6 June 1895.

With Home Rule sinking into the political background, a number of Liberal Unionists returned to the Liberal ranks, while the differences between Liberal Unionists and Tories seemed to lessen. Professor Bryce, speaking at Truro in 1892, had argued that the two were only as different as an alligator and a crocodile. This was an exaggeration, as the party situation was not rigid and Liberal Unionists, like Courtney and Bolitho, retained reputations for being Liberal on some questions.⁶³

The issue of Home Rule was particularly important to Unionist strength in Cornwall. Pelling has noted that in Devon and Cornwall between 1886 and 1892 the swing from the Liberals to the Liberal Unionists was twice as great as it was on average in Britain. Furthermore, while the rest of the country tended to become increasingly Unionist in 1895 and 1900, Devon and Cornwall produced virtually no swing at all. The salience of the Home Rule issue at these elections provides an explanation of these fluctuations.⁶⁴

In some places, the Unionist vote increased because of the presence of Irish Protestants or in reaction to large scale Irish immigration into an area. Lancashire is the best example of this. But this cannot explain the strength of Unionism in Cornwall. Catholicism was weak and there had been little Irish immigration into the county. The largest Irish community in the Camborne area numbered 250 people. Nevertheless, there was a strong undercurrent of anti-Irish feeling, which surfaced in the Camborne riots of 1882, during which the Catholic Church was badly damaged.⁶⁵

The decline of the Irish question as an issue the

63. W.B., 13 June, 18 July 1895, 9 June 1892.

64. H. Pelling, op.cit., p. 163.

65. G. Oliver, op.cit., pp. 32-33; W.B., 20, 27 April

last two elections in the Victorian era meant that they did not cause as much dissension in Wesleyan circles as their immediate predecessors had done. Many Liberals, as well as Methodists, would have shared the opinion expressed in the Methodist Times at the turn of the century, when it wrote, "Gladstonian Home Rule is dead, but we cannot doubt that some system of local self government applied to all the different portions of the United Kingdom will some day satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Irish race". The Liberal Unionists had won their point, but plain coercion, the Tory policy, was still repugnant to Methodist-Liberals.⁶⁶

There were a number of reasons put forward to explain why Nonconformists ought to support a policy of Home Rule for Ireland. There was a traditional allegiance to Gladstone as a Christian leader whom they revered and trusted. Some hoped that by supporting it, the achievement of disestablishment would be hastened. As Liberals, many of them were sympathetic to claims for self-government. Abraham at Liskeard in 1886 argued, "that they should act on the principle of the Sermon on the Mount, whereas in dealy with Ireland they went back to Leviticus". In similar vein, the Methodist Times, quoting the Gold Rule, asked its readers to put themselves in the position of the Irish. It believed Home Rule to be the antidote to Roman Rule.⁶⁷

The most important motive behind Nonconformist opposition to Home Rule was a militant anti-Catholicism, which believed the opposite to this, namely that Home Rule was tantamount to Rome Rule. This view found most adherents amongst Wesleyans, firstly, because of all

1882; A.A. Clinnick, 'Camborne Riots', Cornish Almanack (1931), pp. 117-19.

66. C.M.C.R., August 1895; M.T., 25 October 1900, 25 July 1895.

67. D. Bebbington, op.cit., p. 104; W.M.N., 30 April 1886; M.T., 30 June 1892.

Nonconformists, they were the least openly identified with Gladstonian Liberalism. Secondly, Roman Catholicism throughout the century had always been able to evoke a hostile response from Wesleyans, as it did, for instance, over Catholic Emancipation and the Maynooth grant. Thirdly, Wesleyans had stronger links with Ireland than other Methodists and most Nonconformists. They were therefore more likely to listen to the appeals of their Irish brethren. A fourth factor was that some Wesleyans, who formed the financial aristocracy of Nonconformity, may have been susceptible to Unionist principles for socio-economic reasons, and used Home Rule as an excuse for this. This is easier to assert than to verify, although Unionism seems to have been strong amongst the wealthier Cornish Wesleyans.⁶⁸

The Irish Methodists and their England Methodist supporters were subjected to strong criticism for their views. The Methodist Times on one occasion commented,

Our Irish brethren have been so long in the habit of trusting to Dublin Castle and the Royal Constabulary that they have forgotten that it is not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God that Protestantism has always prevailed.

Others wondered what effect the behaviour of the Irish Protestants would have on their efforts to witness to Roman Catholics, concluding that their conduct was hardly edifying. At all events, the controversy over Home Rule did much to breakdown the traditional "no politics" rule among Wesleyan ministers.⁶⁹

Although a host of arguments were employed against Home Rule in Cornwall, the "No Popery" theme seems to have been the most effective. Technical matters, like the representation of Irish Members at Westminster, soon

68. D. Bebbington, op.cit., p. 172; C.R.O., DDMR/LISK/221.

69. M.T., 23 February 1893, 3 June 1886.

became peripheral. They could be answered. Prejudice could not. In a county like Cornwall, where Wesleyanism and Liberal Unionism were so strong, it is evident that the Wesleyans were a prime factor in the political realignment which followed the Home Rule crisis. It did not involve all Wesleyans, probably not even half of them, but enough to alter the political balance in some seats. While the Whigs in the county gave to Liberal Unionism wealth, influence and candidates, the Wesleyans provided the numbers and some local leaders.

Temperance

Temperance opinion had further progressed within the different branches of Methodism in these years. Sunday closing and local option were deemed desirable by Methodist Conferences and a petition to Parliament in 1895 in support of local option contained the names of 18,753 Methodist local preachers. At the local level, in February 1893 it was decided to create a Wesleyan Cornwall District Temperance Union. It aimed to stimulate the work of existing temperance societies, to form new ones where none existed and to promote temperance legislation. Temperance reformers also banded together in the interdenominational Cornwall County United Temperance Council, which in addition to Methodist support, also included Quakers and Anglicans. By this time, the churches had become the driving force behind the temperance movement.⁷⁰

In Cornwall, evidence of how the Methodist Connexional views were translated into local politics can be seen in the results to the first County Council in 1889. The West Briton gave a brief biographical sketch of each member of the council. Taking those who were

70. M.M., 1892, p. 371, 1895, p. 427; B.C. Mins., 1895, p. 54; C.M.C.R., February, March 1893; W.B., 8 March 1900.

named as supporters of "temperance", vague though the classification is, and analysing them according to religious and party affiliation some clear tendencies emerge.

Fig. 6:1, "Temperance" support on the first Cornwall County Council.⁷¹

	Tory		Liberal Unionist		Liberal		Indep.		Total	
	Temp.	Total	Temp.	Total	Temp.	Total	Temp.	Total	Temp.	Total
Anglican	2	21	3	4	6	11	0	7	11	43
Wesleyan	2	3	2	2	9	13	1	1	14	19
Nonconformist	1	1	1	3	2	5	0	1	4	10
No Religion stated	0	6	0	4	1	2	1	4	2	16
Total	5	31	6	13	18	31	2	13	31	88

Overall, it can be said that there was a strong group of temperance supporters on the Council, although they were still in a minority. The Liberal bias is evident (18/31), compared to the Conservatives (5/31), while the Liberal Unionists fall somewhere between the two. The Wesleyan emphasis is also clear. They formed the largest single denominational bloc of temperance supporters (14/19), larger than the temperance contingent in the bigger group of Anglicans on the Council (11/43). Amongst Anglicans, it was the Liberals who provided most temperance support, whereas with Wesleyans support showed signs of being present irrespective of party label. The Nonconformist category, including the non-Wesleyan Methodists, were insufficiently represented to do justice to their beliefs.

71. Illustrated Special Edition of the West Briton,
20 June 1889.

The late 1880's were a difficult time for temperance reformers. Their proposals had been pushed to one side by disestablishment in 1885 and by Home Rule from 1886 to 1891. Furthermore, to the extent to which temperance had become identified with the Liberal Party, Home Rule divided its supporters into Gladstonian Liberals and Liberal Unionists. There were sound temperance reformers in the Liberal Unionist ranks, like W.S. Caine and in Cornwall, E.W.B. Willyams and T.B. Bolitho. However, overall, Liberal Unionist M.P.s were not enthusiastic about temperance, perhaps partly because they were working alongside Conservatives at elections and also because they were often assisted by the drink trade. Even Caine had returned to the Liberal ranks because of this in 1890.⁷²

The influence of beer at elections was still bewailed. The West Briton in 1892 alleged that at least three Unionist candidates in Cornwall were employing the help of "John Barleycorn". In 1895, an Alliance lecturer, noting the apparent incongruence of "temperance" Nonconformists voting Unionist, wrote, "Let me appeal especially to Christian temperance men not to pray one way and vote another, but in the fear of God to vote as they pray".⁷³

The temperance question resurfaced politically after the defeat of the first Home Rule Bill and the Unionist Government's proposals a little later to compensate publicans for the loss of their licences. Local option formed part of the Liberal's "Newcastle Programme", and in 1893 and 1895 the Liberal Government sought to introduce a local option measure. The first Bill made no progress and the second one was lost when the Government fell. The Wesleyan Conference urged its

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72. D. Hamer, The Politics of Electoral Pressure, p.241; W.B., 19 May, 7 July 1887, 30 May 1895; D.A. Hamer, Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery: a Study in Leadership and Policy (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), p. 335.
73. W.B., 14 July 1892, 30 May 1895; cf. R.C.G., 21 July 1895.

members to support the Bill, and hoped, in vain, that the issue would be dealt with "apart from political partisanship and sectarian bias".⁷⁴

The adhesion of the Liberal Party to the temperance cause is reflected in the Cornish candidates' election addresses. All the Liberal candidates in 1892 mentioned their support of the direct veto. Most of them also committed themselves to support Sunday closing and to oppose compensation to publicans. In 1895 Liberal candidates based their temperance views on the recently rejected Bills. The Liberal debacle at that election caused some Liberals to fight shy of such an overt identification with temperance reformers, notwithstanding the assurances of the Bible Christian Magazine that the Local Veto Bill was not to blame for the Liberal defeat. Unionist candidates either avoided any reference to temperance questions or would speak of temperance reform on "equitable lines". This meant they supported compensation to publicans who lost their licences. There were, then, clear differences between the two parties.⁷⁵

In 1896 Lord Salisbury's Government attempted to put the temperance question into "cold storage" by appointing a Royal Commission to investigate the Licensing Laws. The commission produced two reports, a majority one putting the brewers' views and a minority one which had the endorsement of the temperance representatives. Salisbury ignored both of them. But while the Majority Report fell into oblivion, the Minority Report caused great upheavals in temperance circles. Some supported it. The Wesleyan Conference called it "a satisfactory basis for a large and efficient measure of Temperance Reform". The Bible Christians

74. M.M., 1893, p. 428, 1894, p. 303, 1895, p. 382.

75. David M. Fahey, 'Temperance and the Liberal Party - Lord Peel's Report, 1899', Journal of British Studies, X, 2 (May 1971), p.140; B.C.Mag., 1895, pp. 516-17.

welcomed it, but felt it did not go far enough. Others saw it as a complete betrayal, because it did not include the Direct Veto for England. The Liberals, however, tacitly accepted the Minority Report and in the election of 1900 it provided a meeting ground for Liberals and temperance reformers.⁷⁶

In 1900 temperance was a key issue in the Camborne contest. The Western Daily Mercury stated, "In the main the election has been a square, stand up fight between the Licensed Vituallers and the Temperance Party". It was alleged too, that the constituency had been "flooded with emissaries of the liquor traffic resolved to do all they could to overthrow a temperance advocate". The temperance advocate and Liberal candidate, on this occasion, was W.S. Caine, one of the signatories of the Minority Report.⁷⁷

His opponent was the incumbent Unionist, Strauss, who had defeated Conybeare in 1895. Strauss nonetheless campaigned as a temperance candidate, a tactic he had used in 1895, even though, as Caine pointed out, out of seven possible temperance votes in Parliament Strauss had only voted twice in favour of Sunday closing. On five occasions he had been absent. Caine's biographer commented, "On temperance for the only time in his life, he found himself subjected to challenge as to whether he was a better reformer than his opponent who knew the value of talking plausibly about it in the constituency". Caine still regained the seat for the Liberals.⁷⁸

This election again illustrates Liberal support for

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76. M.T., 12 October 1899; M.M. 1900, p. 314; B.C. Mag., 1900, pp. 70, 351; D. Hamer, The Politics of Electoral Pressure, pp. 300 ff.
77. Quotations from Alliance News, 18 October 1900.
78. W.B., 18 July 1895, 4 October 1900; John Newton, W.S. Caine M.P.: a biography (London: Nisbet, 1907), p. 288.

temperance in Cornwall. Most Liberal candidates explicitly mentioned the Peel Report favourably and even two of the successful Liberal Unionists supported it; Hain at St. Ives and Molesworth at Bodmin. Hain, however, a local New Connexion Methodist had so offended temperance sentiment by refusing to pledge himself to the direct veto that local enthusiasts cast around, albeit unsuccessfully, for a sounder candidate.⁷⁹

In the last quarter of the century there was a clear link between Methodism and the Liberal Party through temperance. All the Methodist candidates of this period in Cornwall, mainly Liberals, were temperance supporters. The various branches of Methodism, including the Wesleyans, committed themselves to such measures as local option and the Peel Report.

Furthermore, it was possible for Wesleyan ministers to campaign on temperance without fear of transgressing the "no politics" convention. Hence, Hugh Price Hughes, who had been enticed to speak in Cornwall by a lady offering £50. to his West London mission on condition that he personally collected it, felt at liberty to hold forth on the Local Veto Bill shortly before the 1895 election. Temperance was perceived as a social and moral issue. It nonetheless had party implications.⁸⁰

While temperance was a factor inducing Methodists to support Liberals-Callington Methodists openly declared their approval of the Wesleyan Liberal, Owen, on these grounds - there was a small minority, usually of Wesleyans, who continued to ignore the subject. St. Issey Wesleyans, for instance, doggedly applied the "no politics" rule to discussion of the Local Option Bill, notwithstanding

79. W.D.M., 25 September 1900.

80. V.B., 30 May, 6 June 1895; M.T., 28 July 1892; M.R., 30 June 1895.

the favourable declaration of Conference. Indeed, what annoyed Liberal-Wesleyans at Truro in 1895 was that some Cornish Wesleyans, who had been present at the Cornwall Wesleyan Synod when it declared itself in favour of the Liquor Control Bill, still continued to campaign for a Unionist candidate who opposed the Bill. The West Briton commented, "there are Methodists so far in sympathy with the Local Option Bill that they would be delighted to see the Government defeated on it tomorrow".⁸¹

Temperance, then, was an issue which, though submerged by Home Rule at first, re-surfaced firmly nailed to the Liberal mast in 1891 and with more open support from Methodists. It remained a prominent issue in Methodist circles, and, perhaps more reluctantly, with Liberals. It was a subject which confirmed Methodist-Liberals in their Liberalism and which caused some Liberal Unionist-Methodists to return to the Liberal fold, after Home Rule had dropped from the political horizon. While it made Unionist candidates in Cornwall wary of offending temperance voters, it was never a sufficiently compelling issue to draw most of the Nonconformist Unionists into the Liberal camp.

The Boer War.

Longstanding antipathy existed between the Boers and the British in South Africa. In 1899 this erupted into war. In Cornwall interest in the conflict was heightened by the return of a large number of miners from the Transvaal goldfields. Cornish Methodists rallied with differing degrees of enthusiasm behind the war. The most widely held view was that, while war was horrible, the Government on this occasion took the right and only course

81. C.D.P., 25 June 1892; W.B., 6 June, 4 July 1895.

of action open to it. This was also the line taken by the President of the Wesleyan Conference.⁸²

There were several reasons Methodists used to justify their support of the war. Hugh Price Hughes reflected the feeling at the time when he declared,

if modern history teaches us anything at all, it teaches us that God has called the British Empire to be the friend and protector of weak and inferior races, and we dare not consent to any arrangement which would deprive the natives of South Africa of the inestimable advantages which they enjoy under the supreme protection of the British Empire.

Rather than seeing the Empire as a cause of war, it was seen as a means of preserving the peace. Hence, the Methodist Times described the need to establish a "Pax Brittanica". Moreover, it was suspected, at a less idealistic level, that the Boers' real aim was to substitute the Dutch for the British flag.⁸³

Another reason was that, just as there were Wesleyans in Ireland complicating the issue, so also there were 80,000 Wesleyans and over 200 ministers in South Africa. The Methodist Recorder was horrified at the possible scenario of Methodist fighting Methodist, but this does not seem to have occurred. The Methodist Times, however, saw the matter in a different light: "Wesleyan Methodism is an Imperial body even to an extent that Wesleyan Methodists themselves do not realise... The fact is that Methodism is, in a pre-eminent degree, the religion of the English speaking world".⁸⁴ In brief, the Boer War crystallized a desire for peace, humanitarian concern, the missionary imperative and patriotism into Wesleyan support for Imperialism.

82. W.B., 12 October, 16 November, 21 December 1899;
M.T., 21 December 1899.

83. M.T., 21, 28 September, 26 October, 1899 27 September 1900.

84. M.R., 19 October 1899; M.T., 12 October 1899.

The Bible Christians, however, in whose ranks pacifism throughout the nineteenth century had always been strong, were more divided. Their Conference commented,

Without attempting to apportion the exact degree of blame in the case of each combatant, we deeply deplore the fact that two Christian nations like England and the Transvaal should have thrown themselves in such deadly feud upon each other... Great differences of opinion exist among us as to the righteousness of the present war and its necessity.⁸⁵

There were some Wesleyans who disagreed with the war. The Methodist Times conceded, "It is perfectly true that a considerable number of most estimable Wesleyan Methodists think war an unrighteous one and they are constantly saying so at the top of their voices. "But these were then dismissed as a small minority. According to Bebbington, the divisions in Methodism were "bottled up" by the closing of the Methodist press to pro-Boers. However, Silas Hocking, a former Free Methodist minister who was a member of the "stop the War Committee", reflecting on ministerial support they received, concluded, "The Quakers as a body were with us. In the main Unitarian ministers were on our side. A considerable number of Baptist ministers gave us their support, and a few Congregationalists. The Methodists as a whole, ignored us".⁸⁶

Hocking had been adopted as the Liberal candidate for Camborne after Conybeare's defeat in 1895. He made no bones about his opinion of the war; "There are a few people in England...who believe that war with all its brutality is opposed to the entire spirit and genius of

85. B.C.Mins., 1900, p. 32.

86. M.T., 1 March 1900; (cf. M.R., 26 October 1899); D. Bebbington, op.cit., pp. 319ff.; Silas K. Hocking, My Book of Memory: a string of reminiscences and reflections (London: Cassell, 1923), p. 180.

Christ's teachings". This particular war he believed was being waged "in the interests of British ascendancy and cupidity and so called Imperialism".⁸⁷

It was not long before Hocking's uncompromising stand led to his withdrawal as Liberal candidate for Camborne. It quickly emerged that his views were not popular locally with electors, Liberals or Methodists. The Methodist Times reported from the Mining Division, "As far as we have been able to observe and judge, his arguments and actions by no means win the approval of Cornishmen in general, or of Cornish Methodists in particular".⁸⁸

Indeed, Cornwall had shared in the rush of patriotic feeling that spread through the country to such an extent that an attempt by Quiller-Couch to hold a peace meeting at Liskeard addressed by Lloyd George ended in uproar. Lloyd George was almost forced to repeat an escaping feat he had had to perform at Birmingham. It was not surprising that Salisbury took advantage of the mood of the country and of divisions in the Liberals ranks over the war to call an election.⁸⁹

In the 1900 election Edward Hain, a Methodist and Bolitho's Unionist successor at St. Ives, and the Wesleyan McArthur at St. Austell were both given unopposed returns. McArthur's remark that "Imperialism without Liberalism is Jingoism, but... Liberalism without Imperialism is Parochialism" was widely quoted. Once war had been declared, he clearly supported it, but remained critical of the Government's handling of the negotiations and unpreparedness for war. He also broadened the issues at

87. W.B., 28 December 1899; see also C.R.T., 6 October 1899.

88. W.B., 22 February, 1 March 1900; M.T., 11 January 1900.

89. W.B., 12 July 1900; R. Kirkup et.al., op.cit. p.8.

the election, refusing to limit himself to a war which was seemingly over.⁹⁰

F.J. Horniman, who had ousted Bentinck at Penryn and Falmouth in 1895, followed McArthur's lead. He was opposed by a Unionist candidate, whose son was serving in South Africa and who campaigned on support for the war. A local matter, the question of the Rector's rate at Falmouth, was also prominent in the contest. Horniman clung on to the seat by twenty votes.⁹¹

It was thought that J.F. Moulton, a Wesleyan by background, would be given a walkover at Launceston. He had won a by election for the seat in 1898 after the death of the sitting Liberal M.P., Owen. Even though they found difficulty in obtaining a candidate, the Unionists eventually brought one forward. Although he did not make any impact on the Liberal majority, he did succeed in restricting the help Moulton could give to Liberals in the neighbouring Bodmin seat. This was believed to be the object of the exercise.⁹²

At Bodmin the party situation was once more in turmoil, because of Courtney's vociferous opposition to the war. He protested against "the engrossing arrogance which men call Imperialism". Courtney's wayward independence as a Liberal Unionist M.P. caused one newspaper to compare him to "an umpire who always gave his own side out". This time however, the verdict was against him. The Conservatives early intimated their opposition to him and in June 1900 the Liberal Unionists had not only withdrawn their support from him, but had selected Sir Lewis Molesworth as their candidate. Courtney was borne on sufferance till the next election.⁹³

90. W.B., 20 September 1900; W.M.N., 27 September 1900; M.T., 7 December 1899.

91. W.B., 9 August, 27 September 1900.

92. W.B., 20 September 1900; Cornish Times, 29 September 1900.

93. W.B., 19 October, 21 December 1899, 1 March 1900; G. Gooch, op.cit., pp. 352, 400ff.

Courtney toyed with the idea of standing in 1900. The now aged Abraham, Courtney's opponent in 1886, urged Liberals to rally behind Courtney, but his plea fell on deaf ears. This marked the end of any hopes Courtney had and he thus tactfully supported the candidature of Thomas Snape, a Lancashire Free Methodist, whom the Liberals had decided to adopt instead.⁹⁴

Although Snape did not share Courtney's views on the war, he did believe in arbitration and was branded by the Unionists as an outsider and a pro-Boer. The nomination papers show that Snape did not succeed in attracting all the Methodists in the division to the Liberal cause. Molesworth gained a majority twice the size of Courtney's in 1895. An interesting postscript to the contest occurred in December 1901, when Liberals in the division invited Courtney to visit them with a view to becoming their candidate. He declined.⁹⁵

At Truro the war caused the Liberals unexpected problems. Their candidate, C.W. Thornton, originally declared his belief that it would be wrong to engage in war. The Kruger ultimatum changed his mind and he even volunteered, being despatched to South Africa with the Imperial Yeomanry. Before his departure, the Liberals rejected his offer to withdraw as candidate. Hence, the election caught the Liberals with Thornton stranded in South Africa.⁹⁶

While it was in one sense an asset to have a patriotic candidate, it was to the Unionists' advantage that he was absent. Lawrence, the Unionist incumbent, had

94. Cornish Times, 22, 29 September 1900.

95. W.B., 27 September 1900; Cornish Times, 29 September 1900; G. Gooch, op.cit., p. 429.

96. W.B., 12 October, 7 December 1899, 18 January 1900: as he was only a trooper, Thornton was unable to return home, unlike those with commissions. (W.B., 27 September 1900).

been a zealous and a generous M.P., and it was not unexpected when he increased his majority. R.G. Rows, supporting Lawrence, was quick to point to the irony of Thornton fighting for his country, while some of his supporters were opposed to the war in which he was a combatant.⁹⁷

The Camborne contest was a bitter one. The Nonconformist, W.S. Caine, replaced Hocking as the Liberal candidate. Apart from temperance, the war was a leading issue. Strauss, Caine's opponent, waged a jingoistic campaign and labelled the Liberal a pro-Boer. Caine had to spend much of his time defending his views on the war. He believed that the war was not caused by Boer desire for supremacy, but by a conspiracy of Johannesburg millionaires. He was not, however, a supporter of the "Stop the War" campaign, and was one of the few candidates to discuss the nature of the peace terms. While most Liberals were happy with Caine's candidature, the Wesleyan President of the Camborne Liberals, John Vivian, resigned, explaining that he was a Liberal Imperialist.⁹⁸

Mining questions were also important in the division. Caine's biographer recalled, "The one argument we found it hardest to meet was the 'Bread and Cheese' argument. Mr Caine would put no money in Cornish mines as his opponent had done". The battle was said to be between "Prosperity Strauss" and "Calamity Caine". However, the Unionist candidate's claim to be the "guardian angel" of the tin mining industry was harder to sustain in 1900 than it had been in 1895, because of the increasing problems and depression facing the industry.⁹⁹

Caine succeeded in defeating Strauss, a result which was said to have owed much to the presence of miners who

97. W.B., 20, 27 September, 11 October 1900.

98. C.R.T., 7 September 1900; W.B., 14 April 1900.

99. J. Newton, op.cit., p. 290; W.B., 4 October 1900; C.R.T., 12 October 1900.

had returned from South Africa. Although Strauss had retained the support of the mine captains and of the influential Unionist Wesleyans, Caine was seen as the Champion of Nonconformity. This was illustrated by Tom Fiddick, a Primitive Methodist, who had become the new President of the Camborne Liberals. He greeted the result exultantly:

Remarking at the outset that he was more in a condition to sign the Doxology than to make a speech, the company rose in a body and sang the Doxology. Mr. Fiddick asked why he and his hearers had sung that. It was, he said, because they had won a great triumph for the church and the Sunday School as opposed to the public house (cheers) - a triumph for progressive Liberalism as against retrogressive Toryism".¹⁰⁰

The various Liberal views on the Boer War were all reflected in the Cornish candidatures, from the anti-war stance of Hocking and Courtney, through reluctant supporters of the war, like Caine and Snape, to Liberal Imperialists such as McArthur. Thorton's absence from the contest nullified his patriotic gesture. It also demonstrated the difficulties of Liberals posing as warriors. The Cornish results, with the return of Camborne to the Liberal fold, highlight Kinnear's comment that the Liberals only succeeded in regaining the lost strongholds of 1895.¹⁰¹

The fortunes of Methodist candidates in the 1900 election has led to Koss to comment, "It was very much the exception for a Wesleyan M.P. not to be an imperialist, while the reverse was true among other Methodists, and to an even greater extent, among other Nonconformists...." He concluded that Methodist candidates fared best when they fulfilled three criteria: "that they were Wesleyans, that they were receptive to imperialism and that they fought constituencies in which Methodist electoral

100. W.M.N., 13 October 1900; W.D.M., 13 October 1900; W.B., 18 October 1900.

101. M. Kinnear, op.cit., p. 26.

strength was concentrated". McArthur and Moulton (whom the Methodist Times still claimed as a Wesleyans) fulfilled all three conditions and were successful, whereas Snape, a Free Methodist and less enthusiastic supporter of the war, was unsuccessful at Bodmin. Hain, the New Connexion Methodist and Liberal Unionist returned unopposed at St. Ives, was exceptional, since his selection as candidate ensured his election. Cornwall thus provides some support for this analysis by Koss.¹⁰²

Bebbington has argued that in the closing years of the century the distinctively Nonconformist attitude to foreign affairs was changing. There was a move away from pacifism towards Imperialism. This was believed to be the case with Wesleyans particularly because of missionary interests. The result was that with the Boer War, to quote the Christian World, "Free Churchmen as a body are in line with the general national sentiment on the question". This seems to have been the case in Cornwall, but Methodists nationally, including Wesleyans, appear to have been more reluctant supporters of the war than a reading of the columns of the Methodist Times would suggest. The Bible Christians showed the least enthusiasm for the whole affair.¹⁰³

Kent has seen behind the behaviour of Wesleyans like Hughes, who enthusiastically supported the war, a belief in "Social Imperialism". This he defines as "an attempt to draw all the conflicting elements of society together in defence of the nation and Empire and to prove to the least well-to-do classes that their interest were inseparable from those of the rest of the nation". This was not, however, an opinion voiced in Cornwall, and while it may have been present subconsciously, it was more likely to exist in cities like London.¹⁰⁴

102. Stephen E. Koss, 'Wesleyanism and Empire', Historical Journal, XVIIIi (1975), p. 117; M.T., 11 October 1900.

103. D. Bebbington, op.cit., p. 323.

104. J. Kent, 'Hugh Price Hughes and the Nonconformist Conscience', p. 195.

Evidence for the view of Koss, that enthusiasm for Imperialism became a bridge to Conservatism for Wesleyans, is also lacking. It did reinforce the Unionism of Nonconformist Unionists, but even Liberal Imperialists like Vivian at Camborne merely refrained from campaigning during the election. They did not transfer their allegiance. The death of Hughes and disillusionment as the war dragged on meant that the appeal of Imperialism to Wesleyans waned. Politics became preoccupied with other issues¹⁰⁵

Conclusions.

Fig: 6:2, Comparison of Methodist number and Liberal voters, 1886-1906.¹⁰⁶

		1885	1886	1892	1895	1900	1906
CAMBORNE	Meth. (a)	20	20	19	18	17	17
	Lib. (b)	(c)	44	40	35	39	50
ST. AUSTELL	Meth.	11	11	11	11	10	11
	Lib.	50	(b)	47	46	(b)	55
BODMIN	Meth.	7	7	7	7	7	7
	Lib.	46	23	39	36	32	47
TRURO	Meth.	10	11	11	11	10	10
	Lib.	43	18	29	33	32	45
LAUNCESTON	Meth.	13	13	14	15	16	17
	Lib.	50	(d)	42	39	40	47
ST. IVES	Meth.	11	11	11	11	10	11
	Lib.	44	12	(b)	(b)	(b)	47
PENRYN & FALMOUTH	Meth.	10	10	9	9	9	11
	Lib.	46	39	34	44	43	46

- (a) Index of Methodism = no. of Methodist members (both sexes, over 16/population).
 (b) Index of Liberalism = Liberal votes/Electorate (male, over 21).
 (c) Lib. v. Ind. Lib. contest.
 (d) unopposed return.

105. S. Koss, 'Wesleyanism and Empire', pp. 117-8.

106. I am indebted to M. Laver and H. Schadee (Dept. of Politics, Univ. of Liverpool) for their assistance in this.

Fig. 6:2 shows that there is no evidence of a correlation between fluctuations in Methodist numbers and Liberal voting at elections in these years. The Cornish election results of this period are better explained by calculating the average Liberal vote per election and the particular effect of the constituency concerned. The 1886 contest is the one that is deviant from this pattern, pointing to the importance of Home Rule as an issue, and Penryn and Falmouth is the constituency for which this method is the worst fit. Being a small borough, local factors counted for more and showed up more easily. This conclusion is not really surprising. Changes in Methodist numbers were not sufficiently dramatic to influence individual election contests, though the trends varied from seat to seat. This absence of correlation does not preclude the possible effect of Methodist switching parties, although this information is not statistically accessible.

An analysis of Nonconformist candidatures between 1886 and 1900 reveals fifteen names. Four of these were Liberal Unionists and eleven were Liberals. Only three of them were local men and nine of the fifteen were Wesleyans. Nonconformist candidatures were most numerous at Truro and Bodmin. Considering the strength of Methodism there, the lack of Methodist candidatures at Camborne is surprising. The occupation of the seat by the controversial Conybeare for most of this time partly explains this. But it was not so much Methodist numerical strength which seemed to influence such decisions. It was rather the influence of Methodists in the local party associations.^{107.}

107. Abraham (Cong.,L.); Bickford-Smith (Wes.L.U.); Caine (Bap.,L.); Hain (M.N.C.,L.U.); Jenkins (Wes.,L.); Lawrence (Unit.,L.U.); Lile (Wes.,L.); Lough (Wes.,L.); McArthur (Wes.L.); McDougall (Wes.,L.); Moulton (C.ofE./Wes.,L.); Owen (Wes.,L.); Snape (U.M.F.C.,L.); Waddy (Wes.,L.); Wills (Bap./Cong. (?),L.U.); Also F.J. Horniman came from a Quaker family, was thought to be a Congregationalist, but was discovered to have been a Presbyterian for 30 years and

The experience of J.F. Moulton when seeking the Liberal nomination at Launceston in 1898 illustrates this. His son recalled,

Having been asked whether he was a Nonconformist, he replied, though not one himself, he had the greatest sympathy with their cause and was referring to the prominent positions that various members of his family had taken in Wesleyan work when he was cut short by the remark from the back of the room - 'Seems to me as you are the only one as has gone wrong!'

Indeed, although a Churchman, his father, grandfather and great grandfather were all Wesleyan ministers.¹⁰⁸

As Methodists began to enter the political fray more often as candidates, areas like Cornwall were looked upon as offering the best prospects for success. As one newspaper put it, "Cornish constituencies are rapidly becoming the happy hunting ground for Methodist Radical candidates". The tendency in Cornwall for Methodist, and indeed Wesleyan candidates to be Liberals, is reflected throughout this period in the country.¹⁰⁹

There were a number of identifiable reasons for this. The temperance cause had become closely associated with the Liberal Party, while correspondingly the brewers had further gravitated towards the Unionists. On issues relating to Social Purity, the Liberals had proven more sympathetic. They had been responsible for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, whereas the Tories had opposed their repeal. The interests of the Church of England, too, were closely associated with the Conservatives as upholders of the Establishment. The redress

then became an Anglican (I am indebted to Dr. Bebbington for this reference). Those names underlined were of Cornish origin, those in capitals served as M.F.s.

108. Quoted in W. Lawrence, op.cit., pp.121-2; H. Fletcher Moulton, The Life of Lord Moulton (London: Nisbet, 1922), p. 17.
109. C.R.O., ADD 366/5; M.T., 15 July 1886, 8 August 1895, 11 October 1900; M.R., 30 June 1892.

of Nonconformist grievances, the control of Ritualism and disestablishment were only likely to come from the liberals.¹¹⁰

At the beginning of this period should be added the appeal of the personality and explicit Christian faith of Gladstone to Nonconformists. His influence was believed to be an important factor in consolidating Nonconformists as a whole in favour of Home Rule. Sometimes, support for the Liberals, as the party of progress, was explained in simple religious terms. Lawrence Ching, a Kilkhampton Wesleyan, gave "his belief in the principle of doing to others as we would they should do to us", as the one reason for his staunch Liberalism. While it is usual at political meetings to defend political creeds with political reasons, there is not the same practical religious motivation to be found in Unionist speeches, outside of concern for Irish Protestants, as there is among Liberal oratory.¹¹¹

There were three impulses attracting Methodists to Unionism this time. The first of these was a dislike of Home Rule, focussing on the possible fate of Irish Wesleyans. Anti-Catholicism continued to characterise Methodists. Secondly, there was the development of Imperialism and the sense of the destiny of the British race, which was associated with the missionary imperative, but which was not an exclusively Unionist cause. Thirdly, there was the growing affluence of Wesleyans. To the extent that socio-economic pressures began to affect the top echelons of Wesleyanism, Unionism became more attractive.

110. M.T., 11 July 1895, 20 September 1900.

111. David W. Bebbington, 'Gladstone and the Nonconformists: a Religious Affinity in Politics', in Studies in Church History, 12: Church, Society and Politics, edited by Derek Baker (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975), p.382; C.D.P., 2 July 1892.

These factors had less appeal to non-Wesleyan Methodists. During the Liberal nadir of 1899, for instance, the Bible Christian Magazine urged on its readers their political responsibilities to keep the lamps on the ancient Liberal altar burning. Support for the Liberal cause ran throughout the Connexion. But while this lessened the need for ministerial abstention from politics, it also meant that on occasion divisions in Liberalism affected them. The Boer War was a case in point.¹¹²

It was amongst Wesleyans that Unionism was strongest. Hence, with political divisions between its members, it was prudent to keep party politics out of the chapels. This accounts for the continuing Wesleyan emphasis on "no politics" in the chapels or by ministers. In Cornwall, this ideal was not always achieved, largely because of the Home Rule issue. Wesleyan Unionists were important largely by virtue of their positions in the Connexion. But in Cornwall they help to explain both the numerical strength of Unionism, for which the desertion of the Whigs alone is insufficient, and the fortunes of Unionism, which fluctuated according to the perceived danger of Home Rule.¹¹³

The Nonconformist move toward achieving social reforms took the nature of crusades, which tended to be crude attempts at influencing politics, usually in negative rather than a positive direction. It was easiest to campaign on issues most closely associated with obvious sin and seek to limit their effects. Drunkenness and vice were two examples. But, as Jordan has pointed out,

the fact remains that many of these protests were much needed to check tendencies which if unhindered would have entailed the degradation of national and

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112. B.C. Mag., 1899, p. 120; John F. Glaser, 'English Nonconformity and the Decline of Liberalism', American Historical Review, 68 (1957/8), p. 357.
113. W.B., 14 July 1892; C.R.T., 26 October 1900; R. Wearmouth, Methodism and the Struggle of the Working

social life. There is, in other words, a point where negative action of some kind is always necessary.

While morally this is commendable, it had political ramifications. To quote Glaser, "Liberalism in the 1890's appeared to many working class voters as a Crotchet Castle, from which dreary teetotaling Dissenters launched raids on pubs, music halls and politicians cited in divorce cases". Not all electors were Nonconformists. Nor did they necessarily see these issues in the same light as Nonconformists.¹¹⁴

Furthermore, there was a contradiction in the Wesleyan attitude to politics. There was the emphasis on political responsibility. As the Methodist Times wrote of the franchise in 1895, "Every Christian elector in Great Britian is bound to vote, if possible, ...and will be compelled to give an account of his vote at the judgment-seat of Christ!"¹¹⁵ Obedience to this led to political involvement and commitment, which in turn led to the emergence of strong political differences of opinion. Hence, on the one hand, there was an incitement to political activity, and, on the other, discouragement from this involving the Connexion in political controversy. This helps to explain why most Methodist political action depended on individual Methodists.

In the career of Methodists, like Hugh Price Hughes, the problem confronting this approach to politics is summed up. Hughes claimed and believed that he was not a party politician. He defined issues in moral or religious terms. But this begged the question of what did and what did not constitute such an issue.¹¹⁶

Classes, 1850-1900, pp. 216-7; Maldwyn Edwards, Methodism and England, pp. 173-4.

114. E. Jordan, op.cit., p. 58; J. Glaser, op.cit., p.359.

115. M.T., 4 July 1895.

116. D.P. Hughes, The Life of Hugh Price Hughes (London: Stoughton, 1904), pp. 85, 358.

The politics of this period evoked from Methodists, as Hill and Turner have noted, two responses. These were, "support for existing governments or an attempted moral coup d'etat. Wesleyan Toryism represents the former, while an aggressive Nonconformist Conscience constitutes the latter".¹¹⁷ On the whole, Methodists followed Hughes and supported Liberalism with enthusiasm and moral fervour, though a number of Cornish Wesleyans broke ranks and opted for Unionism. While there were other factors cutting across these orientations, both sprang from the desire to approach politics from the standpoint of their faith and to define it in moral terms.

117. B. Turner and M. Hill, op.cit., p. 176.

C H A P T E R S E V E N

THE EDWARDIAN ERA

Education

This decade includes the years during which Nonconformity reached its most political in response to the controversial Education Act passed by Balfour's Government in 1902. Under the provisions of this Act, Local Education Committees were given control over all secular education. They replaced the old School Boards, while in the Voluntary Schools they were responsible for meeting the running costs of the schools out of the rates, in return for which they were given the right to appoint one third of the school managers.¹

Balfour's measure provoked various responses. On the whole, the Church of England, directly involved because of its own schools, welcomed the Bill, but with differing degrees of enthusiasm. The Bishop of Truro was twitted by Nonconformists for cancelling confirmations in order that he would be able to reach the House of Lords in time to support the Bill. However, the acceptance by the Government of the Kenyon-Slaney amendment, which placed religious instruction under the control of all the managers rather than the parish clergy, was not popular with Cornish Anglicans.²

Nonconformist feeling was summed up in the Methodist Times, which complained, "Never within living memory or in the modern history of England have the deepest convictions of religious Nonconformists been treated with such ruthless disrespect". Even the Wesleyans, who were the Nonconformists with the biggest stake in education, were

1. A.R., 1902, pp. 99-101.

2. W.B., 6 November, 11 December 1902; see also D.R. Pugh, 'The Church and Education: Anglican Attitudes, 1902', J.E.H., XXIII, 3 (July 1972), pp. 219-32.

moved to protest. A special meeting of the Wesleyan Education Committee decided "that the most strenuous opposition should be offered by our people to the passing of the Bill", and in Cornwall the Wesleyan Synod expressed a desire "to end rather than mend the Bill..."³

In 1903 the Wesleyan Conference was held at Camborne and this was the setting for a confrontation between the two schools of thought in Wesleyanism on attitudes to education. There were those who wanted to preserve the separate existence of Wesleyan Day Schools and there were others who believed the schools ought to be transferred en bloc to the control of the local authorities. Although the Conference decided against the latter option, it did condemn the Education Act and agreed not to build new schools where unsectarian schools were being established. Feelings on the issue were so strong that the President of Conference felt it necessary to allude to the danger of making the Connexion a political organisation in his Conference Address. But opposition to the education measure was to be found at all levels within Methodism and it produced a harvest of hostile resolutions at the Quarterly Meetings of the Methodist circuits.⁴

Although in retrospect it is difficult to understand fully the passions roused by this particular piece of legislation, it was opposed for a number of reasons. Firstly, a variation of the cry that there should be no taxation without representation was raised. It was argued that this measure directly violated an agreed principle that there should be no increase in the grant

3. M.T., 22 May, 12 June 1902.

4. W.B., 25 June, 2, 23 July 1903; M.M., 1903, pp. 9-10, 115 ff.; J.E. Munson, 'A study of Nonconformity in Edwardian England as revealed by the passive resistance movement against the 1902 Education Act' (Unpublished D. Phil. thesis: Univ. of Oxford, 1973), p. 202.

from public funds to denominational schools, unless that increased grant also involved "adequate" representation in the management of the schools. In this instance, "adequate" meant at least half of the school managers being appointed by the council or elected by parents. The Wesleyans had adopted a system whereby trustees elected two managers, the educational authority two more and parents of children at the school another two.⁵

A second objection arose from the responsibilities of the managers in choosing the teachers. This effectively meant that in many church schools Nonconformists would not be appointed headmasters or teachers, unless they subscribed to certain Anglican tests. This maintenance of "religious tests", as it was branded, was an emotive cry to Nonconformists. The Bible Christian Conference protested that this "places in the hands of sectarian managers the appointment of about 70,000 teachers who are civil servants". This was also a source of complaint in the teacher training colleges, since many of these, being Anglican, also imposed religious tests on applicants.⁶

Continuing antipathy between Anglicans and Nonconformists was a third reason. Nonconformists objected to being compelled to send their children to attend schools "the teaching in which is repugnant to the consciences of their parents". There were about 5,600 parishes which only had Anglican schools in them and the spectre was raised of Anglo-Catholic clergy indoctrinating the children of Nonconformists. Nonconformists believed that the Act was not designed to benefit education, but rather to bolster and finance the interests of denominationalism. Furthermore, the Methodist Times was both suspicious and upset, because Catholics and Anglicans were consulted on the education measure, but

5. J. Munson, op.cit., p. 202.

6. B.C. Mins., 1903, p. 43.

Nonconformists were not.⁷

Apart from purely political objections to the Bill, which Nonconformists voiced all the same, there was strong support among the Free Churches for the existing School Boards. The Methodist Times denied that School Boards were monopolised by Nonconformists and claimed that they were superior to the voluntary schools. In defence of School Boards it was even suggested that to link schools to the councils was degrading to education, because it put it on the same level as drains! However, not everybody shared the same opinion of the old system. The average Cornish School Board in these years, was described retrospectively as "about as bad an educational authority as could possibly have been invented...."⁸

It was the County Council in Cornwall which was given responsibility for working the Act. However, even over education, party feeling was considered to be a hindrance to the council's work and the scenario of non-co-operation in the administration of the Act, which took place in Wales, never looked like being repeated in Cornwall. A disappointed West Briton noted that in the 1904 Council elections only one of the ten contested seats was in consequence of the Education Act.⁹

Nonetheless, feeling did run high on the Council as the Bill was progressing through Parliament, and again in the preparation of an agreed syllabus for religious education. The inclusion of the Apostles Creed in the syllabus was the point of controversy. Two Free Methodist County Councillors proposed that the Creed be dropped, but in the end it was decided to place the Apostles Creed in asterisks, making it optional and giving explanations of specific terms like "Holy Catholic Church". This

7. Wes. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), May 1902; M.T., 3 April 15 May 1902; for a local illustration of feelings aroused by Anglo-Catholic clergy in education, see W.B., 7 July 1904.

8. M.T., 3 April 1902; Cornwall Education Week Handbook

was only accepted by a narrow majority, and the few Nonconformist councillors who joined Anglicans in supporting this compromise were widely criticised.¹⁰

The Council's decision was attacked by Dr. Clifford in London and locally by the Free Methodist, Rev. J. Cockin, who called it, "putting the Apostles Creed on the rates". Nationally, the Free Church Council labelled it an attempt to bypass the Cowper-Temple clause, which forbade specific denominational teaching. In a sense, this is proof of Lee's observation, "The tradition of popular indifference to county council work has continued, broken only by occasional outbursts of virulent abuse". This was an instance of the latter.¹¹

Soon after the Education Bill had been passed, W.A. McArthur, the Wesleyan M.P. for St. Austell, expressed his view that, "This education struggle had brought back into the ranks of the Liberal Party many who, owing to the troubles of 1886 had left it". This was true in Cornwall. Charles Menhinnick, a Free Methodist, who had been a Unionist member of the County Council since its inception, was a typical example of someone who became "an ardent Liberal in consequence of his dissatisfaction with the education policy of the Tory government. The West Briton felt able to rejoice "that Unionist Nonconformists have not sunk all their Nonconformity in their Unionism".¹²

An instance of the political effects of the education issue can be seen in the by election at Camborne in 1903, caused by the death of W.S. Caine. The Liberals selected as their candidate Sir Wilfred Lawson, a pro-Boer defeated

(Truro: Jordan, 1927), pp.33-34.

9. W.B., 3, 10 March 1904.

10. W.B., 13 November 1902, 21 July, 15 September, 20 October, 15 December 1904.

11. W.B., 27 October, 17 November, 29 December 1904; J. Lee, op.cit., p.2.

12. W.B., 12 February 1903, 9 October 1902: Thomas Shaw, The Menhinnick Family...The History and genealogy of a Cornish family (Rotherham: 1950), p. 40.

in the 1900 election. Lawson had been baptised in the Church of England, brought up in Nonconformity and in later years returned to the Anglican fold, but with the conviction that the Church of England should not have any political privileges. In his election address, he referred to the Tory education policy as being an attack on the elementary rights of Nonconformists. On the Education Act he promised to "do all possible to get rid of that obnoxious and unjust measure".¹³

Lawson's opponent was the Unionist tin merchant, Strauss, defeated by Caine in 1900. On the education issue he argued that now the measure had become law the best policy was to obey it and seek to modify it. He declared his willingness to support any amendment suggested by the County Council. This offer was ridiculed in the Liberal election newsletter, "Sir Wilfred's Budget", since it was pointed out that on a council where Nonconformists mustered only one third of the total councillors, nothing radical could be expected.¹⁴

Support from the Free Churches poured in to help Lawson. The indefatigable Dr. Clifford gave an impassioned speech at Camborne mainly dealing with the arguments and influence of Sir George Smith, the Cornish Wesleyan and Unionist. It was believed that Sir George's declarations in favour of the education scheme would carry weight in Wesleyan circles. Clifford urged Methodists to stand by the emphatic Conference declarations against the Act.¹⁵

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13. G.W.E. Russell, (Ed.), Sir Wilfred Lawson: A memoir (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1909) pp. 256, 259, 324; Alliance News, 2 April 1903; W.B., 26 March 1903.
14. C.R.O., DDX 481/40; W.B., 26 March 1903.
15. W.B., 9 April 1903.

When the result was announced, Lawson had increased Caine's majority six times over. He attributed this to the education issue. Certainly, the education question in Cornwall gave Nonconformists a strong incentive to work for a Liberal victory and to some extent this is illustrated in the campaign and result of the Camborne by election.

Passive Resistance in Cornwall.

When the Education Bill became law, in spite of Nonconformists protests, the question arose what to do next. The Methodist Times suggested the best policy was to "Work the Bill, minimise its mischief, try to save Education and prepare the way for a really National system. "A similar policy was adopted by R.G. Rows, a Free Methodist and Liberal Unionist, who had become chairman of the new Cornwall County Education Committee. He argued that further protests would only endanger the education of the children in the schools.¹⁶

However, ways of continuing to protest were being considered and one of these was called "passive resistance". This meant a refusal by a ratepayer to pay the full assessment of his rates. Instead, after deducting an estimate of the proportion of the rate spent on education, only the remainder of the bill was paid. This never became official free church policy, but gained the support of many leading Free Churchmen. In Cornwall, opinions in the local free churches varied, but some opted to support passive resistance.¹⁷

Indeed, passive resistance was not new to Nonconformists. As Munson in his study of the movement noted, "The refusal to pay rates for religious purposes

16. M.T., 18 December 1902; W.B., 28 May, 18 June 1903.

17. E. Jordan, op.cit., p. 106; W.B., 12 March, 28 May, 18 June, 24 September 1903.

was part of the Nonconformist's heritage, inherited from the anti-church rate movement of the 1830's to the 1860's". However, the Government remembered, too, that there had been an attempt at passive resistance in 1870, and in the 1890's the threat of it came to nothing. Hence, they believed that it would fizzle out again.¹⁸

The Wesleyan Conference officially remained uncommitted but sympathetic to passive resistance. The Methodist Times decided that it was a question demanding an individual decision, although it stated its own belief that it was a justifiable course of action. However, with Hugh Price Hughes in failing health, there was no prominent Wesleyan willing to launch a passive resistance campaign in the Connexion. Even the Methodist Times conceded, "Many Methodists are still Nonconformists. They are not Dissenters and cannot be expected to share the deep convictions and feelings of their brethren".¹⁹

The Bible Christians, in contrast, were prepared to go further. Their 1902 Conference had warned that a number of their people would not regard the Education Bill as entailing any moral obligation on them to obey it. The following year, the Conference address commented, "We give no direction to our people as to what they ought to do in this matter of 'passive resistance', save to say in the words of the Guardian newspaper, 'The theory of passive resistance is legitimate enough'". The Conference, however, not only expressed its sympathy with those who felt obliged to resist passively, but promised to support them.²⁰

18. J. Munson, op. cit., pp. 109, 138.

19. M.M., 1903, p. 115; M.T., 1, 15 January 1903, 7 August 1902; J. Munson, op.cit., p. 184; D. Hughes op.cit., p. 503.

20. B.C.Mins., 1902, p. 35, 1903, pp. 28,43 ff.

Needless to say, the policy had its opponents, not least amongst Anglicans. The Bishop of Truro, for instance, believed that the passive resistance movement was without cause. He pointed out that only 126 children, two out of every 300 in the county's church schools were withdrawn from any part of religious instruction in 1903.²¹ One view, quite common amongst Nonconformists was that expressed by a Cornish Wesleyan who voiced his pain at the ridicule brought upon Protestants by passive resisters and his shame at the language used by some of them to describe the country's leading statesman.²²

According to Munson, between June 1903 and June 1904, the first year of passive resistance, there were 113 summonses issued in Cornwall for the non-payment of the education rate.²³ The columns of the West Briton alone contain cases of at least 249 summonses issued in the county between March 1904 and the resignation of the Unionist Government towards the end of 1905. The West Briton only seems to have included instances of resistance deemed newsworthy, but the summonses involved about 129 different resisters.

Thirty nine of them were ministers of religion.²⁴ Wesleyan ministers were hardly involved at all, especially compared with the activities of Bible Christian and Congregationalist ministers. By occupation the laymen tended to be small shopkeepers and farmers, and a good number of those identified were Wesleyans. Most of the country's leading Nonconformist laymen, however, Unionist and Liberal, were not among their numbers.

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21. W.B., 5 November 1903; Cornwall in 1902 had 179 Board Schools and 160 Voluntary Schools of which 137 were Anglican and 17 Wesleyan (W.B., 4 December 1902).
22. W.B., 1st October 1903; see also W.M. Hudson, The Land's End: a naturalist's impressions in West Cornwall (London: Hutchinson, 1911), p. 113.
23. J. Munson, *op.cit.*, pp. 272 ff.
24. By denomination there were 14 B.C. ministers, 7 Cong., 5 U.M.F.C., 4 P.M., 3 Bap., 3 Wes., 3 Wes. Reform, 1 M.N.C., and 1 unidentified minister; cf. J. Munson, *op.cit.*, p. 288.

The course of action adopted towards those not paying was to bring them to court. From the first, Cornish magistrates refused to allow passive resisters to use the courts as a platform for their views. Some resisters nonetheless managed to get their views across. William Beer of Gorran stated, "that he did not intend to pay for a godless Act which had been forced through Parliament". A Launceston man mentioned "that he had a decided objection to pay as a Wesleyan for the Roman Catholic teaching out of his pocket". The Rev. J.P. Southwell, the Congregationalist minister at Bodmin, caused some amusement with his efforts to find a legal basis for resistance, moral arguments being disallowed. On one occasion before the bench, he claimed exemption under the Toleration Act of 1688, which, not being repealed, still relieved him from "assisting Popish doctrines". During another appearance, he based his objection on the Act of 1868 abolishing Church rates. On neither occasion did he convince the magistrates.²⁵

Those who refused to pay in Court had a distraint order issued against them. The goods distrained, (pocket watches were a favourite), were then sold on auction, where they were usually knocked down when the right amount was bid, normally being sold back to the owner or to a friend. Sometimes bids from outsiders were refused.

At first, the auctioneers tended not to charge for their services, beyond essential costs, but attitudes changed as the proceedings became something of a habit. Following the auction almost inevitably came the speeches against the Education Act.²⁶

It was not always easy for those who wanted to become passive resisters to do so. A Bible Christian

25. W.B., 10 March, 14 April, 8 December 1904, 13 April 1905.

26. W.B., 24 March, 8, 29 September 1904.

from St. Dennis, for instance, the only resister in his parish, found that an anonymous person had paid in stamps the 5d. he had deducted from his rate demand. When C.A. Millman, a Liskeard Congregationalist, found that an unknown well wisher had paid the portion of the rate he had deducted, he was so annoyed that he instructed his solicitor to institute proceedings against those who had accepted the money.²⁷

In order to overcome these anonymous payments, some resisters refused to pay the whole rate until in court, when distraint warrants would be issued for that which they still refused to pay. Taking their protest even further, a few passive resisters went to prison. An early Cornish example of this was the Rev. J.S. Finch, a Bible Christian minister in St. Just. The first time his goods had been distrained. On the second occasion he had made over to his wife all his belongings. The magistrates sentenced him to six days imprisonment, thoughtfully allowing him to be released by the following Sunday.²⁸

The most celebrated case of Cornish passive resistance was at Liskeard. In November 1904 the Congregationalist Millman, a Wesleyan, R.M. Botterell, and the local Bible Christian minister, Rev. Richard Squire, had all transferred their goods and were imprisoned for one day for not paying the education rate. When the next rate demands were issued they again refused to pay and were imprisoned for a week. Their journey to Bodmin gaol took on the appearance of a victory parade, accompanied as it was by the St. Pinnick temperance band and commemorated in the form of a postcard. On their release, they were given an enthusiastic welcome home. Botterell recalled, "in prison their whole time had been spent with God. It had been a period of great spiritual comfort and he felt that

27. W.B., 24 March, 21 April 1904.

28. W.B., 11 August 1904.

the time had not been wasted".²⁹

Passive resisters believed fervently in the righteousness of their cause. Hence, when the Rev. T.E. Mundy, an aged Bible Christian supernumerary, appeared before the Penzance bench for the third time, he stated, "If it must be one or the other - the treadmill for a month or the payment of the rate - he would rather go on the treadmill than sin against God and his conscience". Munson quotes the instance of one imprisoned Bible Christian minister who maintained, "I quite believe God has as much called me to do this as He has my two daughters". His daughters were missionaries in China.³⁰

But this cannot hide the fact that the movement never captured the support of the majority of Nonconformists. Munson has estimated that there were only about 8,000 resisters in England. According to his analysis of the movement in different counties, Devon was an area of relative strength and Cornwall one of relative weakness. This difference is perhaps attributable to the predominance of Wesleyanism in Cornish Nonconformity and the comparative strength of Old Dissent in Devon.³¹

One practical reason for the limited support received was that the movement was restricted to ratepayers. Those whose rates were compounded with their rent were unable to join in the protest. It was therefore largely confined to the middle classes. Another cause of weakness was the failure to involve more ministers, while in Cornwall many of the leading laymen remained aloof. There seemed to be more sympathy for the resisters than there was practical involvement. The possible

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29. W.B., 30 March, 6 April 1905; Paul Bolitho, The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit, 1751-1967 (Liskeard: 1967), pp. 42-43; C.R.O., DDMR/LISK/351.
30. W.B., 31 August 1905; J. Munson, op.cit., p. 140.
31. J. Munson, op.cit., pp. 269,275.

ridicule to be incurred by becoming a resister, the feeling that it was rather degrading to religion and the activities of anonymous well wishers succeeded in holding back some who may otherwise have joined in. Again to quote Munson, "It had failed to convince the general public that it was a solemn movement of conscientious objection..."³²

At the outset of the campaign in Cornwall, one St. Austell resister denied that they were seeking cheap martyrdom, but argued that they were aiming to keep Nonconformist grievances in the public eye. In this they were successful, even though the movement showed signs of decline before the election 1906. Although repetition removed its news value, the progression from court proceedings, through auctions, to prisons kept up interest. It is reasonable to assume that those who felt so strongly about the Education Act as to engage in passive resistance would rank among the Liberal Party's most strenuous workers at the next election.³³

Temperance

Licensing justices in Farnham in 1902 carried out a scheme to reduce the number of licences without paying compensation to the dispossessed licensees. The policy executed at Farnham was imitated elsewhere and it had the support of Methodists. Brewers and publicans, however, began lobbying the Unionist Government for compensation and this was enshrined in the Licensing Act of 1904. The Act upheld two principles: "that wherever a licence was taken away on grounds of public policy there should be compensation and that such compensation was to be paid by the trade itself".³⁴

This measure roused a second storm of indignation

32. Ibid., p. 265.

33. W.B., 5 November 1903.

34. G. Wilson, op.cit., p.110; G. Brake, op.cit., p. 41; A.R., 1904, p. 109.

amongst Nonconformists against Balfour's Government. As the President of the Bible Christian Conference thundered, "A holy anger is kindled within us as we think of a Government prostrate at the shrine of Bacchus, legislating in the interests of a powerful lucrative monopoly and with no moral sense as to the deep and terrible dangers involved...."³⁵

Balfour's view of temperance reformers was that they had "by some strange perversion...transferred to the seller of drink the sentiments of moral reprobation which ought more properly to be reserved for the immoderate consumer". But the strength of feeling in Cornwall emerged in the Methodist Quarterly Meetings. These consistently passed more resolutions on the subject of temperance and against this particular measure than they did over Balfour's Education Act. Furthermore, there was a hardening of attitude in Methodist circles to members of their own Connexion who were involved in the trade.³⁶

Nonconformist objection to the measure were that it nullified the principle that licences were held for only one year, being issued according to local needs and the public interest. The Act, it was argued, gave publicans a "vested interest", which erected an insuperable barrier to future reforms. They also believed that the compensation was excessive (especially for something of such a morally dubious nature) and doubted whether the Act would lead to the reduction in licences which most people were necessary.³⁷

Temperance was still a political issue of some force. The Direct Veto Electoral Association in West Cornwall, for example, reckoned that it had 1,100 voters on its roll in the St. Ives Division in 1903. In the same year,

35. B.C.Mins., 1904, p. 31.

36. Sydney H. Zebel, Balfour, a political biography (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1973), p.121; W.B., 25 June, 2 July 1903; M.M., 1903, p.117, 1904, p.118; for a clash between teetotalers and Wesleyans at

the Camborne by election was indicative of temperance strength in the Mining Division. W.S. Caine, a noted temperance reformer, was succeeded as Liberal M.P. by Sir Wilfred Lawson, for many years the parliamentary leader of the temperance forces. The timing of this by election coincided with the announcement of the Government's licensing proposals, which ultimately became the 1904 Act. Hence, Lawson's election was greeted enthusiastically in temperance circles.³⁸

The Methodist Times jubilantly observed that the result was "a significant comment by electors on the shameless coquetting of the brewers which has marked the recent conduct of the Government". It added, "We cannot refrain from claiming the result as an undisguised and crushing condemnation of the Government's action in regard to both education and the reduction of licences". While education was the more important factor in the by election, temperance was an issue to which Nonconformists, including Wesleyans, were strongly committed. Balfour had thus trodden on their toes twice.³⁹

The General Election of 1906.

In the winter of 1904-5, there arose spontaneously in Wales a religious revival. Chapel membership in the Principality rose by an estimated 40,000. It was hoped that the revival would spread to England, but, in spite of numerous rumours, it never really did. Reports of revivals were certainly plentiful in Cornwall. The

Liskeard, see W.B., 7 May 1903.

37. W.B., 23 June 1904; M.M., 1904, pp. 9, 107.

38. W.B., 9 June 1903; Alliance News, 16 April 1903.

39. M.T., 16 April 1903.

membership figures of some Methodist circuits in the county showed large increases, but these were counter-balanced by losses elsewhere. While there was an overall increase in Cornish Methodists, it was nowhere near as dramatic an increase as that experienced in the Welsh chapels and it was not sustained. It did, however, contribute a heightened sense of expectancy among Nonconformists. It was this, coupled with feelings aroused by Balfour's education and temperance policies, which moved ministers like Rev. W.W. Foulston, a Truro Congregationalist, to tell his fellow Free Churchmen, "the most spiritual thing they could do was to win the coming election".⁴⁰

The election came soon after Balfour resigned in December 1905. His timing of the resignation was possibly an attempt to capitalise on differences of opinion in the Liberal ranks over Home Rule, but Campbell-Bannerman succeeded in forming a strong Liberal Ministry. The Methodist newspapers were pleased with the Liberal Ministry, since it contained a number of Nonconformists. The Liberals went to the country early in 1906.⁴¹

During the election all seven Unionist candidates in Cornwall played up the threat of Irish Home Rule. Ulster Nonconformist ministers were again to be seen on Unionist platforms and at St. Ives in particular there was said to be "an invasion of Irishmen". The Liberals often attempted to prevent such speakers from being heard and the Western Morning News alleged that chapel leaders were among the chief culprits in doing this. The Liberal candidates were so wary of the Home Rule issue, that comparing the Liberal views of 1886 to those of twenty years later, the Western Morning News commented, "So many

40. C.R. Williams, 'The Welsh Religious Revival, 1904-5', B.J.S., 3 (1952), pp. 253-5; Stephen E. Koss, 'Revival and Revivalism' in Edwardian Radicalism, 1900-14, edited by A.J.A. Morris (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p.78; W.B., 25 May 1905, 24 September 1903; C. Neall, History of St. Ives Fore Street Methodist Church (1962), p.28.

41. W.D.M., 27 September 1905; M.T., 14, 21 December 1905.

Radicals are burning today the Home Rule gods they worshipped then". But this cut the ground from under the Unionists feet.⁴²

The Irish question, which had previously wrought such havoc in the Liberal ranks, was in fact merely a diversion from an issue which had fragmented the Conservatives. In 1903 Chamberlain had taken up the issue of tariff reform and this ultimately led to his resignation from the Cabinet. Balfour also lost the support of Unionist Free Traders. Edward Hain, the Liberal Unionist M.P. for St. Ives, who had been criticised by his Methodist brethren for supporting the Education Act, was one of several who crossed the floor of the House of Commons in defence of Free Trade. While fiscal reform divided Unionists, the Liberals stood rock solid in defence of free trade.⁴³

In Cornwall the tariff reform campaign took on local colouring. It was reported from St. Austell that a variant of the oft quoted illustration of the big and small loaf was "the great and little pastry". However, apart from workers in the Penryn granite industry, the issue did not rouse much enthusiasm in the county.⁴⁴

In the opinion of the Methodist Times, tariff reform could be attacked on ethical grounds, firstly, because it would benefit the few at the expense of the many, and, secondly, because the promise to pay for pensions out of tariffs was considered to be electoral bribery. This Liskeard Circuit Messenger quoted approvingly the view of Dr. Clifford, who argued, "A tax on food is not a matter of cold arithmetic, but of individual and national character. It means more poverty, more suffering, more wrongdoing, ending in widespread deterioration." The West

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42. W.D.M., 10 January, 1906; W.M.N., 17, 23 January 1905.
 43. W.D.M., 24 November 1905; W.B., 15 October 1903, 11 January 1906.
 44. W.M.N., 25 January 1906; W.B., 24 August 1905.

Briton, however, was more down to earth. Comparing the fixed views of electors on temperance and education, it noted at a later date, "Free Trade and Protection are, however, regarded as affairs of expediency and as soon as a voter believes bread will be cheaper and work more plentiful under Protection than Free Trade, he is lost to Liberalism".⁴⁵

But Methodist also saw temperance as a preferable alternative to tariff reform. In connexion with the fiscal question, the Methodist Recorder wrote,

If the millions of money which are attracted to the public houses could be retained in the hands of the working classes, we should have greater comfort, more savings, better national health and more skill in work and we should do much to remove a national sin. The statesman who will lay his hand most determinedly on a traffic which beggars millions and scatters misery broadcast is the statesman that God and the nation require.

Temperance may have been a negative policy, but it was one which its supporters believed would bring with it many positive benefits.⁴⁶

At the election the Wesleyans issued an official election manifesto on temperance. It specially commended Sunday Closing and the Peel Minority Report, while opposing the 1904 Licensing Act. The Methodist Times pointed out, "If this action involves consequences advantageous to one political party and detrimental to the other, that is not the fault of the Conference or the Temperance Committee, but of the political parties themselves".⁴⁷

The Unionist Government's decision to permit the importation of Chinese indentured labour into South African mines, where after the war there was a shortage of manpower, became another election issue. The policy was labelled

45. M.T., 28 January 1904; Liskeard Circuit Messenger, November 1903, W.B., 27 January 1908.

46. M.R., 11 January 1906.

47. M.T., 28 December 1905.

"chinese slavery" and aroused particular concern in Cornwall, as it was believed that the Chinese coolies would deprive Cornish emigrant miners of a possible source of employment. While the Conservative candidate at Launceston dismissed the question as a "yellow herring", it was yet another aspect of Unionist rule which angered Nonconformists and upon which Liberals were able to capitalise.⁴⁸

In spite of the battle on economic policy, education continued to be a salient issue in the election campaign. As an editorial in the West Briton commented, "In strong Nonconformist counties such as Cornwall the fiscal controversy has by no means brushed the education agitation aside..." The Liberals made the most of the education controversy. At Liskeard they produced an election poster portraying a closed door of a church school with the caption "No Nonconformist teacher need apply. "The local vicar objected to it, not surprisingly since it was untrue in Liskeard. In the Launceston division the Liberal candidate tried to take advantage of the case of a Wesleyan lady teacher at Botus Fleming, who was allegedly dismissed because she would not take communion in the parish church. This stirred up quite a commotion in the constituency.⁴⁹

Of the Cornish constituencies, the Bodmin division typified the revitalisation of the Liberal Party in the 1906 election. This was partly due to the Education Act, but also important was the adoption by the Liberals of T.C.R. Agar-Robartes as their candidate. The Robartes family were popular, wealthy and locally influential. Robartes' father, Viscount Clifden, who had taken little interest in politics since 1886, fully exerted his influence in his son's favour. The whole constituency

48. M.T., 19 February 1903; W.B., 25 February 1904; W.M.N., 5 January 1906.

49. W.B., 7 January 1904; W.M.N., 16,17, 18 January 1906; C.D.P., 27 January 1906.

party was reorganised by C.A. Millman, the new agent and passive resister. The intimation that Sir Lewis Molesworth, the sitting Liberal Unionist, would not be standing again gave some of his supporters an excuse to change sides. The new Unionist candidate, H.B. Grylls, a local man, was defending a majority of 1,032 (13.8%), but Robartes still gained a clear victory.⁵⁰

The sitting M.P. for St. Austell, W.A. McArthur, did not become a member of the Liberal Ministry, contrary to expectations and to the disappointment of Liberals locally and Wesleyans nationally. This was, however, at his own request. He faced as his Unionist opponent a self-made Yorkshireman, Richard Garnett. Garnett was an advocate of Balfourian retaliation, though these views not only roused the Liberals, but they were also resented by some Unionists. McArthur's seat was never in danger. He was returned with a majority of 3,151 (38.6%), the largest ever recorded in the division.⁵¹

The strength of Nonconformity in the constituency and the consequent reaction against the education measure was believed to be the predominant factor in the contest. The Western Morning News reported, "feeling runs deep and strong against religious tests and is insistent upon the principle of public control". After the election, McArthur's agent "thanked the Nonconformists for redeeming their pledge to render it impossible for St. Austell ever to be fought again."⁵²

J.F. Moulton, the member for Launceston, was appointed a Judge by the new Government. The local Liberals toyed with the idea of adopting as candidate the Wesleyan, Sir Clarence Smith, who had fought several times in the Liberal

50. W.B., 26 February, 7 May 1903, 2 February, 30 November 1905; see C.R.O., DDX 415/2 for some of the election literature.

51. M.T., 11 January 1906; W.B., 4, 25 January 1906.

52. W.M.N., 26 January 1906; R.C.G., 1 February 1906.

interest. However, they eventually selected G.C. Marks, a Congregationalist, who had campaigned for Moulton in the previous election. The Unionist choice was G.J. Sandys, a Boer War veteran. Again the education question was believed to be pre-eminent. As one of the Plymouth dailies commented, "As in other parts of the country, the Nonconformist feeling on the education question has been unmistakable. Fiscal reform and Chinese labour have been treated as secondary questions but by no means forgotten..." Marks added a further 900 votes to the Liberal majority.⁵³

In St. Ives, the Liberal candidate was Clifford Cory, a wealthy colliery proprietor in South Wales. A Free Methodist, his name had been linked with the seat in 1900, but he had preferred to do battle elsewhere, albeit unsuccessfully. The sitting member, Hain, was not seeking re-election and both he and T.B. Bolitho, his predecessor as member for St. Ives, had returned to the Liberal fold in defence of free trade. The Unionist cause was in the hands of Philip Pilditch, a Surrey architect. In the first contest the division had seen since 1886, Cory chalked up a majority of 1,164 (16.4%), highlighting the Liberal strength in the seat. The Cornish Telegraph believed that the education question had made the deepest impression and commented on the help Cory had received from Free Church Ministers.⁵⁴

At Penryn and Falmouth the contest was described as a battle between, on the one hand, the unpopularity of the Government, and, on the other, the case for the protection of the Cornish granite industry. F.J. Horniman, the Liberal incumbent, was retiring because of ill health and the Liberal choice fell on John Barker, a London

53. W.M.N., 1, 19 January 1906; W.D.M., 23 January 1906.

54. W.R., 23 April 1903, 30 November 1905; Cornish Telegraph, 1 February 1906; see also, B.M. Add.Ms. 41236 f.168, W.S. Caine to Campbell Bannerman on the St. Ives division.

merchant. As at St. Ives, it was noticed "how some ministers of the different churches are busying themselves in favour of the Radical Party".⁵⁵

Barker was a staunch free trader, but was aware of the problems facing the local granite industry. A particular cause of complaining was the decision, by a Unionist Government, to use foreign granite in Government contracts. Barker, making the obvious pun, promised to "leave no stone unturned" to get reinserted into these contracts a commitment to use only British granite. The Unionist candidate, D.B. Hall, went further than this, advocating substantial duties on foreign granite entering Britian.⁵⁶

This was the most marginal Cornish seat, but the Liberals succeeded in increasing the majority from twenty votes to ninety seven (3.8%). Although this was a fair majority by the borough's standards, it was still the smallest swing to the Liberals in the county. Barker attributed his victory primarily to support for free trade, but believed that the education and Chinese labour questions had an "undoubted influence". Hall disagreed. He briefly summarised the result: "Polled more votes than any previous Unionist candidate since 1885. Lost chiefly through the Education Act and the announcement of Liberal victories on Saturday. Fiscal Reform is popular here".⁵⁷

The granite question also spilled over into the neighbouring division of Truro-Helson. The Liberal press enjoyed twitting Lawrence, the Unionist M.P. since 1895, for wobbling on the fiscal question. The two arch Nonconformist Unionists of many years standing, R.G. Rows and Sir George Smith, once again campaigned on his behalf. The Liberals at an early date adopted G.H. Morgan as their candidate. He had been brought up a Welsh Baptist and had served as a pastor of a chapel in Totenham for

55. W.B., 23 March, 30 November 1905, Falmouth Packet, 5 January 1906.

56. W.B., 11, 15 January 1906.

six years. Out of a dislike of accepting money for preaching, he trained as a lawyer. In 1900 he had unsuccessfully contested Totenham and later had joined the ranks of the passive resistance movement.⁵⁸

The seat had been Unionist since 1886. Hence, for Morgan to oust Lawrence and gain a comfortable majority was a striking Liberal success. Morgan was certainly popular among the Nonconformists and preached in some of the chapels. Morgan originally believed that the education question was the most important factor in his success, but towards the end of the campaign thought that free trade was crucial. He commented, "We were sure of the education vote before: but the food tax has brought to our side the waverers among the working people!"⁵⁹

At Camborne, rumours of a possible labour candidature were confirmed early in 1905 when Jack Jones, a West Ham councillor and organiser with the Social Democratic Federation, was declared as their candidate. Immediately, a query was raised as to the source of the S.D.F. funds. Further investigation uncovered a link between the election agent of the former Unionist M.P. for the division, Arthur Strauss, and the treasurer of the S.D.F.. This association was denied, but the suspicion lingered because the S.D.F. admitted that they were being financed by an unnamed wealthy person in the division.⁶⁰

The belief that Tory gold had lured the S.D.F. to Camborne goaded the Liberals into great activity. Jones recalled in his autobiography, "We were chased out of the market place, we had eggs and sticks and over ripe

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57. Cornish Echo, 19 January 1906; Falmouth Packet, 26 January 1906.
58. W.B., 11 January 1906; W.D.M., 16 January 1906; R.C.G., 4, 11 January 1906; Alexander Gordon, Family History of the Lawrences in Cornwall (London: privately printed 1915), p.60.
59. W.B., 25 January 1906.
60. W.B., 5 January, 9 February, 8, 15, 22 June 1905.

fruit thrown at us; we were subjected to every conceivable indignity..." Sir Wilfred Lawson returned to contest his old seat in Cumberland in 1906. Hence, the Liberals employed the services of A.E. Dunn. A Congregationalist, Dunn had fought Exeter in 1892, but had refused to stand again in his home city because it caused too many problems.⁶¹

Nonconformists in the division who had left the Unionists over education openly campaigned for Dunn. C.V. Thomas, the Camborne Wesleyan, for instance, proved a great asset to the Liberal cause. He was fond of quoting Mazzini's words, "All political questions are at their root religious questions", and even argued, "better Home Rule, even in the fullest Gladstonian sense, than that such a Government as the last should return to power again".⁶²

In December 1905, Strauss severed his connexion with the Mining Division, unable to weather the controversy over the S.D.F. funds. The Unionists replaced him with a Devon barrister, Sir Thomas Hewitt. The Liberals were perturbed by the danger of a divided Radical vote. They argued, "You can support Toryism in two ways; you can vote for Sir Thomas Hewitt directly or you can vote for him indirectly by voting for Mr. Jones." Some Liberals were more optimistic. Tom Fiddick amusingly described the situation: "They had in that division a Liberal, a Tory and a forlorn hope". This proved to be an accurate assessment for Dunn was returned with an impressive majority. Jones received a mere 109 votes. At the lowest computation it was calculated that each vote for Jones must have cost his anonymous sponsor £3.⁶³

61. John J. Jones, My Lively Life (London: Long 1928), p. 38; W.B., 9 July 1903, 11, 25 January 1906.

62. W.B., 11 January 1906.

63. W.B., 7, 21 December 1905, 18 January 1906; W.M.N., 16 January 1906; Cornish Telegraph, 1 February 1906.

Thus, the General Election of 1906 gave the Liberals a clean sweep comparable with their success in 1885. Liberal Unionist hegemony in St. Ives, Bodmin and Truro was broken. Kinnear, commenting on the 1906 contest, has argued that the seats which did not turn Liberal were the "bedrock" of Unionism. None of the Cornish constituencies can be so classified, although the Unionist vote in most of the seats held steady.⁶⁴

It is difficult to assess whether Free Trade or Education was the main factor in the Liberal success. In Cornwall, some Liberal Unionists returned to the Liberal fold for both reasons. But those who were Nonconformists were likely to have been motivated initially by the Education Act. There were still those, like R.G. Rows, whose Liberal Unionism was strong enough to survive the taunts levelled at them by some of their Nonconformist-Liberal brethren.⁶⁵

Hamer has shrewdly observed the tendency of Liberal leaders in the election to use the battle between Free Trade and Protection as the rallying cry, above issues like education and temperance, in order "to secure the subordinating of local particularisms in the interests of the Liberal's 'general position'." 'The Liberal victory, therefore, can be seen as a typical reaction of the electorate against the policies of a previous Unionist Government with an attempt by the Liberals to enter office without being as tied as they were by the Newcastle Programme in 1892.'⁶⁶

Nonconformist leaders claimed a good deal of the responsibility for placing the Liberals in power with such a handsome majority, and the extent of the Liberal

64. M. Kinnear, op.cit., p. 28.

65. W.B., 14 January 1904.

66. D. Hamer, Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Rosebery, pp. 314.

landslide can be placed at the doors of Nonconformists. It has been noted, that whereas the Conservative Party machine tended to operate at a steady level of efficiency, Liberal organisation varied dramatically according to enthusiasm and prospects of success. Commodities which the Nonconformists brought to this election in abundance were a zeal and moral fervour, and an optimism in fighting seemingly hopeless seats in which they enjoyed a fair degree of success.⁶⁷

In Cornwall, there were accusations of the politicisation of the chapels. At Launceston, the Western Morning News reported, "The chapel, on the quiet roadside or in the secluded valley, is the governing factor in this division. It has been said that in these little Bethels, is preached the Radical shibboleth from January to December." The Unionist agent in St. Austell publicly stated "that nearly every Nonconformist chapel in this constituency was used as a Liberal committee room during the last election". He did, however, concede that it was not only the chapels that were at fault, and that the churches had also become involved in politics. A similar report of chapel electioneering was recorded by the naturalist, W.H. Hudson, who was then visiting West Cornwall.⁶⁸

Hudson made the further interesting observation: "Fishermen and miners were almost to a man on the Liberal side, led by their ministers...while those on the land were, despite their Methodism, on the other side, but with small hope of winning". It may well have been that the Liberals received a greater loyalty from groups like the miners and fishermen, while those on the land would

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67. Trevor Lloyd, 'Uncontested Seats in British General Elections', Historical Journal, VIII, 2 (1965), p.265.
 68. W.M.N., 19 January 1906; W.B., 23 April 1906; W.H. Hudson, op.cit., p. 170; see also J. Flynn, op.cit., p. 203.

be more open to influence and more likely to be deferential voters. But it must also be remembered that many miners were smallholders, that Liberal land reforms were popular in the county and that Cornish Liberalism has survived the decline in mining. At most, the difference would seem to be one of degrees of support, not of contrasting opposites.⁶⁹

The 1906 contest was really the last election at which there was a church-chapel conflict of serious electoral importance. The results were greeted enthusiastically by Nonconformists. The Bible Christian Magazine for instance headlined the Liberal victory "Our Country's Political Renaissance" and spoke of a "Moral Revolution in the nation". The Methodist Recorder, however, while pleased from the temperance point of view, was less carried away. It remarked, "We have sufficient knowledge of political human nature to prevent us from thinking that the return of the Liberal Party to power is the first scene in the great spectacle of the Millenium".⁷⁰

The remarkable result at Bodmin became the object of a Unionist election petition. The case proved to be a controversial one, because the Judges decided that the organisation of a garden party at Lanhydrock by Viscount Clifden, was, with an election imminent and invitations issued indiscriminately, tantamount to treating. Millman, Robartes' agent, was made the scapegoat, but Robartes was still unseated. The Liberals did not defend the indiscretions of Millman, but were angered by the fact that one of the Judges, Mr. Justice Grantham, a former Conservative M.P., had also adjudicated in the petition at Great Yarmouth, also arising out of the 1906 election.

69. W.H. Hudson, op.cit., pp. 109-110.

70. B.C. Mag., 1906, pp.66; M.R., 11 January 1906.

The evidence there of treating was much greater, but the charges against the Conservative victor had been dismissed.⁷¹

Grylls, the defeated Unionist candidate, disassociated himself from the petition. In his view, events like the garden party, at most affected only the size of Robartes' majority. He declined to stand in the ensuing by election and the local Unionists after initial hesitation, selected Sandys, the defeated Unionist candidate at Launceston. Freeman-Thomas, defeated at Hastings in the General Election, was the Liberal candidate. In a bitter contest, the Liberals held the seat. Hence, the Liberals felt that the name of Robartes had been vindicated, while Unionists consoled themselves with the fact that the Liberal majority had been reduced by seventy nine votes. Robartes soon entered Parliament again. In 1908, when MacArthur the M.P. for St. Austell resigned, Robartes was adopted as his successor and allowed an unopposed return.⁷²

Apart from ill feeling over the election petition, one important issue in the Bodmin by election was the Liberal Education Bill. The Bill was supported by Freeman-Thomas and generally welcomed by the Cornish Liberal M.P.'s, even though some of them did not think it went far enough. Various Methodist groups also wished the Bill a speedy enactment, but were hopeful of further concessions.⁷³

The Bill, however, did not please Conservative Anglican opinion. Garnett, revisiting the St. Austell division, insisted that the measure was introduced

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71. W.B., 22 January, 21 June 1906; Cornish Times, 4 May 22 June 1906; Cornelius O'Leary, The Elimination of Corrupt Practices in British elections, 1868-1911 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962), pp. 218-20.
72. W.B., 28 June, 12 July 1906, 6, 13 January 1908; Cornish Times, 27 July 1906.
73. W.B., 12 April, 26 July 1906; M.M., 1906, p.10; Wes. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), May 1906; see also

with the object of establishing Nonconformity at the public expense and depriving the Church of England of the position which she had won for herself by the self-sacrifice and devotion of her sons and the contributions of her members... It was an iniquitous, dishonest and immoral measure.

Cornish Churchmen showed that they were just as capable as Nonconformists in mounting a protest campaign.⁷⁴

It was left to the West Briton to point out, "No Bill that deals fairly with all religious denominations can thoroughly please either, for it must be the outcome of compromise". It had earlier expressed its fear that the fierce battle over religious education between Nonconformity and Anglicanism might lead to the adoption of a secular solution to the problem and the exclusion of the Bible altogether. The Education Bill was so greatly amended by the Lords that it was dropped. It is significant that the Peers wrecked this measure, while allowing to pass the Trades Disputes Bill, indicative of their greater respect for the power of labour than of the chapels.⁷⁵

It has been argued that the decision of the Liberal leader not to dissolve on this question illustrates the weakness of Nonconformists' political power and further that the defeat of the Education Bill "marked more than any other single event, the death of political nonconformity..." In spite of the attempts by some passive resisters to keep the issue alive - seven St. Austell Nonconformists were summonsed as late as 1910 - and notwithstanding further unsuccessful attempts by the Government to pass an Education Act, the education

Noel J. Richards, 'The Education Bill of 1906 and the Decline of Political Nonconformity', J.E.H., XXIII, 1 (January 1972), pp. 53ff.

74. W.B., 23 April, 21 May 1906; C.R.O., DDX 481/31.

75. W.B., 10 May, 19 April 1906; N. Richards, op.cit., pp. 53, 61.

controversy declined in importance. It was supplanted by and itself pointed to the constitutional issue of the House of Lords.⁷⁶

The House of Lords gave a further snub to Nonconformists and temperance reformers by its rejection of the Liberal Licensing Bill of 1908, which had been an attempt to reverse the Act of 1904 and to introduce powers of local option. Methodists had rallied to support the Bill and its defeat was regarded by the Cornish Wesleyan Synod as "a national calamity". But, as Harrison has observed, by the turn of the century temperance reform was no longer "avant garde" among social reformers.⁷⁷

"Socialism" and the General Election of January 1910.

There was within Methodism in these years a growing strand of thought sympathetic to socialist ideas. The Methodist Times, commenting on the notable triumph of Labour candidates in 1906, urged Methodists to bestir themselves on behalf of social justice and social reform. It argued,

It is no use at this time of day to raise a cry against 'socialistic rant'. Socialism is coming, not in the crude form of its early exponents, but in a thousand and one ways it is with us already. Christian people must co-operate in the reorganisation of society on the lines laid down by our Master himself. If the Christian Church be identified with a blind and prejudiced opposition to the progress of the new social ideal, then the Kingdom of Heaven will suffer such violence at the hands of its foes as it never yet has experienced.

There was amongst Methodists, including some Wesleyans, including some Wesleyans, like Revs J.E. Rattenbury and S.E. Keeble, a nucleus of those whose

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76. N. Richards, op.cit., pp. 49-50, 59; W.B., 3 March 1910; J. Munson, op.cit., pp. 374, 384.
 77. G. Brake, op.cit., p.42; Wes.Mins. (Cornwall Dist.) May 1909; B. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, pp. 404-5.

application of their Christian faith, often based on the Sermon on the Mount, was leading them to view with sympathy the rise of the Labour Party.^{78.}

Politically, the issue of "socialism" was raised by the Liberal Government's action in passing Lloyd George's Budget of 1909. This introduced new taxes on land, partly to finance Old Age Pensions. The House of Lords decided to reject the Bill, thereby provoking a constitutional crisis by breaking the parliamentary convention concerning Finance Bills. The Liberals used this as the reason for calling an election at the beginning of 1910.⁷⁹

A number of Liberals were disconcerted by this "socialistic legislation". One of the nomination papers of the Unionist candidate for Bodmin, for instance, was signed entirely by former Liberals, who had left the Party over the Budget. Some of these were Nonconformists. Nationally, a few Wesleyan Liberal M.P.s, like Fowler and Perks, found themselves in disagreement with the current trends both in Liberalism and Methodism. Although most Methodist-Liberals supported the Government's financial innovation, there were a sufficient number of Nonconformists, largely wealthy Wesleyans, who so disapproved of these new policies that they launched the "Nonconformist Anti-Socialist Union".⁸⁰

To the Methodist Times the fate of the peers was the key election issue. It urged Free Churchmen (as opposed to Free Churches) to enter the fray once more and it commended to them the manifesto of the Free Church Council.

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78. M.T., 18 January 1906; see especially Maldwyn Edwards Methodism and England, pp. 191 ff..
79. R. Douglas, op.cit., pp.41-43.
80. W.M.N., 17 January 1910; W.D.M., 12 January 1910; Neal Blewett, The Peers, the Parties and the People: the general election of 1910 (London: Macmillan, 1972), pp.215,348; see M.T., 25 November, 16 December 1909 for the "Nonconformist Anti-Socialist Union".

This dwelt on the unremedied injustices in education, the awfulness of national intemperance, and the need to continue with social reforms. All these required a clear declaration against the Peers' veto. The Cornish Free Church Councils converted this message into action.⁸¹

A study of the Cornish election addresses indicates that the Liberals fought the election on the twin issues of support for the Budget and the unconstitutional action of the House of Lords, necessitating its reform. Appropriate assurances were given on education and temperance. Only Robartes in St. Austell mentioned Home Rule among the Liberals, and that was to disassociate himself from it. The Unionists, however, majored again on the danger of Home Rule and the need for fiscal reform, which was usually linked to the question of pensions. Tariff reform was canvassed as their alternative to the Budget and the action of the House of Lords in referring the question to the country was commended. The need for a strong Army and Navy was another recurrent theme.

The sitting Liberals at Launceston, St. Ives, St. Austell and Camborne were thought to be safe. This proved to be the case. H.B. Grylls, who had fought Bodmin in 1906, substantially reduced Marks' majority at Launceston without putting the seat at risk. The Unionist, Major C.B. Levita, performed a similar feat on Cory's seat at St. Ives.

In the St. Austell division it was noted that Robartes had "voted away on sixth of his inheritance by voting for the Budget". Tariff reform made little impression on the china clay owners or workers, in spite of the "educational" efforts of the Unionist candidate,

81. M.T., 2, 9 December 1909; W.D.M., 4 January 1910.

F.H. Bernard. The Liberal majority remained large and Robartes, like Marks, believed the constitutional question to be pre-eminent.⁸²

In the Mining Division, Dunn, who had intended to retire from parliamentary life was persuaded to stand again. There was an attempt by some of the mining interests to argue the case for the protection of tin mining. N.G. Chamberlain, the Unionist candidate and nephew of Joseph Chamberlain, gave prominence to the fiscal question in his campaign. Dunn, an assiduous and popular member slightly increased the Liberal majority.⁸³

South East Cornwall proved to be one of the stiffest contests in the county. Near to the election the Liberals selected C.A. Grenfell to replace Freeman-Thomas as their candidate. But the Unionists were hopeful, because their man, Sir Reginald Pole-Carew, had a distinguished military career behind him and came from a good local Cornish family. He had been nursing the seat for two years and had attracted much support from the local squirearchy. His platform stressed support for tariff reform and capitalised on the navy scare, an important consideration in a seat which had increasing numbers of voters working in the naval dockyards in Devonport. In the end, the Liberal majority slumped to fifty votes on a high poll.⁸⁴

The Unionists had great hopes at Penryn and Falmouth. Both sides were in doubt as to the result, and, being marginal, national leaders made it a port of call. The granite question was standard fare among Conservative speakers. C.S. Goldman, like Pole-Carew, had been nursing the seat for the Tories for some time. Barker, the sitting Liberal, fell ill during the campaign. When the result

82. W.D.M., 5, 26 January 1910.
 83. W.M.N., 5 January 1910; W.D.M., 4, 22, 24 January 1910.
 84. W.D.M., 22, 24 January 1910.

was announced, it was learnt that the Conservatives had recaptured the seat, establishing a majority of 181, on a turnout of 93.5%.⁸⁵

The Unionists also had designs on Truro. The candidates were the same combatants as in 1906, even though Lawrence the Unionist was over seventy. In a letter to an elector, Morgan demonstrated how everything hinged on the House of Lords. He wrote,

I want to get Temperance Reform, Fair Play for Nonconformists and the main burden of taxation placed on the unearned profits of the rich and not on the food of the poor. The House of Lords blocks the way of these reforms. Will you help to remove the barrier?

Morgan retained the seat with a slightly increased majority.⁸⁶

A running battle developed during the contest between Morgan and the Unionists over the attitude of Sir Robert Perks, the Wesleyan Liberal, to Morgan's candidature. The story is a confused one. But it shows how important the Nonconformist vote was perceived to be, in that the views of Perks were believed to command great weight amongst Nonconformist electors.⁸⁷

The withdrawal of Perks from active Liberal politics and the creation of the Nonconformist Anti-Socialist Union are indicators of the breach reopening politically in Nonconformity. The unity of 1906 was lost. As Blewett has observed, "The monolithic nature of Nonconformist support for Liberalism, ... was breaking, this time irretrievably, on the social and economic policies of the Liberal Government".⁸⁸

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85. W.D.M., 10,12,17 January 1910; W.B., 13 December 1909, 20 January 1910; cf. N. Blewett, The Peers, the Parties and the People, p. 470.
86. W.D.M., 24 January 1910.
87. W.D.M., 6,15,24 January 1910; M.T., 6,13 January 1910; W.B., 10 January, 17 November 1910.
88. N. Blewett, The Peers, the Parties and the People, p. 347.

During the election some Wesleyan ministers were not averse to overt political campaigning. For instance, Rev. W.H. Barden, who had done sterling work for the Liberals when stationed at Redruth in 1906, returned to Camborne in January 1910 to give eloquent discourses on the iniquities of the House of Lords. The Western Morning News complained,

There is no more painful feature in connection with the present electoral contest than the manner in which Nonconformist ministers have degraded their ministerial position by making it subservient to their political animosities. Many of them have not stopped short of language which can only be described as blasphemous in their association of Radical politics with Divine considerations and those Nonconformists who are Unionists and have the courage of their opinions have been made to feel that at any rate in the chapel which should be their spiritual home they are looked upon as 'heathen men and publicans'.⁸⁹

At a post-election meeting of Unionists in Bodmin, one Wesleyan Unionist argued, "The influence of Nonconformists... in that division and in Cornwall was the great secret of the success of the Liberal Party". Pole-Carew, alluding to these comments, referred to Nonconformity as hitherto "a sharp thorn in their sides". But he added, "The channels of certain denominations had been, and were being, used as political platforms. That was not in accordance with the better class of Nonconformists and was becoming discredited among them". He seems to have perceived the strength of the reaction in some parts of Nonconformity against overt politics in the chapels. For some this was caused by trends in Liberal policy, notably the Budget. This seems to have been among the wealthier Free Churchmen. Others were disturbed by the increasing emphasis on the social aspects of the Gospel, which they feared was leading to a neglect of spiritual matters. Even this, as Blewett has pointed out, "was not uncongenial

89. W.D.M., 19 January 1910; W.M.N., 24 January 1910.

to the growing social conservatism of the Nonconformist laity".⁹⁰

The General Election of December 1910 and the Irish Question.

Although in Cornwall the Unionists had made one gain and wiped out the Liberal majority in the country at large, the overall result was a stalemate. The Liberals secured 275 seats, the Unionists 273, the Irish Nationalists eighty two and Labour forty. As the West Briton observed, "the fact of the hour is that the Irish members are masters of the situation". This led to the re-emergence of Irish Home Rule as a dominant political issue. After the January contest, the Peers dutifully let the Budget through. But failure to resolve the question of the future of the House of Lords ultimately meant that the country was plunged into a second election that year in December.⁹¹

In Cornwall, the Liberal election addresses placed their supreme emphasis on the Parliament Bill and the conduct of the House of Lords. To a lesser extent, the ensuing benefits in education and temperance were highlighted. Unionists, however, concentrated on another consequence of the Bill, namely the danger of Home Rule. While not averse to reforming the second chamber, the Tories attacked the Liberals' Parliament Bill, as well as criticising the Government's record, especially in the area of military preparedness. The Free Trade-Protection controversy also rumbled on a secondary level.

Not all the Cornish seats were contested. Robartes at St. Austell was returned unopposed. Although the

90. W.B., 24 February 1910; N. Blewett, The Peers, the Parties and the People, p. 348.

91. W.B., 28 February 1910; R. Douglas, op.cit., pp. 47-49.

eldest son of a peer, he wished to see established a strong second chamber, but deprived of its hereditary element. He also reiterated his strong opposition to an independent Irish Parliament. At Launceston, Marks again held off the Unionist challenge. The Liberals focussed on the constitutional question, and the Home Rule spectre raised by the Unionist candidate, Edward Treffry, failed to impress. One local Liberal dubbed it a "turnip lantern bogey".⁹²

In St. Ives, Sir Clifford Cory stood once again. He had reservations over the Parliament Bill, believing that on its own it would be dangerous, but supported it as the temporary measure the preamble stated it to be. His clear opposition to Home Rule took much of the steam out of the Unionist campaign. The Liberals were pleased that Cory slightly increased his majority, while the Unionists took comfort from the fact that St. Ives had at least returned a man pledged against Home Rule.⁹³

The Liberal candidate for the Mining Division was Francis Dyke Acland, who until his defeat in the January election had been a member of the Government. Dunn on this occasion had been determined to stand down. Acland largely confined himself to the "Peers versus the People" issue. The Unionists chose Dr. George Coates, an expert in tariff reform to contest the seat. He dismissed the House of Lords controversy as a red herring to distract from Home Rule. It was by Camborne standards a quiet election. Coates, disappointed with the lack of support he received from some of the local Unionist leaders, failed to make much impression on the Liberal majority.⁹⁴

The Unionists were once more hopeful of success at Truro, with its Unionist leanings. Their candidate,

92. W.B., 28 February 1910; R. Douglas, op.cit., pp.47-49.

93. W.D., 2 December, 1910; W.M.N., 4, 16, 19 December 1910.

94. W.B., 8, 19 December 1910.

Charles Williams, was the eldest son of a popular, former member for the seat. Morgan in his speeches concentrated almost entirely on the House of Lords, likening their own proposals of reform to a "death bed repentance". In order to defuse the Home Rule issue, Morgan circulated a leaflet in the division explaining his opposition to the establishment of an independent Irish Parliament. Morgan held the seat, Williams narrowing the margin between the two parties. But the Western Morning News commented, "It is admitted by Liberal Nonconformists that it is Mr. Morgan's preaching performances in the chapels that are the chief secret of his hold upon the Nonconformist electors".⁹⁵

At Penryn and Falmouth, Goldman, the incumbent Unionist, was deemed to be safe. Barker, because of ill health, had stood down as Liberal candidate, but it was not until the end of November that his successor, W.J. Burt, a barrister, was selected. On Home Rule, Burt pledged himself not to support a Home Rule Bill without the mandate of a future election, while Goldman used the Irish question to defend the existence of the Peers' veto. Goldman characterised the Liberals as being in favour of the extinction of the House of Lords, while Burt, not prepared to go that far, did vividly prophesy, "as we cut the claws of the House of Lords on the Finance Bill last time, this time we are going to tie their legs and throw them on their backs." However, Burt was not to be in Parliament to witness this Act. The borough showed the largest swing in the county to Unionism, considerably enhancing Goldman's majority.⁹⁶

Bodmin proved to be the most exciting contest. Sir Reginald Pole-Carew stood again, arguing simply that Home Rule would cause Civil War in Northern Ireland and again that the British Navy no longer met the two power standard.

95. W.B., 14, 15 December 1910; W.D.N., 30 November 1910;

W.M.N., 13, 15 December 1910.

96. W.B., 31 March, 21, 24 November, 1 December 1910.

On the eve of the election it emerged that the Liberal member was not going to stand again. Instead, a young Plymouth solicitor, Isaac Foot, was drafted in from the Totnes seat to take up the Liberal cause. Foot, a Wesleyan local preacher and a gifted speaker, put new life into a flagging Liberal campaign.⁹⁷

Foot opposed tariff reform as "a policy of dear bread and corrupt politics." He believed the House of Lords question could easily be settled by agreeing two things: "that in finance the Commons should have the only word and in legislation that they should have the last word". On Home Rule, he argued that Irish Nonconformists were not dead against it and refused to believe that it would result in the cruel treatment of Irish Protestants. However, it was noticed that in his campaigning on the Irish question he was less outspoken than he had been when fighting Totnes earlier in the year.⁹⁸

The Liberals talked of "making our enemies our foot-stool", while Pole-Carew spoke of giving Foot the boot. After a recount, it emerged that Pole-Carew had won by forty-one votes. Foot accounted for his defeat largely in technical terms and the short time at his disposal before the election. He placed low down on the list "the scare associated with Home Rule and the exploitation of Nonconformist sympathy by the talk about Catholic oppression".⁹⁹

However, Home Rule had firmly established itself as an election issue. There were Nonconformists who wished to see the Lords reformed in order for Education and Licensing Bills to be passed, but who were not enamoured of the prospect of Home Rule passing as well.

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97. W.B., 1 December 1910; W.M.N., 21 November 1910;
M.T., 1 December 1910; W.D.M., 1 December 1910.
 98. W.B., 24 November, 1 December, 1910; W.M.N., 30
 November, 12 December 1910.
 99. W.D.M., 9 December 1910; W.B., 15 December 1910;
W.M.N., 14 December 1910.

Ulster Nonconformist ministers again appeared in Devon and Cornwall to emphasise the perils of Home Rule. The fact that in this election the Unionists not only gained Bodmin, but also several seats in Devon, has caused some writers to attribute this to the re-emergence of the Irish question. Pelling has also noted that between the two elections in 1910 there was a distinct move towards the Unionists not reflected elsewhere in the country.¹⁰⁰

But the effect of the Home Rule issue was not as dramatic as it had been in 1886. Firstly, Cornish Liberals were wary of committing themselves to it, often advocating devolution as an alternative. Secondly, the seats which the Liberals lost were marginals. Foot was defeated at Bodmin on a turnover of under forty six votes. Furthermore, the swing to Unionism in Devon and Cornwall, according to Blewett's figures, was greatest in the Devon ports, indicative of the importance of the naval question as a factor at Plymouth, Devonport and also Bodmin.¹⁰¹

For Methodists this seems to have been a quiet election. The Methodist Recorder observed, "there are signs that the peril for the Churches is not so grave as it has been in recent elections...The Church has its own problems and is beginning to feel them with some acuteness". Matters of more fundamental importance than wielding political influence were beginning to demand attention.¹⁰²

Methodists, Trade Unionism and the 1913 China Clay Strike.

Trade Unions came into prominence nationally in the years before the Great War because of certain militant

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100. W.M.N., 12 December 1910; N. Blewett, The Peers, the Parties and the People, pp. 349,411; H. Pelling, op.cit., pp. 163-4.
101. N. Blewett, The Peers, the Parties and the People, p.500; M. Kinnear, op.cit., p.36.
102. M.R., 24 November 1910.

national strikes and the rise of syndicalism. It was in these years, too, that Cornwall experienced its first taste of militant trades unionism. The county, however, is notable for the absence of unions in the nineteenth century. The Webbs in their studies were unable to find any evidence of trade unionism among the Cornish miners in the last century.¹⁰³

This has been attributed to the system of wage payment in the mines, involving miners bidding against one another. The tributers were paid according to the value of the selling price of the ore they raised, while the tutworkers, who dug the shafts, were paid according to the number of fathoms they had covered. The miners preferred this system, with its outside chance of a windfall, as it allowed them in a sense to be their own employer. The absence of single capitalists, the mines often being run by a plurality of adventurers, and the presence of men from their own ranks as mine "captains" hindered the development of class feeling.¹⁰⁴

A further important factor in the latter part of the nineteenth century was the decline in the mining industry. This drove many miners overseas, or even up-country as strike-breakers, in search of employment. For all the militancy and bitterness engendered in the Mining Division since its creation in 1885, both miners and mine owners knew they were facing difficult times. The failure of the S.D.F. candidate to make any impact shows the absence of support for extreme militancy.¹⁰⁵

The insularity and isolation of Cornwall was another factor. There was a distinct dislike of the up-

103. Webbs quoted by John G. Rule, 'The tribute system and the weakness of Trade Unionism in Cornish mines', Bulletin of the Society for the study of Labour History, 21 (Autumn 1970), p. 25.

104. Ibid., pp.25-26.

105. J.R. Ravensdale, 'The China Clay Labourers' Union', History Studies, 1, 1 (May 1968), p. 54.

country, "foreign" element involved in trades unionism. Trade unions, therefore, emerged, not so much with individualistic-minded Cornishmen banding together, but rather filtering into the county through the national organisation of unions, like those in the post office and railways. Even so, the depressed state of the Cornish economy meant that there were enough unemployed to break strikes while the unions in existence were not strong enough to hold out in a strike to achieve their ends. This was the experience of the China Clay Labourers Union in 1875.¹⁰⁶

The role of Methodism in relation to Cornish trade unionism is hard to assess. Rule has argued that, as with Chartism, it was an inhibiting factor, by openly opposing extreme radicalism and by monopolising local speaking and organisational talents. Moore in his study of a Durham coal mining community has noted amongst Methodist Union leaders in the last quarter of the nineteenth century a reluctance to use the strike weapon, combined with a deferential attitude to management. The individualism of Methodist soteriology and current economic thinking gave them a faith in the operation of the market system and in the coincidence of the interests of employers and employed.¹⁰⁷

But the subject of trade unionism forced a response from Cornish Methodists in July 1913, when the china clay workers went on strike. An organiser from the Workers' Union had been active in the county since 1911. The clayworkers focussed attention on two issues: firstly, that their pay had not kept up with rising prices, and, secondly, their demand for fortnightly pays, not the month in hand system. The china clay industry was at this time booming and the Union made good progress in recruiting the clay workers. At one works, the company initially

106. J. Ravensdale, 'The China Clay Labourers' Union', p.62; cf. J. Rowe, Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution, pp. 311, 315, J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', pp. 391-2.

107. J. Rule, 'The tribute system...', p.28; R. Moore, op.cit., pp. 167-8.

promised fortnightly pays and then withdrew the offer, ordering the Union organiser off the premises. It was this which sparked off the strike, even though the union was financially weak. Very soon 2,500 men were on strike.¹⁰⁸

In his account of the strike, Ravensdale commented, "From the start the spirit of a religious crusade dominated the public meetings probably more than it has done at any other time in an industrial dispute in this very religious county". Hymns and prayers characterised many of the meetings, and a prominent part was played in the strike by the United Methodist minister, Rev. H.B. Coventry, a member of the I.L.F., who cycled round the area in his spare time to support the workers' cause. The solution to the dispute, in his view, was simple:

What they wanted to do was to get the gospel of Jesus Christ down into our social conditions, to make the spirit of Jesus Christ the animating spirit in our industrial conditions. They wanted to see the clayworks of mid Cornwall, not run in a spirit of private gain but run for the good of the community.¹⁰⁹

For the most part ministers stood aloof from the conflict. They sought to mediate between strikers and clayowners, as did W.J.Nicholls, the United Methodist layman and chairman of the St. Austell U.D.C., and Robartes, the local M.P.. The problem was that the clay owners did not want to negotiate. Some of the leading proprietors of clay pits were Nonconformists, the Stocker family, for instance, being prominent St. Austell Baptists.¹¹⁰

This facet of the dispute caused Coventry to

108. J.R. Ravensdale, 'The 1913 China Clay Strike and the Workers' Union', in Exeter Papers in Economic History, 6: Provincial Labour History, edited by J.H. Porter (Exeter: Univ. of Exeter, 1972), pp. 54-55.

109. Ibid., p. 56; W.B., 7 August 1913.

110. W.B., 7, 11 August, 1913.

comment, "It was better for the Churches in that district to be supported by the pennies and shillings of the working classes than to be simply upholstered by the big subscriptions of the men who were determined to keep the workers down at any price". One St. Austell Wesleyan of forty years standing, disgusted with the local Wesleyan ministers for not helping the strikers, remarked, "They were too much in with the big bugs and the clay merchants". There was the call from one local preacher for a Labour M.P. for St. Austell.¹¹¹

There were many rumours of violence and intimidation during the strike, but these seem to have been exaggerated. There were high spirited pranks, such as the serenading of blacklegs and loud all night hymn singing outside the police superintendent's house in Bugle. The placing of dynamite in milk cans near cottages at Nanpean owned by one clay company was exceptional. The strike grew more serious when the employers refused to recognise the union or negotiate until the men went back to work. The clay workers responded by bringing out the enginemen, who had stayed at work until then to stop the pits from becoming waterlogged.¹¹²

The next stage in the dispute was to bring in outside helpers from the Workers' Union to consolidate the strike. The employers, however, brought in one hundred police from Tonypany, "trained strike breakers" with their special equipment of "electric torches and shields". The employers decided to try and open up the works gradually, especially in the Bugle area where support for the strike was weakest. The "Glams" were determined to get the blacklegs through the pickets, and on one

111. W.B., 14, 25 August, 11 September 1913.

112. J. Ravensdale, 'The 1913 China Clay Strike', pp. 57, 60, 66; W.B., 14, 18 August, 2 October 1913.

occasion seem to have baton charged the pickets violently with little or no provocation. Indignation at the police action was great, nationally and locally.¹¹³

Although a ballot of the strikers after this showed considerable support for continuing the action, the drift back to work continued. The privations of the strike were beginning to bite hard and the refusal of Cornish dockers and railwaymen to stop moving the clay being worked in the Bugle area was the final blow. By the end of September, after about eleven weeks, the West Briton reported, "It looks as if the clay strike is rapidly falling to pieces and that the men have lost much and gained nothing!" The strike officially ended the following week.¹¹⁴

However, the strike had made trade unionism an issue locally. Furthermore, in January 1914 Stocker recognised the union on his own initiative and after pay talks increased the wages. Other clay owners were bound to follow suit and hence, in defeat, came success. More importantly, the strike illustrated even in Cornwall the divisions over the labour problem emerging in the chapels, and especially the difficulty confronting ministers when chapel members were on both sides and when neutrality was interpreted as opposition.¹¹⁵

Conclusions.

At the beginning of the century there were divisions among Nonconformists over the Boer War, but the legislation in education and licensing by Balfour's Government led to a closing of ranks and closer co-operation between Nonconformists and Liberals. Nonconformity reached its most political with the mounting of the passive resistance

113. J. Ravensdale, 'The 1913 China Clay Strike', pp. 57, 60, 66 W.B., 4 September 1913.

114. W.B., 11, 29 September, 6 October 1913.

115. W.B., 15 January 1914.

campaign, which succeeded in keeping alive the education issue, but did not gain wholehearted Nonconformist support nationally or in Cornwall. Wesleyans in particular remained aloof. There was nonetheless a return to the Liberal ranks of a number of Nonconformist Unionists.

In spite of exhortations to Wesleyan ministers not to violate the "common understanding" on politics, the election of 1906 swept away Wesleyan ministerial inhibition on politics. The Methodist Times gave ministers a justification for their action. It argued, firstly, that the "no politics" convention was merely a compromise born of a time when politics were cruder and baser: "Politics, like other forms of human activity, have been gradually purged of much of their grossness; and moral principles are taking the place of the old system of plunder by party". Secondly, it suggested that the "no politics" rule was introduced at a time when Christians "had not fully realised the truth that the religion of Christ was concerned with the establishment of the kingdom of God here and now, and not only with the conditions of existence in the future state".¹¹⁶

Moreover, the Wesleyan Conference had specifically condemned the education and licensing measures of the Unionist Government. The implication to be drawn from this appeared to be that it was acceptable for ministers to campaign for the Liberals, as this was in accordance with Conference resolutions, and also, out of conscience to keep quiet. To campaign for the Unionists, however, was to campaign against the declaration of Conference. Behind this attempted commitment of the Wesleyan Conference to Liberal politics was a theological change in some quarters, which meant that politics were no longer seen as a danger to spirituality, but, as J.E. Rattenbury put it, "if there were more spirituality there

116. M.R., 4 January 1906; M.T., 11 January 1906.

would be more politics".¹¹⁷

It was at this time that the link between the chapels and the Liberal Party became so close that Unionist papers like the Western Morning News could talk of the imposition of the "chapel screw" and complain of chapels being employed as Radical committee rooms. C.A. Hanson, the Conservative choice to follow Pole-Carew at Bodmin, complained in 1914 of one minister in the division who

prostituted the sacred pulpit by subordinating his religious principles to his political prejudices, indulging in the most extravagant eulogies of members of Her Majesty's Government and wishing 'more power to their elbow' and propogating in the most sacred place party principles and the policy of the Radical party.

It was a prime case of "notes and beams" for the Western Daily Mercury a few days later pointed to a Precentor at Truro Cathedral, whose sermon consisted of an attack on Liberal policy of Home Rule for Ireland.¹¹⁸

During the years of the Liberal Government, a reaction against this more overt political approach took place among some Liberal Nonconformists. In a few cases, the cause was disillusionment with politics with the failure of the Liberal Government to fulfil its promises on redressing Nonconformist grievances in education and temperance. For others the Budget of 1909, (and Lloyd George's defence of it), meant that a fear of Socialism stemmed as much from the activities of a Liberal Government as it did from labour extremists. Hence, the formation of the Nonconformist Anti-Socialist Union amongst disconcerted Liberal and Unionist Nonconformists, although there is little evidence of its activity in Cornwall.¹¹⁹

117. M.T., 11 January 1910.

118. W.M.N., 27 January 1910, 11 May 1914; W.D.M., 18 May 1914.

119. W.B., 15, 20 September 1910.

There were growing fears that politics were hindering the spiritual life of Nonconformists. Recollecting forty years in Cornwall in 1917, J.S. Flynn, a not unsympathetic observer, believed that Cornish Wesleyanism

...seems to have lost its converting grace and its power to edify through the class meeting. Revivals are not popular and platform speeches about improving the social conditions of the masses...have to a large extent displaced the more solemn message of Methodism: 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul.'¹²⁰

There seems, too, to have been something of a division emerging in Wesleyanism between the younger ministers and some of the older, wealthier laymen.

Methodists were now beginning to face their own problems. As one writer put it, "For religious people the vital issue was not church vs. chapel but Christianity vs. unbelief". Even in the Methodist stronghold of Cornwall towards the end of the first decade of the new century, membership figures began to show a downward turn. Comparing the 1870's to the Edwardian era, Flynn commented, "it is doubtful if religion has the hold it then had and what there is of it is not so intense."¹²¹

By 1910 the issue of the Home Rule had re-emerged when Irish Nationalists gained the balance of power. Although the issue may have had some influence in the West Country with the loss of several Liberal marginals, the Cornish Liberal candidates, with the exception of Foot, who lost Bodmin, were less than enthusiastic supporters of it. For this reason its effect was not as dramatic as in 1886.

The China Clay Strike in 1913 and the S.D.F.

120. J. Flynn, op.cit., p. 120.

121. J. Glaser, op.cit., p. 362; J. Flynn, op.cit., p.185.

candidature in Camborne in 1906 showed that in Cornwall the labour movement was beginning to make inroads. But, as Pelling has commented of both Devon and Cornwall,

A region where provincialism was strong, where industry was lagging, and where the traditional loyalties such as those of church and chapel still remained very important, was not likely to take the lead in the development of the Labour Party.¹²²

It did not.

The tendency in the late nineteenth century for Liberal candidates to be Nonconformists continued in the Edwardian years. In 1906, for instance, five of the seven Liberal candidates in Cornwall were Nonconformists. A good Nonconformist candidate, like Morgan at Truro, was believed to gain many votes amongst Nonconformists through his gifts as a preacher. It is interesting to note that the Wesleyan Perks, for many years M.P. for Louth, considered the fact that there were 300 Methodist lay preachers of one kind or another in the division, compared with only seventy four Anglican clergymen, an important factor in his success.¹²³

Pelling has argued that the rise of other pressure groups, the decline of the parson's influence and the removal of Nonconformist grievances meant that from the 1880's the church-chapel conflict was losing its importance in England. Nevertheless, one cannot but agree with his exclusion of Cornwall from his generalisation. In Cornwall, as he commented, "Religion still counted for a good deal and Nonconformity was the backbone of Liberalism in the rural areas".¹²⁴

123. Ibid., p.224; Nonconformist candidates in Cornwall in these years were; CORY (U.M.F.C.,L.) DUNN (Cong.,L), Foot (Wes.,L.), Lawrence (Unit.,L.U.), McARTHUR (Wes.,L.), MARKS (Cong.,L.), MORGAN (Bap.,L.); Methodist journals only give an incomplete and inconsistent coverage of Methodist candidatures at election, but S. Koss, Nonconformity in Modern British Politics, p.227-36, gives figures of Nonconformist candidates, 1900-35.

124. H. Pelling, op.cit., pp. 422-23, 173.

C H A P T E R E I G H T

BETWEEN THE WARS, 1914 - 1945.

The Great War.

In July 1914, the Wesleyan Conference had expressed its belief "that our people would do well to regard with suspicion statements that the nation is in danger through inadequate armaments". A few months later, however, when war had been declared, Methodists rallied to support it. The 1915 Wesleyan Conference commented, "Deeply as we deplore the appalling spectacle of bloodshed and widespread misery, we are driven to confess that 'a righteous war is better than an immoral peace'".¹

By May 1915, there were 80,000 Methodists in the Armed Forces and the Methodist Recorder could write, "There is no mistaking the enthusiasm our people are showing for the War. We put it as bluntly as that. They have no doubts and they are ready to stake all..." In Cornwall Methodists took their place alongside Anglicans on the local Food Control Committees and Military Tribunals. There were a few pacifists, notably the Anglican minister at St. Hilary, Rev. Bernard Walke, but they were exceptional.²

A hardening of attitudes by Methodists to the war as it progressed has been noted by some authors. This seems to have been the case in Cornwall. In 1916, for example, at a fraternal gathering of local Nonconformist ministers, the Primitive Methodist minister at St. Day wondered "whether the military machine had not captured the church and referred to the tinge of hatred in some war sermons, the absence of protest against the general treatment of

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1. M.M., 1914, p. 104, 1915, p. 453; Wes. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), September 1914.
 2. Wes. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), September 1914; M.R., 20 May 1915; H. Brown, A Century for Cornwall, p. 75.

conscientious objectors and the serious silence on the great drink problem ". An interesting discussion was said to have ensued from this, but the details were not recorded.³

The war did provide Methodists with an opportunity for pressing for long desired temperance reforms. In 1917, the Wesleyan Conference recommended its people to work for the "total prohibition of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic drinks". This decision was firmly supported by Cornish Methodists.⁴

In an unambiguous way the First World War confronted people of all denominations with the question of why God allows war and its consequent suffering. When patriotic ardour had cooled, some were contemptuous of the way in which the name of God had been used as part of the British cause. Hence, Wickham has argued that the churches lost the generation that fought the war and that the numerical decline in the churches can be explained in part by the non-replacement of their parents in the pews by children who had fought in the war. Certainly the Great War cast its shadow over much of the thinking in the following years.⁵

Methodist Decline, Reunion and Ecumenicalism.

Looking at the inter-war period as a whole, several trends can be seen at work within British churches. These were a numerical decline, some important realignments among the churches, notably Methodist union, and the erosion of some of the interdenominational hostility so evident in the nineteenth century.

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3. Maldwyn Edwards, Methodism and England, p. 196; C.R.O., DDMR/R (3) 175; cf. R. Moore, op.cit., pp. 196-202
 4. M.M., 1917, pp.89-91; Wes. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), May 1918.
 5. E.R. Wickham, Church and People in an Industrial City (London: Lutterworth, 1957), p. 212.

Fig. 8:1 Nos. of Cornish Methodists and Sunday School Scholars, 1901-1931.⁶

Year	Cornish Methodists	% of total Cornish po.	Wesleyan Sunday Schools	Wesleyan Sunday School Scholars
1901	37,472	11.63	-	28,466
1911	35,997	11.49	259	26,081
1921	30,781	9.98	251	21,235
1931	29,885	9.71	252	16,955

Figure 8:1 illustrates the numerical decline confronting Cornish Methodists, both in membership and numbers involved in the Sunday Schools. Equally, Methodism was losing momentum at the national level. Currie has commented,

A definite deterioration can be seen in most aspects of denominational life from the late nineteenth century onwards... Growth rates slacken about 1890 and growth becomes absolute decline in 1907-1920. By the 1920's the entire process of membership turnover is markedly reduced in scale and the organisation shows signs of ageing and an increasing preference for lateral as opposed to frontal growth.

Although the largest drop is seen between the years 1911 and 1921, the signs of decline were appearing before the First World War.⁷

Methodism with its evangelistic emphasis was peculiarly sensitive to statistics and, according to Currie, it was this decline in "frontal growth", growth by evangelism, which provided the stimulus for what he calls "lateral growth", growth by union. Ecumenical schemes were not new in Methodism. In 1857 the U.M.F.C.

6. Figures extracted from various Methodist Minutes of Conference and Wes. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.).

7. R. Currie, op.cit. p. 103; see above, p.62-63.

had been born out of a union of the W.M.A. and the Wesleyan Reformers and the second half of the nineteenth century was littered with failed attempts at union. But, while ecumenical ventures predate numerical stagnation and decline, these made union all the more attractive.⁸

Another stimulus to union is what Currie has called the concept of a "critical size", the number of members believed to be needed to organise a denomination successfully. This may have been a factor influencing some of the non-Wesleyan Methodists, the Bible Christians, the U.M.F.C. and the M.N.C., who joined together to form the United Methodist Church. Among the amalgamating denominations the votes in favour of the practicality of union were never less than 90%. In the Cornish Bible Christian circuits only one vote was cast against the proposal.⁹

It was not until 1932 that Methodist union involving Wesleyans, Primitive Methodists and the recently formed U.M.C. was achieved. It was a long drawn out affair. The proposals met with nothing like the same support which had greeted the foundation of the U.M.C.. This was particularly true of a section of Wesleyans. Some of them desired union with the Church of England and saw Methodist union as a diversion from this aim. Eventually, however, careful wording succeeded in resolving the ecclesiastical proposals to receive the necessary support from all sides.¹⁰

Advocates of union brought forward a number of arguments to strengthen their cause. Falling numbers had led to heartsearching to find the explanation of the withdrawal of divine favour. A view developed that division

8. Ibid., pp. 230 ff.

9. Ibid., p. 89; Sidney Dixon, The road to unity in Cornish Methodism (C.M.H.A. Occas. Pub., 15, 1969) p.22.

10. J. Kent, The Age of Disunity, p. 13.

amongst the churches was sinful and that unity was the solution. Certainly, the downturn in membership meant that denominational barriers in Methodism seemed anachronistic and the wastefulness of duplicated resources was thus highlighted.¹¹

However, the union proposals provoked considerable opposition in areas like Cornwall, traditional Methodist strongholds which had been greatly affected by the drift in population and also by the decline in numbers. The Cornwall Wesleyan Synod continually urged caution of the question of union and consistently rejected the proposals on union put to it.¹²

One reason for Cornish Methodists' objection to reunion revolved around a fear of the effect this would have on their own local chapel. Cornwall had a multitude of chapels, representing every branch of Methodism, often built when Methodism was at its high water mark in the belief that numbers would continue to increase. Therefore, the problem of overlapping of circuits and chapel redundancy was acute. At Penzance, for example, it has been estimated that there were no fewer than twenty three chapels within three miles of the town centre.¹³

It must also be remembered that this situation was partly the product of fierce controversy, the memory of which lived on. At Camelford and Wadebridge, for instance, even the U.M.C. was against union. Furthermore, in spite of a new spirit of co-operation, there was often very little intercourse among many of the different Methodists at the local level.¹⁴

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11. Ibid., pp. 2ff; Bryan R. Wilson, Religion in Secular Society: A Sociological comment (London: Watts, 1966), pp. 125ff.
 12. Wes. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), May 1919, May 1920, May 1926; J. Kent, op.cit., pp. 26,29.
 13. G. Pawley White, A half century of Cornish Methodism 1925-1975: A local preacher's experience (C.M.H.A. & Institute of Cornish Studies, 1975), p. 5; R. Currie, op.cit., p. 199.
 14. G. White, op.cit., p. 5; Ben Batten, Newlyn Towners: Fishermen and Methodists 1800 - 1978: an outline history, p. 39.

Methodist leaders anticipated union "as preparing the way for the great advance to which the Methodist Church is now Divinely called". Unfortunately, the expected economy of resources was slow in coming and the advance never came at all. The closing of chapels in places like Cornwall, where there were often long family associations, proved traumatic and sometimes involved the loss of members to Methodism. There was therefore a tendency to economise on ministers in preference to closing chapels.¹⁵

Writing in 1965, one Methodist author summed up the overall effect of Methodist union :

At the top level integration came quickly; lower down it was a failure in that even now is has not been completed except in the superficial sense of amalgamation of Circuits. What this often meant in practice was that better resources encouraged mere amalgamation of Circuits without the closure of redundant churches. Such closures have often been forced by the failure of what Union was hopefully expected to accomplish; an increase in efficiency and in membership.....¹⁶

Methodist union highlights both the developing ecumenical spirit and some of its limitations in Cornwall. But there was also a moving together, or rather a lessening of opposition, between the Church of England and Methodism. Co-operation was stimulated by the experience of working together in matters of common interest during the First World War. The Lambeth Conversations and the interdenominational Conference on Politics, Economics and Citizenship held at Birmingham in the 1920's were other straws in the wind.¹⁷

However, church-chapel conflicts had not vanished. The revision of the Anglican Prayer Book provided a new area of controversy. When the issue was debated in

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15. M.M., 1933, p. 375; J. Probater, Fore Street Methodist Church Redruth, p. 40.
16. Henry Rack, The Future of John Wesley's Methodism (London: Lutterworth, 1965), p.44.
17. H. Brown, A Century for Cornwall, p. 77; E. Jordan, op.cit., p. 173; Maldwyn Edwards, Methodism and England, p. 200.

Parliament in 1927 and 1928, considerable opposition to the proposed alterations came from anti-Catholic feeling.¹⁸

This controversy entered the political arena in the by election at St. Ives in 1928. All three contenders for the seat were questioned on the issue, but ironically they were all Nonconformists. They all agreed that the Prayer Book question was not suitable for an election campaign and adopted the line that, as Nonconformists, this was an issue in which they could not interfere.¹⁹

The following year the topic emerged in the 1929 election. Captain Moreing, standing as the Conservative candidate for Camborne, had supported the Revised Prayer Book in the last Parliament. At the election he was cross-examined on this issue by some of his constituents including several leading Methodists. A Conservative post-mortem examining Moreing's subsequent defeat gave as one factor the disturbance his Prayer Book vote had caused amongst Nonconformists in the division. Hence, while Nonconformists as candidates prudently opted out of the debate, at the local level Nonconformists joined Anglican Evangelicals in opposing concessions to Anglo-Catholicism.²⁰

Anglo-Catholicism had become a particularly important issue in the Truro Diocese with the appointment of W.H. Frere, the "Mirfield monk", to the Bishopric in 1923. He incurred criticism for his support of the Revised Prayer Book. But the best known example of Anglo-Catholicism in Cornwall and the opposition it could provoke was found at St. Hilary, where Rev. Bernard Walke had introduced many Anglo-Catholic practices. John Kensit, an ardent Protestant campaigner from London, with

18. A. Dunstan & J.S. Peart-Binns, Cornish Bishop (London: Epworth, 1977), pp. 76ff.

19. W.M.N., 24 February 1928.

20. W.B., 16 May 1929; C.R.O., DDX 387, 21 October 1929.

the assistance of local supporters waged a campaign against him, on one occasion disrupting Mass with loud hymn singing. Walke ignored judgments against some of the ornaments in his church, but when the Protestant Truth supporters broke into the church to forcibly remove them, they caused other damage in the process, as well as considerable publicity.²¹

Frere's successor as Bishop in 1935 was J.W. Hunkin, the son of a Wesleyan coal merchant in Truro, who had at one time been a probationary Wesleyan minister. Hunkin, a low Churchman, sought closer links with Cornish Methodists and was helped in this by his background. But events like those at St. Hilary illustrate that strong antipathy remained in some quarters.²²

Methodism and Politics.

In the years following the Great War, Methodists continued to be encouraged to participate in elections by voting, especially in view of the extension of the franchise in 1918. However, a recurring problem in these years was the position of Methodist ministers who not only voted, but also desired to stand as parliamentary candidates, an action they perceived as an outworking of their faith. The Primitive Methodist conference quickly prohibited it. Hence, Rev. F.J. Hopkins, who was still a minister when he fought Bournemouth for the Labour Party in 1918, resigned from the ministry soon after and went on to work for the Labour Party in Cornwall in the late 1920's. Although disliked by the Methodist press, it was not until 1925 that it was declared inexpedient for active Wesleyan ministers to become parliamentary candidates.²³

During the course of the 1918 election, the Wesleyan President of Conference issued a message

21. H. Brown, A Century for Cornwall, pp. 88, 99ff.; A. Dunstan & J. Peart-Binns, op.cit., pp. 99ff.; C.D.P., 10 September 1932.

22. A. Dunstan & J. Peart-Binns, op.cit., pp. 25, 30, 90.

23. M.M., 1918, p. 85, 1931, p. 261; W.B., 16 October 1924; M.T., 2 May 1929.

illustrating the continuity in Methodist attitudes with previous years. He pointed to the emphasis the scriptures placed on the importance of a candidate's character and to principles, like righteousness and brotherhood, for which the Gospel stood and to those which it opposed, like the exploitation of the weak and the spoilation of virtue. Finally, he stressed the importance of the drink question.²⁴

Some issues which had roused Methodists to political action in former years had declined in importance to them. The question of Irish Home Rule was still occupying the attention of politicians, but Methodists limited themselves to expressions of hope for a peaceful settlement and a condemnation of the use of violence for the achievement of political ends. It was not as divisive an issue as it had been in 1886, although Methodists in Northern Ireland became part of the Unionist camp.²⁵

Similarly, education lost much of its emotive power. Cornish Wesleyans welcomed the 1918 Education Bill, believing that it would "greatly promote the efficiency of our educational machinery throughout the country". Occasionally, the old issues re-surfaced. In 1923, for example, the Wesleyan Conference drew attention to the unfair position facing some Nonconformist children in religious education in some single school areas and insisted upon absolute equality of eligibility for teaching posts irrespective of religious opinions.²⁶

Part of the defusing of this issue was due to the completion of the state school system. Wesleyans had handed over most of their schools to the Councils. Hence,

24. M.T., 5 December 1918.

25. F. Jeffery, op.cit., p. 30; U.M.C. Mins., 1922, p. 279; M.M., 1921, pp. 71, 337-8.

26. Wes. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.) May 1918; M.M., 1923, p. 90.

while there were fifteen Wesleyan schools in Cornwall with 2,083 day scholars in 1906, by 1921 there were only two with 131 pupils. The following year one of these closed. The other, at Probus, was involved in a protracted discussion over its proposed merger with the local parochial school. This was not finalised until 1928, and only then under pressure, showing the prickly nature of the problem.²⁷

Temperance remained a prominent point in Methodist social and political thought. The Great War had raised the possibility of State nationalisation of the drink trade, which divided opinion within and without Methodism. Another controversial issue of these years was prohibition, which had been adopted in the U.S.A. during the war years. Methodists, on the whole, welcomed the American decision and were outraged by the attempts of British traders to break the Prohibition laws.²⁸

The temperance movement in Cornwall, like the Sunday schools, had entered a decline between the wars. The Synodical report felt that among the Bands of Hope the real purpose was being "obscured by an excursion spirit". But, even so, in 1932 Cornish Wesleyans still boasted ninety nine branches of the League of Abstainers with a total membership of 5,172. The League was established in 1927 and was one of several campaigns to raise support for the temperance cause. These ensured that, though there was a decline in support, there remained substantial numbers committed to temperance reform.²⁹

At elections, Methodists supported the various programmes advanced by the Temperance Council of the Christian Churches. This usually included demands for

27. C.R.O., DDP 194/28/27.

28. G. Brake, op.cit., pp. 51-54; Wes. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), May 1925; M.M., 1930, p. 65.

29. Wes. Mins (Cornwall Dist.) May 1922; M.M., 1921, p. 57; G. Brake, op.cit., pp. 62, 108.

local option, Sunday closing and restrictions on clubs to be the same as those on public houses. But, in the 1931 election the temperance question was suspended because of the crisis precipitating the formation of the National Government. Although it was revised in 1935, it was clearly less important politically than before.³⁰

In terms of party support, temperance enthusiasts found themselves in either the Liberal or the Labour camps, though Labour support for temperance seemed to wane in the late 1920's. The Conservatives were pre-eminently regarded as the party of the brewers. In Cornwall the association of temperance with Liberals continued and Cornish Liberal candidates in these years included Leif Jones, the President of the United Kingdom Alliance, and Isaac Foot, for a time Chairman of the Parliamentary Temperance Group.³¹

Temperance, however, could lose a candidate more votes than it would gain for him. In the aftermath of defeat in a by election at St. Ives, Isaac Foot expressed his conviction that the most effective tactic employed against him was the rumour that "if you vote for Foot, he will rob the working man of his beer". At Bodmin in the 1924 contest it was reported that the brewers were going to finance a Labour candidate in order to oust Foot. The local Labour Party was mysteriously offered £300., which it refused to accept. This shows that there was still some spirit left in the question.³²

Some Labour candidates in Cornwall were critical of the preoccupation with the temperance question. One of them, Paul Reed, a Methodist and a supporter of local option, pointed out that improvements in transport made a mockery of local option as an effective policy, since it

30. M.M., 1919, p.59, 1922, p.58; M.T., 26 October 1922, 15 October 1931, 14 November 1935; United Methodist, 22 November 1923, 23 May 1929.

31. W.M.N., 28 May 1929.

32. Cornishman, 15 July 1937, W.E., 16 October 1924.

would be easy to travel from a "dry" to a "wet" area. Another, the former Primitive Methodist minister, F.J. Hopkins, commented,

He thanked God that the conscience of the church as well as those connected with other organisations was waking up, but he wished we could get more evidence that they were as much concerned about the abolition of bad housing, unemployment and poverty, as they were about this one question of drink.³³

Cornish temperance organisations noticed that many of the withdrawals from temperance support came from those who had fought in the First World War. Built up as it was on an equation that good people were teetotal and bad people were not, the pressure of human contact, in the war for instance, forced the equation to collapse. In these years, as the Methodist Recorder admitted, "The steady witness of the Christian religion is almost all that keeps the issue alive". It was thus a cause allied to churches which were themselves facing problems and to a political party which by the Second World War was only of minor importance.³⁴

Just as Methodists maintained their battle against intemperance, so they continued to wage war against gambling, deploring its evident increase. Methodists argued that gambling, led to a waste of thought, time and money, engendering an attitude which was antithetical to Christian stewardship. It was also attacked because it appealed to covetousness and developed a habit of carelessness of the suffering and loss it inflicted on others. It was to be rigidly excluded from the chapels.³⁵

The possibilities of legislation in this field were narrower than in the case of temperance, but nonetheless Methodists actively opposed the introduction of Premium Bonds, believed it to be immoral to impose a Betting Tax and saw Football Pools as a "disastrous exploitation of the gambling craze". As in the case of temperance, they

33. Cornish Guardian, 23 May 1929; Cornish Echo, 17 May 1929.

34. C.R.O. DDX 472/10, p. 214; M.R., 23 October 1924.

35. M.M., 1931, p.64.

were swimming against the tide of prevailing opinion.³⁶

In Cornwall, it was the problem of vice, literature of low moral standards and sensational reporting of divorce proceedings which occupied the Methodist conscience. Sunday Observance became a political issue when the Labour Party began to hold meetings on a Sunday and the Western Morning News was warmly applauded for its refusal to report such gatherings in its columns.³⁷

At the Conference level, whilst still supporting the older causes, interest was focussing on other issue. To quote the Wesleyan Conference, "One of our foremost duties is to equip ourselves to serve the present age... and to examine the social implications of the gospel that we may shape our life and thought thereby. It is the age of the social question". The individualistic quietism of nineteenth century Methodism was giving way to an emphasis on the Social Gospel, as the application of the new teaching on the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man took effect.³⁸

In the inter-war years Methodists sought to detach themselves from class warfare. The Minutes of Conference in these years displayed a recurring hope in the use of moderation and arbitration in the settlement of industrial disputes and a sympathetic concern for the unemployed. Hence, in the General Strike of 1926, although the reaction of the churches, like that of the politicians, was diverse, the Methodist journals, while not condoning the strike, argued against a harsh reaction against trade unions.³⁹

The Wesleyan Conference defined its position at length:

We shall never build the New Jerusalem if we are dominated by self regarding interest... The Church cannot stand outside the sorrow and welter of our social system. It is not our task to define by what

36. M.M., 1917, p.91, 1925, p. 60, 1935, p.67; M.R., 22 November 1923.

37. Wes. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), May 1920, May 1925, May 1929; W.M.N., 13 May 1929; U.M.C. Mins., 1931, p.25.

38. M.M., 1922, p. 365, 1934, pp. 391 ff.

39. M.M., 1919, pp. 63,271, 1933, p. 82; M.R., 6, 13, 20 May 1926

economic measures reform shall come, but we must in season and out of season insist that each life is of eternal value to God, that we are all of one family and that life's great gifts are not for a few but for all.

If it had no answers to economic questions, Methodism at least viewed social questions with increasing sympathy.⁴⁰

The General Strike had little impact in Cornwall. As the West Briton put, "But for the hold up of the railways, Cornwall has not suffered exceptionally..." But during these years, particularly in the 1920's, Cornwall was severely affected by unemployment consequent upon a post-war slump in tin mining. Rising costs and a slump in the price of tin resulted in the closure of all but one Cornish tin mine within thirty months of the signing of the Armistice. Unemployment was said to have affected every household in the Camborne-Redruth area.⁴¹

While Methodism was reticent at Conference level to become involved in the political aspects of social welfare until this century, in the chapels concern for the poor and distressed had always been present and the situation in Cornwall gave Methodists an opportunity to display this outworking of their faith. Retiring offerings were taken as often as possible for the Local Relief Fund. The United Methodist carried an appeal for the needy in the Area.⁴²

The Camborne Wesleyan circuit passed a resolution that, in view of the prevailing distress, the Government ought to take steps to alleviate the problem by finding relief works. This did not elicit a positive response and, indeed, in the one scheme the Government did support at a later date, it insisted that unemployed Welsh miners were used on it. The Camborne resolution is interesting in that Methodists did not usually pass resolutions on

40. M.M., 1926, p. 415.

41. W.B., 13 May 1926; D.B. Barton, A History of Tin Mining and Smelting in Cornwall (Truro: Barton, 1967), pp. 262ff., 267ff.

42. C.R.O., DDMR/CB 28, 3 March 1921; United Methodist,

such topics at circuit meetings. Yet there was a strong feeling in the county that the Government, having reaped the benefit of the mines in the war years, had some moral obligation towards them now.⁴³

Even more important to Methodists than poverty and temperance was enthusiasm for the League of Nations. There had always been a strand of pacifism in Methodism and, although it was not prominent in the war years, the horror and bloodshed of the Great War was such that nobody wanted an encore. Methodists of every sort and at every level placed great emphasis on supporting the League. Wesleyans hailed it as being "the Christian solution of international difficulties".⁴⁴

After union, the Methodist Conference published a report on War and Peace. It outlined the view that war was unchristian and that the duty of the Church was to promote peace, though it conceded that within Methodism there were two distinct groups. In 1937, these two positions, the Pacifist and the Just War, were further clarified.⁴⁵

As the 1930's progressed, Methodists, on the one hand, were appalled at the inability of the League of Nations to prevent events like Italian aggression in Abyssinia, but on the other hand, were alarmed at the increasing preparations for war made by the Government. The question of peace was not as clear cut a party issue as temperance, though the Conservatives were regarded with a good deal of suspicion. Typical of the time, Methodists wanted peace but withdrew from supporting the means of enforcing it.⁴⁶

30 November 1922.

43. Wes. Mins (Cornwall Dist.) September 1921; C.R.O. DDMR/CB 21, 14 September 1921; Frank Michell, Annals of an Ancient Cornish Town- being notes on the history of Redruth (1946; rpt. Penzance, 1978), p.216.
44. M.M., 1918, p. 84; Wes. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.) May 1920; U.M.C. Mins, 1923, p.119.
45. M.M., 1933, pp. 434ff.; 1937, 383ff.
46. M.M., 1931, p. 63, 1934, pp. 82 ff., 1938, p. 64.

When the Second World War broke out, Methodists once again rallied in support. The Methodist Recorder wrote,

As the Prime Minister has said, we are fighting against 'evil things'. We are aware that such claims are usually made by both sides at the beginning of every war. But if traditional Christian distinctions between right and wrong have any meaning at all, there can be no doubt⁴⁷ that in this case the Prime Minister is right.

Nowhere could escape the impact of war. Cornwall became a centre for evacuees from London. The extent of the ignorance of the Christian faith amongst these city dwellers surprised Cornish ministers, and Methodists deplored the effects of the war on moral standards. The loss of young men to the Armed Forces affected many chapels, though attempts were made to minister to the spiritual needs of servicemen and the evacuated city youth. Cornwall, with the exception of the areas bordering on the Tamar estuary, escaped heavy bombing and hence the dubious benefit of this experienced in Hull, where bombs solved the problem of chapel redundancy.⁴⁸

As the prospect of victory arrived, Methodists once again sought to find ways of ensuring a permanent peace. Their hopes were transferred from the defunct League of Nations to the nascent United Nations. The Methodist response to the Second World War followed the same pattern as their attitude to its predecessor.⁴⁹

This, then, was the Methodist approach to politics between the wars. Politics were still seen as a legitimate sphere for the citizen to enter. Indeed, ministers seemed more willing to enter it. Some issues had lost their importance, but others like temperance and opposition to social evils continued to form a platform for Methodist action, albeit with limited success.

47. M.R., 7 September 1939.

48. H. Brown, A Century for Cornwall, pp. 107-109; T. Shaw, Methodism in the Camelford and Wadebridge Circuit, p. 213; K. Harrison, op.cit., p. 83.

49. M.M., 1946, p. 60.

A more sympathetic attitude towards social and industrial questions was also developing, evidence of the changing focus of salvation from the individual to society, an outworking of new theological "insights".

Political Change

The inter-war years saw not only religious change, but great fluctuations in the fortunes of political parties. This was partly a product of the far-reaching effects of the First World War,⁵⁰ but there were also a number of important differences between the pre-war and post-war electorates. Firstly, since there had been no election for eight years, there was a bid change in the existing electorate. Secondly, the electorate had been greatly expanded by granting the franchise to nearly all men over the age of twenty one and to women aged thirty or more. The Cornish electorate in 1918 was over twice as large as it had been in 1910. A third difference was caused by major redistribution of seats. In Cornwall this meant a reduction from seven to five in the county's parliamentary representation.⁵¹

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50. The war itself caused changes in Cornish M.P.s. Robartes, who sat for St. Austell was killed in action in 1915, while Pole-Carew retired from the Bodmin seat in 1916. According to the political truce in operation at the time, the Liberal Wesleyan, Sir Francis Layland-Barratt was chosen to represent St. Austell, and Charles Hanson, a staunch Anglican who for a short time had been a Wesleyan minister in Canada, was the Conservative selection for Bodmin.
51. The new ST. IVES seat was expanded to include Helston R.D.C., while the new CAMBORNE constituency incorporated the borough of Helston and East Kerrier. The PENRYN AND FALMOUTH division was formed by uniting the old borough with most of the former St. Austell division and the city of Truro. BODMIN remained largely unchanged, but for the addition of a dozen parishes, including Callington, from NORTH CORNWALL, which had been extended to cover the rural area around St. Columb Major. (W.D.M., 21 November 1918); See William L. Miller, Electoral Dynamics in Britain since 1918 (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp.1ff. for a fuller description of the changes in the electorate.

Fig. 8:2, Conservative % of the vote at General Elections in Cornwall, 1918-1945.

Election Year	Constituency					Seats Won
	Bodmin	Camborne	N.Cornwall	P.&F.	St.Ives	
1918	58.4*	-	-	50.6*	-	2
1922	46.6	-	-	42.7*	53.5*	2
1923	46.4	-	43.5	38.0	40.6	0
1924	51.1*	42.9*	53.6*	43.3*	53.0*	5
1929	43.7	32.6	42.3	34.1	39.7	0
1931	-	43.4*	45.3	40.5*	-	2
1935	50.4*	48.3*	48.7	39.6*	-	3
1945	43.8*	37.1*	45.4	37.0	47.3*	3
Seats Won	4	4	1	5	3	17

* = Conservative victory.

1. The candidate stood as a Constitutionalist, who joined the Conservatives soon after the election.
2. A National Liberal candidate supported by Conservatives and opposed by Liberals

Fig. 8:3, Labour % of the vote at General Elections in Cornwall, 1918-1945.

Election Year	Constituency					Seats Won
	Bodmin	Camborne	N.Cornwall	P.&F.	St. Ives	
1918	-	48.0	-	-	38.4	0
1922	-	21.9	-	16.6	-	0
1923	-	-	-	-	12.9	0
1924	-	24.6	-	22.4	-	0
1929	10.0	25.3 ¹	8.0	28.9	17.1	0
1931	-	24.5 ²	5.6	24.9	-	0
1935	7.2	24.0 ²	-	32.1	-	0
1945	18.2	35.3	-	43.7*	27.2	1
Seats Won	0	0	0	1	0	1

* = Labour victory.

1. I.L.P. candidate supported by Labour.
2. excludes separate I.L.P. candidature.

Fig. 8:4, Liberal % of the vote at General Elections in Cornwall, 1918 - 1945

Election Year	Constituency					Seats Won
	Bodmin	Camborne	N.Cornwall	P.&F.	St. Ives	
1918	41.6	52.0* ¹	-*	49.4 ²	58.6*	3
1922	53.4*	-* ¹	-*	32.8	46.5	3
1923	53.6*	-* ¹	56.5*	62.0*	46.5*	5
1924	48.9	32.5	46.4	34.3	47.0	0
1929	46.3*	35.8*	49.7*	37.0*	43.2*	5
1931	-*	32.1	49.1*	34.6	-*	3
1935	42.4	25.8	51.3*	28.3	-* ³	2
1945	38.0	27.6	52.8*	19.3	25.5 ³	1
Seats Won	4	4	7	2	5	22

* = Liberal victory

1. At Camborne in 1922 the main contest was between a National Liberal and a Liberal candidate. They both stood again in 1923 as Liberals.
2. This excludes the vote of a separate National Liberal candidate, who received 7.9% of the vote.
3. At St. Ives, the National Liberal candidate in 1931 and 1935 is counted as a Liberal. By 1945 he is classified as a Conservative.

Figures 8:2, 8:3 and 8:4⁵² give the percentage vote received by each of the three main parties in the inter-war years. The seats were not always contested. Sometimes coalitions meant unopposed returns. Other times it was a sign of weakness or for tactical reasons. Thus, the percentage of the vote necessary to win a given seat varied considerably according to the number of candidates standing. The experience of the Liberals at St. Ives and Penryn and Falmouth in the early 1920's shows the wide variation in voting behaviour and of votes necessary for political success.

52. Material extracted from F. Criag, British Parliamentary Election Results, II. x

A brief sketch of political events during these years will add flesh to the skeletal form of election results. The 1918 election resulted in a resounding victory for the Conservative backed Coalition, headed by Lloyd George, which had replaced Asquith's Liberal Ministry in 1916. Asquithian Liberals fared so poorly that the Labour Party formed the official opposition. The Liberal Party thus lost its position as one of the two governing parties. Cornwall returned two Conservatives and three Liberals, compared with two Conservatives and five Liberals in December 1910. This masks the true Liberal position. Two of their three members had been 'couponed', and the third, the Independent Liberal, Acland, only fought a Labour opponent.

The "Coupon" was a letter sent by Lloyd George and Bonar Law to candidates supporting the Coalition Government. This arrangement hardened the division between Liberals supporting Asquith and those supporting Lloyd George. The importance of the coupon rested in the popularity of Lloyd George at the time. As the Asquithian, Isaac Foot, put it "My opponent has not won the seat on any particular policy but as a sort of Christmas gift from Mr. Lloyd George". Its effect at Bodmin and Penryn and Falmouth was believed to be crucial in winning the seats for the official Coalition Conservative candidates.⁵³

As the contest progressed there was both a hardening of feeling against Germany and what the Methodist Times called a "vulgarising of the election". In Cornwall it was reflected in the Independent candidature at St. Ives, where Imperialism incorporated strong anti-Semitic and anti-Germanic feeling. It was more prominent still in the campaign of Sir Edward Nicholl at Penryn and Falmouth. His remark at a meeting at Feock that "A dead German was the

53. Trevor Wilson 'The Coupon and the British General Election of 1918', Journal of Modern History, 36(1964), p.29; cf. Roy Douglas, 'The background to the "Coupon" election arrangements', E.H.R., 86 (April 1971), pp.318-336; W.B., 30 December 1918; W.D.M., 2, 16, 30 December 1918.

best German and that he would rather kick a German than speak to one", was typical. It gives a glimpse of the feelings at this time.⁵⁴

The Labour Party fielded two candidates in Cornwall, who were both former Liberals and Congregationalists. A.E. Dunn had represented Camborne before the war. He gained 38.4% of the vote in Labour's first outing in St. Ives. George Nicholls, a former Congregationalist lay pastor and a Rechabite, had previously fought as a Lib-Lab candidate. He came with 532 votes of victory in the Camborne division, although he returned to the Liberal fold in subsequent elections.⁵⁵

An interesting feature of the election was the agreement between Methodists, Free Churches and Liberals in defining the issues of the campaign. These included general aims like support for the League of Nations, restoration of individual liberties, temperance and social reform. Although these aims were confined neither to Nonconformists nor to Liberals, the placing of "Vote Liberal" advertisements in the Methodist press illustrate the political link still believed to exist.⁵⁶

A by election at Bodmin early in 1922, caused by the death of Sir Charles Hanson, gave electors an opportunity to register their dissatisfaction with the Coalition Government. Isaac Foot, the Wesleyan Liberal, easily defeated the Conservative candidate, Hanson's son-in-law, Sir Frederick Poole. The local Labour Party urged its members to support Foot. The Western Morning News even encouraged Conservatives to vote for Foot in order to register anti-Coalition feeling. Liberals were overjoyed with the result and Sir John Simon despatched a telegram, which read, "Dear Foot, Congratulations on your marvellous feat".⁵⁷

54. M.T., 12 December 1918; W.B., 25 November 1918.

55. W.B., 5,30 December 1918; see also Asquith Papers, vol.33, f. 34.

56. United Methodist 5 December 1918; M.R., 5,12 December 1918; M.T., 21 November, 5,12 December 1918.

57. W.M.N., 20 February 1922; Cornish Guardian, 3 March 1922
Hugh Foot, A start in Freedom (London: Hodder & Stoughton,

It was later that year that the Coalition broke up. The ensuing election was a confused one. In Cornwall, Foot retained Bodmin with a reduced majority, but his fellow Liberal Methodist, Sir Clifford Cory did not fare so well at St. Ives. In a clear fight against a Conservative, Cory, a National Liberal candidate, was well beaten. In North Cornwall, the county's other National Liberal member, Marks, was walking a precarious tightrope. He favoured closer co-operation with the Conservatives, but found that this was unpopular with local Liberals. At one stage it looked as though he would face a Liberal opponent, but in the end was returned unopposed.⁵⁸

At Camborne the Liberals procured the veteran temperance champion, Leif Jones. The Unionists and Coalition Liberals had been involved in discussing together potential candidates for the seat. Eventually Captain Moreing was selected by the National Liberals with Unionist support. He had substantial interests in Cornish mining, a fact he, like Strauss before him, was not slow to exploit. He narrowly won the seat. The Labour vote declined and it was thought that their candidate lost some of the mining vote to Moreing, while retaining sufficient support to rob Jones of victory.⁵⁹

For the first time the Labour Party put forward a candidate in the Penryn and Falmouth constituency, in addition to the Conservative and Liberal candidates already in the field. Their choice to fight the seat containing the china clay pits was Joe Harris, one of the leaders of the 1913 Cornish China Clay Strike. But the controversial aspect of this contest was the candidature of the National Liberal, G.H. Morgan. This

1964), p. 25; Ross McKibbin, The Evolution of the Labour Party 1910-1924 (London: O.U.P., 1974), p. 120.
 58. C.D.P., 28 October, 4 November 1922; Cornish Times, 3 November 1922; C.R.O., DDX 381/1, 13 January, 29 June 1921, 16 June, 26 October 1922.
 59. C.R.O., DDX 387, 7 October 1920, 24 October 1922.

was said to be Lloyd George's answer to the refusal of Conservative candidates to refrain from fighting Coalition Liberals elsewhere, as at St. Ives for example. Although a Nonconformist and former Cornish Liberal M.P., Morgan was regarded as a traitor by many of his erstwhile supporters. He lost his deposit. His campaign, by further dividing the Liberal vote, helped to ensure the Conservative victory.⁶⁰

Nationally the Conservatives won a large majority of the seats. Labour advanced to 142 members, though their progress in Cornwall was not encouraging. Their intervention at Camborne and Penryn and Falmouth highlights Wilson's remark on Liberal prospects. He commented, "At every point their chances of recovery were being crabbed by the Labour Party". National Liberal representation was cut to sixty and Independent Liberal M.P.s numbered fifty six.⁶¹

Just over a year later, in 1923, Liberals were fighting another election as a united party. Baldwin's espousal of Protection was the cause both of the election and of Liberal reunion. Asquith and Lloyd George joined forces again for a battle in defence of free trade reminiscent of 1906. There was little time for rebuilding local party organisations, but the improved morale, a consequence of unity, and funds from headquarters resulted in an upsurge of Liberal activity. In Cornwall, Liberals held Bodmin and North Cornwall, and regained St. Ives and Penryn and Falmouth. The Liberal majority at Penryn and Falmouth in a straight fight with a Conservative was a staggering 6,000 (24%).⁶²

It was the Camborne seat which highlighted the

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60. W.M.N., 26 October, 8 November 1922.
 61. T. Wilson, The Downfall of the Liberal Party, p. 258; C.R.O., DDX 381/1, 29 June 1921.
 62. Chris Cook, The Age of Alignment: electoral politics in Britain 1922-1929 (London: Macmillan 1975), p.128; W.M.N., 8 December 1923; C.D.P., 27 October, 3, 17 November 1923.

difficulties of Liberal reunion. In the other Cornish seats telegrams of support were despatched to the Liberal candidates from Lloyd George and Asquith. At Camborne, the Independent Liberals and the National Liberals could not agree, and the United Liberal Committee in London declared itself neutral. Moreing was the nominee of both the National Liberals and the Conservatives, while Jones was supported by Asquithian Liberals. With no Labour opponent to split the Radical vote, Jones won easily and Cornwall returned a clean sweep of five Liberal M.P.s.⁶³

Protection had been decisively rejected and the Liberals succeeded in gaining ground in the country at large, mainly at the expense of the Conservatives. However, it was the Labour Party which formed the new Government. As Cook has commented, "The paradox is the first Labour Government was, in part at least, the result of the financial weakness and organisational weakness of the party in rural England" If it had been able to fight more effectively in area like Cornwall, as a result of the consequent division of the Radical vote, Conservatives may have received an overall majority of seats.⁶⁴

Liberal M.P.s supported the Labour Government but came to no official agreement with it. They found it surprisingly antagonistic toward them. The minority Labour Government called an election in 1924, the third in two years, in circumstances which were favourable to the Conservatives. All the Conservative candidates in Cornwall used issues like the Government's proposed loan to Russia, the trial of the Communist editor, Campbell, and the mysterious Zinoviev letter to arouse anti-Socialist fears.⁶⁵

63. F. Craig, British Parliamentary Election Results, II, p. 311.

64. C. Cook, op.cit., p. 168.

65. T. Wilson, The Downfall of the Liberal Party, pp. 289-297; United Methodist, 16, 23 October 1924.

In Cornwall there were two Labour candidates, at Camborne and at Penryn and Falmouth. They were the former Primitive Methodist minister, F.J. Hopkins and a Cornishman, Frank Rowe. Although they were handicapped by lack of organisation, they both aimed their campaigns at the Liberal vote.

While Cornwall did not reflect "Con-Lib" pacts formed in other parts of the country, it did illustrate the anti-Liberal feeling in the Labour Party, which intensified during the election. This was one explanation of Cory's defeat at St. Ives, Labour voters preferring the Tories to the Liberals in the absence of their own candidate. However, Cory's defeat is also attributable to the defection of Liberal voters to Conservatism, because of the fear of Socialism.⁶⁶

This was what happened at Bodmin, where the Tory candidate had eleven nomination papers signed by former Liberals who added "Anti-Socialist" after their name. Foot found himself, like all Liberal candidates, charged with supporting Socialism, because the Liberals had put Labour in office, and accused of crypto--Toryism, because they had brought the Labour Government down.⁶⁷

A Conservative wave swept the country. For the first time ever, Cornwall returned five Conservatives to Parliament. At Camborne, the National Liberal Moreing had stood as the Constitutionalist and Anti-Socialist candidate, but was in practice a Conservative nominee. In eleven days the Conservative candidate at Penryn and Falmouth turned a 6,000 Liberal majority into a majority of over 2,000 for himself. The Liberals were reduced to forty M.P.s and set their sights on survival rather than holding office. In spite of the large Conservative majority, Labour extended its influence.⁶⁸

66. W.M.N., 17, 18 October 1924.

67. M. Kinnear, op.cit., p. 46; W.M.N., 20 October 1924.

68. W.B., 6 November 1924; C.R.O., DDX 387, 18th January 1923.

During this period of Conservative hegemony the Liberals produced a series of notable policy inquiries, the most famous of which, the Yellow Book, was concerned with Britian's industrial future. Although Lloyd George emerged as the leader of the Liberals in Parliament, divisions in the Party continued.⁶⁹ A by election at St. Ives in 1928 gives a glimpse of the continuing Liberal quarrels.

The Liberal candidate was Mrs. Hilda Runciman, the wife of the Wesleyan M.P. for Swansea West. She was standing with the idea of keeping the seat warm for her husband until the next election. The Runcimans appeal was thought to owe much to their Nonconformity and staunch temperance views. Mrs. Runciman won the seat against Labour and Tory opponents to become "the Duchy's first woman M.P.", but it was a victory for the old style of Liberalism, not for the new Liberal policies, nor for Lloyd George. As the Manchester Guardian commented on the campaign,

A Liberal candidate who never mentions the name of the Liberal leader if she can help it and who has nothing to say about what the great bulk of Liberals regard as the most hopeful Liberal movements of the Post War period, is plainly laying up controversial difficulties for herself.⁷⁰

The expiration of Baldwin's term of office was the cause of the 1929 election. The Liberal scheme enshrined in the Yellow Book and publicised in pamphlet form under the title "We can conquer unemployment" set the pace for the election. Conservatives attempted to ridicule the scheme. Liberals rallied behind it. Even Runciman, who, as planned, successfully moved from Swansea West to St. Ives, supported the basis of the plan, albeit with some reservations.⁷¹

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69. T. Wilson, The Downfall of the Liberal Party, pp.345ff., R. Douglas, History of the Liberal Party, pp.188ff.
70. W.M.N., 17 February, 8 March 1928; Manchester Guardian, 21 February 1928; Runciman Papers, W.R., 330; the role played by the Runcimans in the 1928 Tavistock by election further highlights the Runcimans' feud with Lloyd George and Liberal divisions over policy (Runciman Papers, W.R., 218, 333).
71. Runciman Papers, W.R., 331.

For the first time a Labour candidate stood in every Cornish division. Those standing at Bodmin and North Cornwall lost their deposits, a fate meted out also to a local, non-party candidate at Camborne, J. Carah Roberts, who stressed local issues, like mining and tourism. But the Labour Party continued to advance in Camborne and in Penryn and Falmouth.

The Liberals won all five Cornish seats, completely reversing the 1924 results. In part this was attributed to the importance of the temperance issue to the newly enfranchised women voters between the ages of twenty one and thirty. The new Liberal policies also aroused great interest and support. Furthermore, the quality of the Liberal candidates, like Runciman and Maclean, attracted to the county by the brighter prospects of success, in turn made their success more likely. However, as Wilson has remarked, "For Lloyd George, even this advance must have seemed a mixed blessing". His adversaries in the Liberal Party had made Cornwall their stronghold.⁷²

Nationally, it was the Conservatives who collected most votes, but Labour who won most seats and who formed their second minority Government. The Liberals received 5.3 million votes but a mere fifty nine seats. Even in Cornwall, their majorities were not as big as they had been in 1923, a product of growing Labour intervention. The failure of the Liberal revival of 1929 to translate votes into seats condemned them to the status of a minor party and has been a recurring problem facing Liberals at every subsequent election.⁷³

In 1931, the Prime Minister, MacDonald, faced with a growing financial crisis formed a National Government. He had Conservative and Liberal backing, though he carried little Labour support with him. The Conservatives pressed for an early election and MacDonald went to the county in

72. C.R.O., DDX 387, 21 October 1929; W.M.N., 28 May 1929; T. Wilson, The Downfall of the Liberal Party, p. 376.

73. C. Cook, op.cit., p. 341.

October 1931. It soon became clear that Conservatives were using the contest to seek to introduce protection, and that the Coalition was split between those who believed tariffs were needed and those who, as free traders, were not prepared to commit themselves on the issue.

The Methodist Times came out strongly in favour of the National Government, but not all Methodists agreed with it. A youthful Dr. Soper, for instance, strongly dissented from this view. Even at such a time, the moral approach of Methodists is apparent. The Methodist Recorder insisted, "It is something more than a play on words to assert, that, more important than the departure from the Gold Standard, is the deflection of the nation from the Golden Rule". It added, "The trouble of the world is not merely or mainly economic; it is moral".⁷⁴

The situation in Cornwall in the election was muddled. At Bodmin, the Conservative candidate, Harrison, stood down when Foot promised to continue to give staunch support to the National Government in which he was Secretary of Mines. He was returned unopposed when his Labour opponent was drafted to fight Devonport.⁷⁵

At St. Ives, Runciman, who had been intending to retire from parliamentary life, was persuaded by the financial crisis to stand again. Local Conservatives contemplated opposing him, but, with the help of MacDonald, Runciman succeeded in avoiding a contest. Soon after the election he was appointed President of the Board of Trade.⁷⁶

Elsewhere Liberals were not so fortunate. At Camborne, Leif Jones, a supporter of the National Government, faced opposition not only from an I.L.P. candidate, Kate Spurrell, but also from the Conservatives who refused to support an "unrepentant" free trader. E.D. Simon, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade in the

74. M.T., 15, 22 October 1931; M.R., 29 October 1931.

75. W.M.N., 7, 12 October 1931; C.R.O., DDX 385/1, 10 October 1931.

76. Cornish Post, 17 October 1931; Runciman Papers, W.R., 245, 252.

National Government, was the Liberal nomination at Penryn and Falmouth. Two Cornishmen, the Conservative Maurice Petherick, who had stood in 1929, and A.L. Rowse, the Oxford don and Labour candidate, opposed him. In both seats, Conservatives made gains at the Liberals' expense. Conservative attempts to oust the Liberal Sir Donald Maclean, MacDonald's President of the Board of Education, in the North Cornwall constituency narrowly failed.⁷⁷

There had been efforts to avoid some of the contests.⁷⁸ But Conservatives were not prepared to give way in more than two seats, even against ministers in the National Government. Cornwall therefore typifies the determined Conservative campaign to promote their own protectionist candidates at the expense of Liberal supporters of the National Government.

The National Government was returned with a vast majority. Labour was decimated. An increase in overall Liberal representation masked a decline in votes and the fact that many Liberals were only returned by the grace of the Conservatives. Furthermore, Liberals were again divided. There were Samuelities, who supported the Government but no Protection, Simonites, who were prepared to support tariffs, and a Lloyd George family group with Labour leanings.

Differences between Samuelites and Simonites were evident in the North Cornwall by election in 1932 caused by Maclean's death,⁷⁹ but they came to a head when the Government adopted "Empire Free Trade" at the Ottawa Conference. The Samuelite Liberals and some of the Labour supporters of the Government resigned. Runciman was among those who stayed. Indeed, he had been present at

77. Cornish Post, 10 October 1931; W.M.N., 9, 10 October 1931; C.R.O. DDX 381/3, 29 September, 8, 12 October 1931.

78. W.M.N., 13, 16 October 1931.

79. W.M.N., 1, 25 July 1932; Runciman Papers, W.R., 262.

Ottawa. Many of his Liberal supporters at St. Ives were said to be "very sore" at his desertion of free trade, but the key, leading Liberals in the division and the Conservatives supported him.⁸⁰

The election of 1935 marked a further decline in Liberal fortunes. Runciman, an important figure in the Cabinet, was unopposed at St. Ives. But, at Bodmin, Foot had lost much support by leaving the Government after the Ottawa. Opposed by a youthful, vigorous Conservative, J.R. Rathbone, and again facing a Labour opponent, Foot was well beaten.⁷⁹

Conservatives also succeeded in strengthening their grip on Camborne and Penryn and Falmouth. At Camborne, divisions between the I.L.P candidate of 1931, Kate Spurrell, and the official Labour candidate, H.R.G. Greaves, ruined Labour's chances of making progress. But the death of the Liberal agent in the division, the Methodist, J. Tabb, had led to a decline in Liberal organisation and their campaign had the marks of a scratch performance. At Penryn and Falmouth Rowse succeeded in pushing Labour into second place even against the respected Wesleyan, Liberal candidate, Sir. R.W. Allen.⁸²

Only in North Cornwall were the Samuelite Liberals able to hold out and even there the majority of Acland, who had won the 1932 by election, was none too large. Nationally, Liberals only secured twenty one seats. The National Government, Conservative in all but name, secured a comfortable victory.

In the summer of 1935 the Council of Action for Peace and Reconstuction had been launched. It sought to focus

80. Runciman Papers, W.R., 221, 252.

81. Runciman Papers, W.R., 278; C.R.O., DDX 385/1, 5 November 1932, 7 January 1933; W.M.N., 4, 17 November 1935; Cornish Guardian, 11 November 1935.

82. W.B., 17, 31 October, 14, 18 November 1935.

attention on "unprovoked aggression" in international affairs at home on unemployment. Initiated by the leaders of the Free Churches, it was hoped that the Council of Action would play an honourable, non-party role in the 1935 election.⁸³

It supported 362 candidates of which only sixty seven were returned, including all twenty one Liberals. The four Cornish Samuelite Liberals received the Council's backing and Isaac Foot, one of its leaders, claimed that the Council of Action's schemes "constituted the only constructive proposals before the country for dealing with unemployment". But whilst two Cornish Labour candidates were approved by the Council, a third, Falconer, standing in Boot's seat at Bodmin was not, despite giving favourable replies to the Council of Action's questionnaire. This arbitrary distribution of favours earned it the name "Council of Faction" in the local press.⁸⁴

The Methodist Times wrote of the campaign,

The documents as a whole appear to us to be capable of support alike by progressive electors in all three political camps - Conservative, Liberal and Labour. But the essential problem is not with the programme of the Council of Action but with its leader.

The Western Morning News was more blunt, calling it Lloyd George's "latest electioneering device".⁸⁵

Koss concluded that the Council of Action foundered because "although its aims and leadership were essentially secular, it relied for organisation and support on religious bodies which were shown to command limited resources and a still more limited perception of political reality". As an attempt by the Free Churches to make its voice heard on the important political issues of the day, the Council of Action was an irrelevant side-show, even in a Nonconformist county like Cornwall, and its link with

83. C.D.P., 2 November 1935; Daily News 8 November 1935.

84. W.M.N., 8, 12, 13 November 1935.

85. M.T., 24 October 1935; W.M.N., 2 November 1935.

Lloyd George dampened what enthusiasm there was.⁸⁶

Following the 1935 election, Foot held an extraordinary meeting at Penzance to take Runciman to task for having issued letters of support to the Conservative candidates in the county. Foot felt bitterly that Runciman had betrayed Liberalism by his action and alleged that he was buying favour with his new associates in order to secure immunity from opposition. Runciman calmly denied the charges, but his agent shrewdly forecast that Foot may be preparing the ground for a by election fight. This proved to be the case for in 1937 Runciman was elevated to the peerage.⁸⁷

The by election was a sharp contest. Foot stood with virtually no organisation behind him. Alex Beechman, Runciman's successor, stood as a National Liberal but used the Conservative agent. Runciman declined to be present during the contest, but weighed in with a letter of support for Beechman. Foot strongly attacked the use Beechman made of the word Liberal. Noting the difference between Free Trade Liberals and Protectionist Conservatives, he commented, "A clever horseman can ride two horses at the same time, but it is a necessary condition that both horses should be going in the same direction".⁸⁸

Foot's campaign was based on the support of traditional Liberal Nonconformists, who were disgruntled with Runciman and the National Government. On a low poll he was beaten by 210 votes. This may have been due

86. S. Koss, Nonconformity in Modern British Politics, p.215.

87. W.M.N., 25, 28 November 1935; Runciman Papers, W.R., 278; Foot also visited Spen Valley and Devonport, where the electors of Sir John Simon and Leslie Hore-Belisha received a similar indictment of their member's conduct (see Michael Foot, 'Father of the Foots', Sunday Telegraph, 9 August 1970.

88. W.B., 24 June 1937; Cornishman, 17 June 1937.

to his inability to poll a sufficient portion of the Labour vote. Although local Labour leaders supported Foot, officially they were neutral. But there remained a feeling in some quarters that the Methodists had let "Our Isaac" down. Runciman's influence may have been crucial.⁸⁹

Reflecting on the political changes of these years, one of the striking features is the decline of the Liberal Party. The St. Ives by election typifies a recurring theme in the inter-war period, whereby Liberals blackened their own cause in the eyes of the electorate by their frequent divisions and inability to work together. Liberals at Camborne had engaged in a civil war centred on Jones and Moreing in the 1920s and Morgan's candidature as a National Liberal in 1922 at Penryn and Falmouth was probably more divisive than his poll would suggest. Liberals at St. Ives and North Cornwall had both flirted with Conservatives in the immediate aftermath of war and the Party was still divided in the years prior to the Second World War. The effect of this was debilitating to morale and confusing to voters.

Cook has observed that the decline of the Liberal Party was not a simple, single process, but occurred initially and dramatically in the large cities and coal mining areas. The persistent strength of Liberalism elsewhere is seen in Cornwall. However, Liberal divisions expedited Liberal organisational decay. The Devon and Cornwall Liberal Federation, for instance, virtually collapsed in the early 1930's.⁹⁰

A perpetual problem for political parties is how to keep themselves afloat financially. The Conservatives, while not free from such matters, had the advantage of more wealthy supporters and candidates than other parties. Cornish Labour candidates in the 1920's particularly found themselves limited by this factor. It was also a big problem for Liberals. These financial problems, the

89. Times, 30 June 1937; Cornishman, 24 June, 1 July 1937.

90. C. Cook, *op.cit.*, p. 340; Interview, Canon H.M. Brown, 1 October 1977.

organisational decay, the dissensions within the leadership and their local ramifications, all influenced the electoral performance in varying degrees. Again to quote Cook, "The Liberal decline resembled the pictures of a kaleidoscope, changing from constituency to constituency, with all the complexities of a Seurat landscape".⁹¹

In one sense, Liberal misfortunes strengthened Cornish Liberalism, as strong Liberal candidates saw in the county a greater chance of success than elsewhere. At the same time, however, the collapse of the Party nationally made more effective the argument that it was not worthwhile voting Liberal, because they were no longer contenders for office. Both Labour and Conservative candidates squeezed the Cornish Liberals in this way.

The emergence of the Labour Party in these years to the position of official Opposition and briefly to form Governments on two occasions is another important development. Yet, while the Labour Party had grown nationally, it had yet to capture its first seat in Cornwall. Indeed, in Bodmin and North Cornwall the Party's candidates lost deposits in every contest they entered. These were the most agricultural seats in the county. Nevertheless, Labour did establish a strong base in Camborne and nosed itself into second place in Penryn and Flamouth. These two seats were those containing the county's main industries, China Clay and the remnants of a mining industry.⁹²

It was the Conservative Party which gained most from Labour's intervention in Cornwall. Tripartite contests meant a division of the Radical vote by Labour. A Conservative victory was that much more easy to secure.

91. C. Cook, op.cit., p. 343.

92. M. Kinnear, op.cit., pp. 117, 119.

But perhaps more important than this was the genuine fear people had of "Bolshevism" and Labour gave a target upon which these fears could be focussed. This happened notably in 1924 and was a means of attaching timorous Liberal voters to the Conservatives.

The net results of all these changes was that the county no longer had any safe seats. Fluctuations in support in the 1920's had been dramatic. But by the Second World War it was the Conservative Party which was strongest in Cornwall and with Labour making inroads into the Liberal vote.

Nonconformity and Liberalism.

The question must be asked as to how Nonconformists responded to the political events taking place around them. The career of Isaac Foot, in many ways the traditional Nonconformist Liberal, sheds some light on this subject. Foot was uncompromising and outspoken, which, while it inspired his supporters, antagonised his opponents. This is best illustrated in his firm views on temperance and gambling, but was also present in his dislike of privilege and clericalism. Liberty, springing from his Christian faith, was the watchword of his political creed. He believed, "It was the cause of freedom which called Liberalism into existence".⁹³

Another aspect of his political views was a concern for social justice. Economics was not his field of interest, but he supported the old Liberal watchwords of Free Trade and Retrenchment. In the 1923 election he had commented, "In my politics I always consider first the position and claims of poor people and those most in need. If I thought Protection would help those people I would be a Protectionist". Hence, his particular aversion to taxes on food. Yet, he was also willing to support the new Liberal policies being developed in the 1920's.⁹⁴

93. Cornish Guardian, 21 December 1935; Observer 15 June 1947; Isaac Foot, Liberty and the Liberal Heritage (Ramsay Muir Lecture, 1947; London: Gollancz, 1948), p. 24.

94. F.M.N., 6 December 1923.

In a political life spanning thirty five years, Foot only spent ten of those in Parliament. As the Western Morning News wrote in an obituary, "so far as the political side of his career was concerned the story is one of unfulfilled promise through the accident of fate".⁹⁵ The failure of such a gifted politician to fulfil his potential is in itself evidence of declining attraction of the traditional Nonconformist Liberal approach to politics.

His fellow Wesleyan Liberal, Walter Runciman, shared much of the same heritage. He once wrote, "With Liberals liberty is not a matter of logic; it is an instinct and a passion". He made it clear in 1928 that, as an individualist, he would not be comfortable in either the Labour or Conservative Parties, and that he was prevented from joining the Tories by their "unbroken alliance" with the liquor interest and "instinctive love of Protection".⁹⁶

It took him a number of years to change his mind on free trade. The financial crisis leading to the formation of the National Government led him to re-think his views. It was only when he was convinced by "the practical aspect of the question" that tariffs were necessary that he supported them and remained in the National Government after the Ottawa Conference.⁹⁷

If Foot represents one strand of Nonconformist thinking on politics and Runciman another, the movement of the Congregationalist, A.C. Dunn, from the Liberal to the Labour Party was yet a different trend at work. His switch of allegiance was not indicative of a change in political views, but rather a conviction that Labour was now the progressive force in politics. As he said in 1918, "I have not changed my Radical faith - I am just as Radical now as ever I was - But I believe the Labour Party are the best instruments for carrying my Radicalism into effect".

95. W.M.N., 14 December 1960

96. Walter Runciman, Liberalism as I see it (London: Benn, 1927), p. 15; Runciman Papers, W.R.221

97. Runciman Papers, W.R., 245, 254.

"Labour", he insisted in 1923, "is Liberalism with a capital 'L'". There were thus two forces at work eroding Nonconformist commitment to the Liberal Party from opposite ends.⁹⁸

Yet, looking at the number of Methodist candidates standing nationally in elections in the inter-war years, there remained a predominance of Liberals of one kind or another. A small core of Methodist-Conservatives stood regularly, and a good number of Methodist-Labour candidates were in evidence, who were more successful in being elected than were their Liberal brethren.⁹⁹

However, in Cornwall, the Liberal hegemony in Methodist candidates was evident. Eleven out of seventeen identified Nonconformists were Liberals. The others consisted of a Conservative, a member of the I.L.P. and four Labour candidates. By denomination they were made up of ten Methodists, five Congregationalists, one Presbyterian and a Baptist. All together these candidates were involved in thirty five of the forty electoral contests between the wars. Occasionally they fought against each other, as at St. Ives in 1928 when the three candidates were all Nonconformists. Eight of the seventeen, all Liberals, were successful at some time in their forays into the political arena. Almost two thirds of the Cornish Liberal candidates in this period came from a Nonconformist background. This indicates that in the Cornish context being a Nonconformist was regarded as an important electoral asset for parliamentary candidates, especially Liberals.¹⁰⁰

98. W.D.M., 6 December 1918; W.M.N., 5 December 1923.

99. S. Koss, Nonconformity and Modern British Politics, pp. 227ff.; According to Koss, between 1918 and 1935 there were a total of 491 Methodist candidatures producing 195 M.P.s at General Elections. By parties, there were 267 Liberal candidates and 71 Liberal M.P.s, 171 Labour candidates and 89 Labour M.P.s, 43 Unionist candidates and 28 Unionist M.P.s, as well as ten other candidates, seven of whom were elected.

100. The Nonconformist candidates were; R.W. Allen (Wes.,L.); A. Caird (Cong., Con.), A Carkeek, (U.M.C., L.); C. CORY (U.M.C., N.L./L.); A.E. Dunn (Cong.,Lab.); I. FOOT (Wes.,L.); F.J. Hopkins (P.M.,Lab.); L. JONES (Cong., L.); D. MACLEAN (Pres.,L.); G.C. MARKS (Cong., NL./L.); G.H. Morgan (Bap., N.L.); G. Nicholls (Cong.,Lab.); P. Reed (U.M.C., Lab.); Mrs. H. RUNCIMAN (Wes.L.), W.

This is not surprising when one considers the electoral strength of Nonconformity in Cornwall in these years. Kinnear in his political atlas of Britain has calculated for each constituency in England the number of members belonging to the major Nonconformist denominations and expressed this as a percentage of the electorate. The year which he took for these figures was 1922.

The figures do contain some important weaknesses. The correspondence between Nonconformist membership and the electorate, for instance, is incomplete. Furthermore, he assumes that chapel members possessed votes in the constituency within which the chapel was located. In the case of Methodism with its circuit system, the principle adopted, classifying circuit members according to the location of the head chapel, also introduces an element of distortion.

Fig. 8:5 The Nonconformist Vote in Cornwall in 1922¹⁰¹

Constituency	Wes.	P.M.	U.M.C.	Cong.	Bap.	Total	% Elect.
Bodmin	3128	73	1978	270	94	5543	16.7
Camborne	4938	489	2459	-	39	7925	23.2
N.Cornwall	3641	-	4000	265	177	8083	28.0
Penryn & Falmouth	3087	279	1523	345	415	5649	15.1
St. Ives	3113	332	1146	124	184	4919	16.8

Kinnear estimated that a seat needed 10% of the electorate to be Nonconformist before it would be influenced by a Nonconformist vote. Figure 8:5 shows that all the Cornish constituencies exceed this percentage. Indeed, they rank amongst the most Nonconformist seats in England.

The influence of this vote is harder to assess. The press devoted less space to local politics than hitherto, making local Nonconformist participation more difficult to identify. The issues in the political arena were moving

RUNCIMAN (Wes., L./N.L.); Miss K. Spurrell (Meth., I.L.P.), J.T. WALTERS (Wes., L.).
 101. M. Kinnear, op.cit., pp.125-129; I am indebted to Dr. Kinnear for sending me an expanded version of his figures of the Nonconformist vote to be included in a new edition of his book.

away from standard Nonconformist shibboleths, like temperance. Attempts by Nonconformists, as for example in the Council of Action, to influence political debate were not noted for their success.

Nonconformists were not immune to the effects of the divisions within Liberalism, with erstwhile Liberal stalwarts being creamed off into the Conservative and Labour Parties. This can be seen amongst the Unionists at Camborne, the National Liberals at St. Ives in the 1930's, and in a few cases in local Labour associations. Some Nonconformists, faced with this new situation and perplexing decisions, seem to have recoiled from political involvement at all.

But the general impression given and the united testimony of oral history is that the overwhelming majority of chapelgoers remained loyal to the Liberal Party despite its vicissitudes. Local tradition records the story of Major-General Poole, Isaac Foot's Conservative opponent, walking through Saltash during one election campaign and pausing momentarily outside the Wesleyan chapel in Fore Street to examine the rather imposing front of the pre-war chapel. A local wag was said to have informed him, "Its no good stopping there. They won't put you in". He was right.¹⁰²

102. Interview, Mr. D.C. Vosper, 18 June 1979.

A CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE.Methodist Decline; the continuing story.

History never stands still and the years following the Second World War have seen continuing changes in the religious and political life of Cornwall and of the whole country. Taking first religious change, Figure 9:1 highlights the downward trend in Methodist membership returns for Cornwall since the war. In the 1950's occasional years showed small increases, but these were not enough to alter the overall decline. In the 1960's the decreases were larger and in the 1970's, figures for the Cornwall District alone showed a further drop of 4,000 members between 1969 and 1977, at a time when the county's population has been increasing in contrast to earlier decades.

Fig. 9:1, Cornish Methodist membership figures, 1939-1969.¹

	1939	1949	1959	1969
Cornwall District	19,042	17,139	21,706	19,575
Cornish circuits in other Districts	8,529	7,669	2,777	2,424
Total Cornish Methodists	27,571	24,808	24,483	21,999

It is revealing to compare church attendance in 1951 as revealed by the 1851 Census with that of today. In 1851 there were 23,346 Wesleyan members and all told 34,897 members of Methodist denominations in Cornwall. Total attendances recorded in the Census were 99,973 for

1. these statistics are taken from M.M.; in the 1950's circuit reorganisation meant that the "Cornwall District" covered more of the county than hitherto. In 1970 the publication of annual membership figures was suspended. Triennial statistics are issued instead (M.M., 1970, p.77).

the Wesleyans and 154,705 attendances for all Cornish Methodists. Merely at the evening service, the Wesleyans counted 54,209 individual attenders, which means there were at least as many non-members at their services as there were members. Compared with total Methodist membership, the figures for total attendances was over four times larger.²

This contrasts starkly with the 1977 figures published in the Methodist Minutes. In the Cornwall District there were 16,551 attendances in total. As a percentage of the membership this was 106.2%, while the overall Connexional average was 90.3%. This is indicative of the loss of a body of chapel-going adherents in Methodism, who were not members. It is also a mark of the decline in the quality of Methodist membership measured in terms of chapel attendance.³

Indeed, nominalism has been causing concern amongst the leaders of Cornish Methodism for some time. In a report on "Fellowship" given to the Cornish Synod in the early 1960's, it was noted,

In general there is little enthusiasm for mid-week preaching services; Wesley Guilds are less strong than even five years ago; in some areas there is little enthusiasm for fellowship and where there are classes and prayer meetings, they tend to be subjective and inward looking.

The move towards a more inclusive and less demanding approach to membership can be seen in the establishment in 1969 of a Community Roll, embracing all within the pastoral care of the Methodist Church.⁴

The decline in membership has added to the impetus to close chapels. In Cornwall, above one third of

2. see above p53 for details of the 1851 Census.

3. M.M., 1978, p. 51.

4. Meth. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), 1950/1, 1951/2, 1962/3; M.M., 169, p. 63; see also Henry D. Rack, 'The decline of the class meeting and the problem of church membership in nineteenth century Wesleyanism', Proc. of the W.H.S., 39 (1973), pp. 12-21.

Methodist chapels have closed in the first forty years following Methodist Union in 1932.⁵ The absurdities which changes in population can cause were highlighted at Carharrack, where it was reported that there were two hundred more seats in the two Methodist chapels than there were people living there.⁶

According to the Cornwall District Synod, there are several ways of tackling the question of chapel closure:

- (i) A chapel has been closed and its membership has been transferred en bloc to the neighbouring chapel, where a united society has redistributed its offices;
- (ii) a chapel has been closed and part of its furnishings have been incorporated in the neighbouring chapel, so that the best of both have been used to the glory of God;
- (iii) a chapel has been closed and sold and the proceeds of the sale made available for the creation of a new Methodist church elsewhere in the same circuit;
- (iv) the Chapel Department has been asked to decide which of two neighbouring chapels should close - the two congregations agreeing in advance to accept its judgement and to form a united society; while
- (v) in one village with three chapels the proposal is now actively being discussed for the closure and sale of all three in order that one new, united church might be built.

This last option, starting afresh, is believed to be the best solution in most cases, but not always the easiest to achieve, and, anyway, as one Cornish Methodist put it, "The Cornish do not close chapels generally until the roof falls in!"⁷

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- 5. In 1932, there were 328 Wes., 287 U.M.C. and 37 P.M. Chapels in the uniting branches of Methodism in Cornwall. By 1969, 106 U.M.C., 84 Wes., 18 P.M. and 4 Wes. Reform Union chapels had closed.
 - 6. John Probert, 'Cornish Chapels closed since Methodist Union (1932)', J. of C.M.H.A., III,6 (October 1970), pp. 128-30; Meth. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.) 1965/6; cf. M.M., 1963, p. 83.
 - 7. Meth.Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), 1960/1; Interview, Rev. R.H. Luke, 2 September 1977; Correspondence, Mr. J. Probert, 13 January 1978.

Fig 9:2 Methodist chapels categorised according to size of membership, 1974.⁸

	0	1-59	60-159	1604	Total
Cornwall District	1	372	56	15	444
Plymouth & Exeter District	1	335	63	29	428
Methodist Church	10	5743	2019	897	8669

Despite rationalisation, the membership of Cornish chapels is small. Figure 9:2 illustrates this. Research in Liverpool has suggested that "once a rural church gets below thirty membership, the chances are that its days are numbered". According to statistics given in the 1978 Minutes, Cornish chapels have an average membership of only thirty seven per chapel, one of the lowest in the Connexion. It also has the highest ratio of chapels for each minister in the country.⁹

The 1975 Triennial Statistics contain a table to show the number of new members coming into chapels. Figure 9:3 is based on this. Although calculated on only an eleven month period, it was acknowledged that the returns were poor. Over 72% of Methodist chapels - in Cornwall the figure was 80% - failed to make any new members in 1974.

Fig.9:3 Methodist Chapels cateogrised according to numbers of new members expressed as a % of the chapel membership 1974.¹⁰

	None	0.1-5%	5.1-10%	Over 10%
Cornwall District	356	52	23	12
Plymouth & Exeter District	337	54	22	14
Methodist Church	6292	1560	542	265

8. M.M., 1975, p. 74.

9. Frank Pagden, 'An Analysis of the Effectiveness of Methodist Churches of varying types and sizes in the Liverpool District', Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britian, 1, edited by David Martin (London: S.C.M., 1968), p. 132; M.M., 1978, p. 53.

10. M.M., 1975, p. 69.

The author of the Liverpool study has commented,

It is well known that Methodism loses around 4% of its membership every year from all causes. It can be said with confidence that providing the transfer situation of members equalises itself, if a church, circuit or district receives more than 4% new members per year, it will grow. If it receives less it will decline in total numbers.

The Cornwall District Synod has placed the key figure at 5% for the county, since it has an older age structure, and loses many of its younger members through up-country migration. If the 1974 figures are typical and continue, further decline is inevitable.¹¹

Almost every other department of Methodism is contracting. Cornish Methodist Sunday Schools, which in 1932 catered for 28,696 scholars, in 1977 contained only 5,860 members. Young People's Groups have also shown a fall in numbers over the same period, and with regard to local preachers, the scenario of too many appointments chasing too few preachers has become a familiar one.¹²

These figures all point to the downward path upon which Methodism in Cornwall and in the country at large seems set. Indeed, the waning strength of organised Christianity is apparent in all major denominations.¹³ In human terms, the prospect for the future does not look rosy. For the purpose of this study, it is important to note that the quantitative and qualitative influence of Methodism in Cornwall has decreased, is decreasing and will probably continue to decrease. The Methodist base of the Nonconformist-Liberal equation has been heavily eroded.

11. F. Pagden, op.cit., p. 125; A Cornish Commentary upon the Rural Methodism Report (1959).

12. M.M., 1978, p. 52; Meth. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), 1956/7, 1957/8.

13. For a more optimistic conclusion, see Prospects for the Eighties: From a Census of the Churches in 1979. (London: Bible Society, 1980).

Ecumenical Initiatives

Not all Methodists in Cornwall have found Methodist Union easy to accept. In December 1955, for instance, a group of Cornish local preachers warned, "Some of us already have cause to regret Methodist Union when we see ritualistic and sacerdotal tendencies growing". But continuing membership decline has provided a further stimulus to ecumenical schemes. In the post-war years attention has focussed on talks aimed at Methodist-Anglican unity.¹⁴

In 1959, Cornish Methodists and Anglicans met together in a Joint Study Group to consider the Interim Report issued on the Methodist-Anglican conversations. The basis of Methodists' study of the Report was a series of questions obtained from those who agreed and those who disagreed with the scheme. In their discussions, two schools of thought were evident in the Cornwall Synod. One minister outlined his support on the grounds of unity being the will of God and necessary to fulfil the mission of the church. The arguments brought forward to justify Methodist Union in 1932 were being wheeled into action again.¹⁵

Another minister argued that the proponents of union were abusing spiritual texts and that, at root, the proposals were merely a "business reorganisation" at the lowest level. To him, episcopacy was unbiblical and the reconciliation service was ambiguous, involving the acceptance of priestly and Catholic conceptions as well as the Evangelical. This was in effect underlining the view of Dr. Barratt, a leading opponent of union, who had asked the Methodist Conference in 1958, "What is the good of agreed doctrinal statements which carefully avoid the really divisive issues?"¹⁶

14. R. Currie, Methodism Divided, p. 302; A.R., 1969, p.367.

15. Meth. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), 1963/4.

16. J. Kent, The Age of Disunity, p.178.

A later discussion in Synod raised a variety of views on the proposals. Some feared a loss of identity in the Church of England, a fear of being "the Methodist Jonah in the Anglican whale". Others believed that the Church of England ought to be disestablished first, an echo of past battles. Still more were worried by the belittling of the role of the laity perceived in the scheme.¹⁷

When the Methodist circuits and Synods voted on the Scheme in 1965, it became clear that nationally Methodists desired closer relations with the Church of England by a substantial majority, but that they approved of this particular scheme by a considerably smaller margin. The Cornwall Synod, while approving of closer contact with Anglicans, was one of three to reject the proposals. In the Methodist circuits opposition was much stronger and Cornish Anglicans also vetoed the scheme. As one Cornish author commented, "It was clear that concern and opposition was developing, on both sides, to the proposals, and that a favourable decision would risk a rent in both communities".¹⁸

In 1969 the scheme was again put to the vote. As a whole, the Methodist Church voted in favour with a sufficient majority to enact the proposals. This time the Cornish Synod had a majority in its favour, but the circuits in the Cornwall District were still strongly against union. Only seven out of twenty five voted in favour. Cornish Anglicans again rejected the scheme and it was the failure to gain a large enough majority in the Anglican Church which was its downfall. It was interesting to note that amongst Anglicans one fear was that Methodist-Anglican unity may hinder a rapprochement with the Roman Church.¹⁹

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17. Meth. Mins (Cornwall Dist.), 1964/5; R. Currie, Methodism Divided, p. 309; for a challenging personal account of a change of view from opposing to supporting union, see David Foot Nash, Their Finest Hour: Methodists and Anglicans, (London: Epworth, 1964), p. 7.
18. H. Brown, A Century for Cornwall, p. 126; the voting figures are given in W.M.N., 29 June 1965.
19. W.M.N., 15, 19, 20 March, 8 May 1969; H. Brown, A Century for Cornwall, p. 128.

The failure of the Methodist-Anglican talks has not ended ecumenical adventures. In 1970 the Methodist Conference affirmed, "On all fronts we have determined to strengthen our ecumenical links and to work together with other denominations, including the Roman Catholics, in every possible activity of mission, service and worship". The same year the Cornwall Council of Churches was formed with that precise aim. The denominational barriers of past generations are being hauled down, even in Cornwall.²⁰

Ecumenical developments since the war illustrate the dragging of the heels which has characterised Methodists and Anglicans in Cornwall. Some have attributed this to the individualistic nature of the Cornish. It is more likely to be attributable to the legacy of rural areas, where old church-chapel conflicts linger in the memory and where the churches and chapels are still the centre of community life. The strength of Anglo-Catholicism in Cornwall may also be a factor, as indeed may be the fear that union will cause more chapel doors to close. While the Cornish Methodist layman sees no objection in "co-operating with" other churches, he dislikes the idea of "becoming part of" them. Nonetheless, as Currie has commented, "Ecumenical displays continue to fascinate their promoters even though their history is one of short runs and empty houses".²¹

Methodist Social and Political Attitudes.

Looking at the social attitudes of Methodists in the post-war years, it is again possible to see areas of continuity and change. The longstanding issue of temperance is a case in point. The arguments used to maintain total abstinence amongst Methodists have changed little. When the West Cornwall Licensed Victualler's Association stated, "Our greatest opposition comes from the Methodist

20. M.M., 1970, p.79; Meth. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), 1969/70; see M.R., 17 January 1980.

21. F.M.N., 20th March 1969; R. Currie, Methodism Divided, p.311

Church", the Cornwall District Synod commented, "This we regard as an unsolicited and thoroughly genuine testimony to the effectiveness of our work for the Cause of Temperance".²²

In 1950 the Methodist Conference felt it necessary to declare that, contrary to popular opinion, total abstinence was not a condition of membership, so strong had the link between Methodism and temperance become. But, since then, teetotal sentiment has continued to wane in all quarters until it has become a minority view. The South Devon and Cornwall branch of the Independent Order of Rechabites acknowledge that most of their strength, especially in Cornwall, comes from Methodists. But the trend in their membership is far from encouraging. It fell from 3,034 at the end of 1947 to 808 thirty years later.²³

Changes in society have raised new issues for the remaining temperance enthusiasts. Road accidents caused by drunken drivers meant that in Methodist circles the introduction of the breathalyser was welcomed. The drink question has been connected with the taking of drugs, both at their worst involving addiction. But there remains a residue of traditional support, which makes itself heard in the letter columns of the Methodist Recorder.²⁴

Today the temperance movement seems an outdated survival from the Victorian era. Its techniques are obsolete and its effectiveness in mounting a campaign strictly limited. Politically it is powerless.²⁵

It is not only in the realm of temperance that the chapels seem to be fighting a losing battle. Opposition to the "gambling craze" has been maintained. In 1956

22. M.R., 9 March 1978; R.H. Luke, A Great Need for Total Abstinence (Address to the Western Temperance League Annual Conference, Plymouth, 16 October 1968); Meth. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), 1953/4.

23. M.M., 1950, p.56; G. Brake, op.cit., pp.119,123; information supplied by Mrs. Y.E.Bennett, of the local I.O.R. branch.

24. M.R., 18 January 1979.

25. G. Brake, op.cit., pp. 124-5.

Conference repeated its conviction "that the growing and emphatic diversion of thought to the unbalanced contingencies of luck, will in the long run, do far more harm to the social fabric of the community than the immediate financial gain could do good". However, in Cornwall the problem has entered the chapels with the increasing use made of raffles as a source of fund raising. A number of circuits in the District have expressed their difficulty in enforcing a Conference ban on them.²⁶

While opposition to the "commercialisation" of Sunday has continued, attempts to maintain its sanctity have sometimes been counterproductive. In some Cornish towns where petitions by the churches against the opening of cinemas on Sundays have been successful, this has been nullified by the formation of film clubs. In Camborne, where the proposal to open the cinema on Sunday had also been successfully defeated, the premises opened instead for Bingo, which some considered to be a greater evil.²⁷

In education Methodists generally welcomed the 1944 Education Act, albeit with some qualms over the concessions to Roman Catholic schools. But Methodist beliefs about education have changed. According to the 1976 Conference Address,

There can be on exclusively Christian education in State Schools. Islam, Buddhism, even Communism must be expounded by those who treat them and all religions seriously, though a sense of culture and history alike demands that Christianity be taught in its historical development.

The area of battle has changed from what kind of Christian teaching to what type of religious education, if any, should be given in schools. It is a sharp contrast with earlier years.²⁸

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26. M.M., 1956, pp. 31-32; Meth. Mins (Cornwall Dist.), 1948/9, 1949/50.
 27. C.C. Mins., 19 November 1966, 1 March 1967
 28. M.M., 1944, pp. 196ff., 1976, p.41; Meth. Mins (Cornwall Dist.), 1958/9.

The desire for lasting peace among Methodists has revealed itself in the post-war period in support for the United Nations and in protests against nuclear armaments. Cornish Methodists have brought their fears of nuclear war to the notice of their M.P.s, and, as a whole, the Methodist Church declared its belief in complete disarmament. These feelings were most vociferously articulated in the immediate aftermath of war, although they continue in Methodism to this day.²⁹

Missionary work has given Methodism an international outlook and movements aiming to assist developing countries have been given a high priority amongst Methodists. The 1971 Conference commented, "We deplore some aspects of the so-called permissive society, but recognise that in the light of the Gospel, poverty is a worse obscenity than sexual licence". Thus, Methodists have been urged to serve overseas on a short term basis, and to give one day's income or 1% of their income toward world development, while the Government has been lobbied to increase Government aid to developing countries.³⁰

Behind this new emphasis is the outworking of a new theological redefinition of mission. As Pauline Webb expressed it,

The present century began with an American Methodist layman, John R. Mott, expressing the missionary motive of the whole ecumenical movement as he declared its aim as being 'The evangelisation of all the world in this generation'. Perhaps the most significant evidence of the great change that has come about in our understanding of mission in the twentieth century is to be seen in the fact that a recent Overseas Consultation, to which Methodist leaders from all parts of the world came, it was suggested that the slogan should be 'A fully human life for all humanity!'³¹

Methodism in the post-war years has also consistently

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29. W.M.N., 23 September 1959; M.M., 1948, p.54; M.R., 24 July, 16 October 1980.
30. M.N., 1968, p. 85, 1971, pp. 71,73; Meth. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), 1969/70, 1971/2.
31. Pauline Webb, 'Mission', Dissent and Descent: essays on Methodism and Roman Catholicism, edited by Brian Frost & Leo Pyle (London: Epworth, 1975), p. 60.

opposed racism, notably in its opposition to apartheid in South Africa, although the problem of race relations in this country is not one which has affected Cornwall. A national debate emerged over the support of Methodism for the World Council of Churches' Special Fund to Combat Racism. Conservative Evangelicals in Methodism urged Conference to dissociate itself from this Fund because of its commitment to give money to a group of people who espoused violence as a means of achieving their political ends. However, the Alliance of Radical Methodists not only supported the W.C.C. Programme to Combat Racism, but urged that Methodists should withdraw support from the Methodist Church in Rhodesia. These contrary views are the product of two different theological positions contained in Methodism.³²

Another issue which has recently divided Methodists arose from a Methodist report entitled, "A Christian Understanding of Human Sexuality". It dealt with many aspects of sexuality, but its approval of homosexual relationships as a "Christian way" of expressing sexuality provoked a storm of controversy. In particular the comparatively small weight given to the teaching of the Bible was criticised. The debate continues, but it is interesting to note that from a position in the nineteenth century when the Nonconformist Conscience sought to impose its standards on society, the situation has altered in the twentieth century to that where changes in society, involving the rejection of previously accepted "Christian" values, have created problems which have influenced the moral teaching of the churches.³³

These glances at contemporary Methodism highlights its move away from its original stance as an evangelistic body seeking to spread Scriptural Holiness. However,

32. M.M., 1950, p.217, 1970, pp.79-80, 1971, p.71;
S.R.C.Mins., 4 May, 1978; M.R., 19 April, 10, 31 May 1979.

33. M.R., 26 April, 3, 10, 17 May, 1979.

Methodism, even in its united state is not a united church. In 1971 the President of Conference admitted, "We must recognise that we are, in the jargon of our time a 'pluralistic' not a monolithic church. Conflicting ways of thought, attitudes of mind and convictions of heart make modern Methodism a mosaic of most variegated patterns".³⁴

It is evident that not only does the social and political setting change in which Methodism lives, but the Methodism under examination also alters through time. Theological differences in Methodism like, for instance, those between Conservative Evangelicals and Radicals, mean that sections within Methodism disagree not simply on matters of church government as their forbears did, but more fundamentally on soteriology, eschatology and the source of ultimate authority in their faith. Moreover, these problems and divisions are not confined to Methodism. Hence, theological "labels" may be of increasing relevance in accurately describing the state of the churches in Britian, as opposed to the traditional denominational appellations.

In Cornwall, Methodism reflects most of the areas of activity of the Methodist Division of Social Responsibility. But nearly all the issues, for instance, concern for alcoholics, released prisoners, and moral standards, while continuing a tradition of active social welfare, are not the burning political questions of the day and on the whole contain little of controversy between the political parties.³⁵

Furthermore, for all the activities in the county of the local Methodist Citizenship Committee and its successor, the Social Responsibility Committee, there remains a feeling that this is an area from which many Methodists shy away and for which they are not inclined to take responsibility. It is necessary to heed the

34. M.M., 1969, p. 93, 1971, pp.73-74; M.R., 3 May 1979.

35. Meth. Mins. (Cornwall Dist.), 1963/4, 1971/2; C.C.Mins., 18 March, 11 November 1972; S.R.C., Mins., 25 November 1978.

warning of Turner and Hill. They concluded, "It would be mistaken to translate too readily the statements of articulate leaders and opinion makers within Methodism into a general statement of grass roots belief". The Methodist social conscience may be broader than it was before and may have expressed itself on a wider range of subjects, but its influence both in terms of its numerical weight and fervour has declined.³⁶

In the post-war period Methodists still found themselves being reminded of their responsibility to vote at elections. Even in the 1979 contest one Methodist minister stationed in Cornwall took it upon himself to express Wesley's attitude to elections in the letter columns of the local press and the view expressed by a Truro Methodist minister in the 1960's was typical. He had written,

I do not claim that Christianity can tell which is the best way to take in matters such as the Common Market, the national economy or comprehensive schools. But I do believe that the Christian attitude is necessary before the best solution is found.

The appeal to selfishness and materialism in post-war politics perturbed the Methodist Recorder.³⁷

In respect of parties, it was clear that the emergence in European countries of "Christian" parties did not meet with the approval of Methodists. The Methodist Recorder commented,

This attempt to lash the Church and Christians to a party chariot is as disingenuous as it is fatuous. No party has a monopoly of Christianity, either in its doctrines or its supporters, and to drag the church into party disputes would disrupt both it and the nation.³⁸

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36. Interview, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey, 30 July 1979; B. Turner & M. Hill, op.cit., p. 175.
 37. Cornish Guardian, 3 May, 1979; W.B., 4 April 1966; M.R., 1 October 1959, 24 September 1964, 31 March 1966.
 38. M.R., 26 January 1950.

There remained, however, particularly in the years immediately after the war, a legacy of goodwill towards the Liberal Party as the alternative party to class politics and as an expression of essential truths. To quote again the Methodist Recorder,

The fundamental Liberal accent on the rights inherent in personality as such - the equality of men and women. whatever their station - is what is antithetic both to Socialism's exaltation of the State and to Conservatism's protection of privilege.³⁹

It is this perception of Liberals as a party of moderate reform, tainted neither with Socialism, nor Reaction, but seen rather as the "middle way", which has continued to attract Free Churchmen to its ranks. This is an opinion firmly reflected in the attitudes of most of the Cornish Methodist Liberal candidates in this period. Stuart Roseveare, twice champion of the Liberal cause in the Bodmin division, commented "Liberalism seemed to offer so much that appealed to Methodist thinking from a Christian standpoint", while A.G.S.T. Davey, who campaigned in the Falmouth-Camborne constituency, wrote in similar vein, "Liberalism was, for me, the faith of the free and independent man - one with a true love of God and a respect and love for his neighbour".⁴⁰

However, the most vociferous party identification within Methodism has been with the Labour Party. Lord Soper has been a leading figure in Methodism for many years and he has been an election asset well used by the Labour Party to attract to itself Methodist voters. Soper's essential ambition is that the Kingdom of God, using the Sermon on the Mount as its base, should be established here and now. His argument is that "Socialiam is not only compatible with the Christian Gospel, but is its true expression in political terms". In party terms, the Labour Party is seen as the only

39. M.R., 12 July 1945.

40. Interview, Mr. T.S. Roseveare, 22 April 1977;
Correspondence, Mr. A.G. S.T. Davey, 10 August 1979.

potential vehicle for political change.⁴¹

Soper's overt stance on politics is a long way removed from that of early Methodism and highlights the change in Methodism in this respect. It is more acceptable now than ever before for Methodist ministers to stand as parliamentary candidates. The only example of this in Cornwall is when Rev. Malcolm White was the unsuccessful Labour candidate for Truro in February 1974. In fact, in his view, being a minister has hindered his efforts in general to gain nomination as a Labour candidate, but helped him in the case of Truro.⁴²

When one Methodist Labour M.P. asserted in the Methodist Recorder, "You cannot be a Tory and a Christian", he came under attack from the Cornish Conservative member David Mudd. His argument was basically that one's faith is separate from politics. He explained, "I've never tried to prostitute my religion by assuming that there is or is not a link between my politics and my religion. In fact, I don't think there is a link".⁴³

A more reasoned account of Conservatism came from another Methodist M.P., Dr. Rhodes Boyson, in the course of the October 1974 election campaign. Fundamental to his argument is the belief that man as a fallen creature is neither perfect, nor perfectible. Responsibility is seen as the means of producing moral growth and this applied to economics requires free enterprise. While accepting the need for a safety net for living standards below which they should not be allowed to fall, Conservatism is to be preferred because "it takes for granted that man is a competitive creature who in most cases follows his self-interest". This needs to be channelled, not broken.⁴⁴

41. M.R., 19 May 1955; David Butler & R. Rose, The British General Election of 1959 (London:Macmillan, 1960), p.85; R.W. Johnson, 'The Nationalization of English Rural Politics:Norfolk South West, 1945-1970', Parliamentary Affairs, 26 (1972-73), p.22; Donald Soper, Christian Politics:an introduction (London:Epworth,1977), pp.101, 106-109.

42. Interview, Rev M.White, 18July 1979; M.R. 21 February 1974.

43. M.R. 17 February, 10 March 1977.

Boyson's article is one of a series in which the Methodist Recorder engages at every election, when selected Methodist M.P.s from the various parties put forward their party's view. His was unusual in that it sought to establish a connexion between his faith and his politics. It is not without significance that these articles by Methodists in politics normally explain their views as they would to anybody else. The only Methodist element in what is said is often the name of the journal in which they write. The impression is given that for a substantial number of Methodists their Methodism does not especially influence their political views in the way the leaders of Methodism would hope, or at least, that it is possible as a Methodist to find a justification for voting for any of the main political parties. A decision on which party to support is thus dependent on other factors.

It seems, as one commentator observed in 1963, that the Nonconformist political technique has been played out. He wrote, "It was a technique which had many battle honours to its credit, but it depended on the protest being backed by votes sufficiently numerous and sufficiently at the disposal of denominational leadership for M.P.s to tremble for their majorities". This phenomenon has vanished, but the old Nonconformist Conscience continues in an attenuated form in two groups which have some, though not a complete overlap. One group continues to emphasise the traditional, personal moral issues. In Methodism it is represented by the Conservative Evangelicals and tends to the right of centre in politics. The other group stands for a broader emphasis on social issues. This is a stance more likely to be adopted by Radical Methodists and in politics to locate itself to the left of centre.⁴⁵

Cornish Politics

If Methodism has undergone change in the post-war

44. M.R., 10 October 1974.

45. Christopher Driver, 'The Nonconformist Conscience', New Society, 39, 27 June 1963, p.7.

period, so also have the politics of Cornwall changed. One minor factor in this is the readjustment of constituency boundaries. The 1945 General Election was fought with the pre-war boundaries, but the next election in 1950 saw the county still with five seats, but with the towns of Penryn and Falmouth transferred to the old Camborne seat to form the Falmouth-Camborne division. The remainder of the former Penryn and Falmouth division was renamed Truro.⁴⁶

The post-war years have not been a particularly prosperous time for Cornwall. The county has remained an economic backwater. No significant new industrial development has arisen to replace the mining industry. The county's economy has been characterised by low wages, low unionisation and high unemployment and the pursuit of employment and higher education has led to many young people migrating up-country. An influx of retired people has been evident and an increase in the number of second homes has made this into a controversial subject. Even the development of tourism is regarded as a mixed blessing. This forms the socio-economic background to political developments.

Fig. 9:4 Conservative % of the vote at General Elections in Cornwall, 1950-1979

	Bodmin	F'ith-C'borne	N. Cornwall	St. Ives	Truro	Seats won
1950	49.2*	38.7	46.6*	46.0* ¹	41.8*	4
1951	50.9*	44.1	48.8*	53.3*	55.6*	4
1955	49.2*	48.8	47.3*	52.1*	46.1*	4
1959	46.0*	36.2	46.6*	47.9*	44.2*	4
1964.	40.2	37.6	45.7*	42.6*	40.6*	3
1966	41.4	39.7	44.5	41.4*	40.4*	2
1970	48.3*	44.5*	47.1	50.9*	49.3*	4
1974(F)	44.2	41.9*	38.2	45.2*	40.4*	3
1974(O)	45.5*	47.2*	42.0	45.5*	39.0	3
1979	54.9*	56.7*	51.7*	54.0*	39.1	4
Seats Won	7	4	6	10	8	35

*= Conservative victory

¹= St. Ives candidates were National Liberal and Conservative from 1950 until after 1966 election.

46. W.B., 12, 19 January 1951; in 1946 and 1966 proposals were made to cut Cornish representation from five to four M.P.s. Although the county's population fell below the quota for five seats, Cornwall kept its five M.P.s on the grounds of accessibility to London and within each constituency. In the 1971 reorganisation, the boundary readjustments were only minor.

Fig. 9:5, Labour % of the vote at General Elections in Cornwall, 1950-1979.

	Bodmin	F'th-C'borne	N.Cornwall	St.Ives	Truro	Seats won
1950	21.3	43.1*	15.1	30.7	34.5	1
1951	23.5	46.3*	16.4	31.8	44.3	1
1955	22.8	51.2*	9.8	29.6	35.2	1
1959	15.7	45.8*	9.5	26.9	34.0	1
1964	11.2	44.5*	9.8	28.1	31.5	1
1966	12.0	46.8*	7.0	30.9	37.0	1
1970	12.8	41.4	4.3	27.2	33.0	0
1974(F)	11.6	33.9	3.9	22.6	22.2	0
1974(O)	10.5	35.7	6.4	24.8	20.5	0
1979	6.9	25.9	3.2	20.9	7.4	0
Seats won	0	6	0	0	0	6

* = Labour victory.

Figures 9:4, 9:5 and 9:6⁴⁷ give in summary form the election results

Fig. 9:6 Liberal % of the vote at General Elections in Cornwall, 1950-1979.

	Bodmin	F'th-C'borne	N.Cornwall	St.Ives	Truro	Seats won
1950	29.5	18.2	38.3	23.3	23.7	0
1951	25.6	9.6	34.8	14.9	-	0
1955	28.0	-	42.9	18.3	18.7	0
1959	38.3	18.0	43.9	25.2	21.8	0
1964	48.6*	17.9	43.8	29.3	27.9	1
1966	46.6*	13.5	48.5*	27.7	22.6	2
1970	38.9	12.1	48.6*	21.9	17.7	1
1974(F)	44.2*	24.2 ¹	57.9*	31.8	36.0	2
1974(O)	44.0	12.7 ¹	51.3*	29.7	39.8*	2
1979	35.2	13.9	43.7	20.1	52.8*	1
Seats won	3	0	4	0	2	9

* = Liberal victory

¹ = an Ind. Lib. candidate secured a further 4.4% of the vote.

since 1950. Once again flesh is put on the statistical skeleton by glancing at the history of the individual constituencies. The Bodmin division has continued to be a Liberal-Conservative battle. The Labour Party have tried to build up support on the base of the Devonport Dockyard vote resident on the Cornish side of the River Tamar, but tactical voting by Labour supporters is an important factor in the seat.

47. Based on figures in F. Craig, British Parliamentary

The Liberal cause at first remained with the Foot family, John Foot twice contesting the seat, but the candidature then passed to the local Methodist Liberal, Stuart Roseveare. However, Douglas Marshall, the Conservative member from 1945 to 1964, neutralised the effectiveness of good local opponents by identifying himself with the personal interests of the seat. His defeat by Peter Bessell was partly due to Tory carelessness, the effect of continued success and the ageing process, but also to a switch in Liberal tactics. Bessell aimed to woo the Tory doubtful rather than fight on Radical Liberal principles. He pursued spectacular gimmickry to gain publicity and annoyed local Conservatives with the parochialism of his approach.⁴⁸

Bodmin reverted to Conservative hands on Bessell's retirement and with the swing to the Conservatives in 1970. The new Liberal candidate, Paul Tyler, briefly regained the seat in February 1974 by nine votes in the Liberal revival, but lost it in the October contest, a result emphatically confirmed in the 1979 election. The prominence of Bessell in the trial of Jeremy Thorpe did not help the Liberal campaign.⁴⁹

In 1945 Labour won its first seat in the county when E.M.King⁵⁰ won the old Penryn and Falmouth division and in the neighbouring Camborne seat, the Labour candidate, Harold Hayman came within 584 votes of victory. Hence in 1950 the merger of the towns of Penryn and Falmouth with Camborne gave Labour the one seat in the county it has held and with some degree of success. Hayman, a local man, held Falmouth-Camborne from its creation in 1950 until his death in 1966.

It was, as Lee has commented, "something of a textbook case for Labour candidates in areas without a strong

Election Results, III, pp345-9.

48. W.M.N., 17 May 1955, 2 October 1959, 26 March 1966; C.R.O., DDX 385/2, 28 November 1959.

49. W.M.N., 5 May 1979.

50. King subsequently joined the Conservatives and from 1964 to 1979 was Tory M.P. for Dorset South.

Labour tradition. He was well known and popular, diligent ; as a local member and had an excellent local association, efficiently organised by his wife. Trade union strength in the division helped him to hold what was a Labour marginal in a period of Tory hegemony nationally, but perhaps still more important were the memories of unemployment and hardship in the inter-war years and the fact that the division did not share in the prosperity of the 1950s.⁵¹

In 1966 Dr. John Dunwoody successfully retained the for Labour but lost it in 1970, a defeat attributed to his preoccupation with Westminster politics rather than local matters. The successful Conservative, David Mudd, was a popular Cornishman, who turned to Methodism after an Anglican upbringing. He has attracted to himself a personal vote comparable with that of Hayman's by identifying himself with local matters. In 1979 this became the safest Conservative seat in the county.⁵²

Liberals have not fared well in the seat. Even G.G. Sharp, a leading Methodist-Liberal barrister was only able to poll 18.2% of the vote in 1950. In 1955 through a last minute withdrawal there was no Liberal candidate. Although they made encouraging headway in February 1974 at a time of Liberal resurgence, hopes of further progress were dashed by the local executive's decision to replace their candidate, the ebullient A.G.S.T. Davey. Davey organised a separate candidature in the election the following October, dividing the Liberal vote and causing it to slump. Poor organisation has characterised Liberal efforts and they have not been a serious contender for the seat.⁵³

In North Cornwall Tom Horabin retained for the Liberals in 1945 the seat he had won in the 1939 by election. He campaigned as a Radical Liberal, advocating

51. A. Lee, 'How Cornwall Votes', p.14; Correspondence, Mr. R. Boscawen, 4 June 1979, Mr. N. Nicolson, 30 May 1979.

52. W.M.N., 5 October 1974; A.Lee, 'How Cornwall Votes, p.14.

53. W.M.N., 11 May 1955.

a coalition of the left, and for that reason was not opposed by an official Labour candidate. However, Horabin's subsequent defection to Labour gave the Conservative candidate, Sir Harold Roper, the opportunity to capture the seat. The former Liberal M.P. for Dundee, Dingle Foot, twice sought unsuccessfully to recapture the seat in the early 1950's, although his performance produced some of the better Liberal results in the whole country, so low were Liberal fortunes. Dingle Foot's subsequent desertion in Horabin's footsteps to the Labour Party only made Liberal problems more difficult.⁵⁴

However, by squeezing the Labour vote, which since 1951 has never been large enough to retain its deposit, the Liberals regained lost ground. Indeed, so marginal had the seat become by 1964, that it was considered that the Conservatives may have held it merely on an advantageous split of the postal votes. Scott-Hopkins, Roper's successor to the seat, represented the constituency from 1959 until defeated in 1966 by the Liberal, John Pardoe, a forceful personality, who set up an efficient election organisation and roused support in "chapel areas".⁵⁵

Pardoe was unseated in the Conservative landslide of 1979, despite a reputation as a good constituency man and having emerged as one of the leaders of Liberalism. His prominent role in the Lib-Lab pact and his proximity to Jeremy Thorpe's North Devon seat both told against him. Furthermore, the influx of retired people into the division between elections, particularly in the Newquay area, is a trend tending to work against the Liberals.⁵⁶

Since the Second World War, the St. Ives division has returned an unbroken line of National Liberal and/or

54. W.B., 28 June, 2 August 1945; David Butler, The British General Election of 1951 (London: Macmillan, 1952), p.268.

55. David Butler & Anthony King, The British General Election of 1964 (London: Macmillan 1965), p.226; W.M.N., 25 March 1966.

56. Guardian, 19 May 1979; Western Evening Herald, 28 April 1979; W.M.N., 12 June 1970.

Conservative candidates. Alec Beechman, who represented the seat before the war, easily retained the seat in 1945. In 1950 Greville Howard succeeded him, adopting an apolitical style of campaigning and standing as a National Liberal and Conservative. Cornish Liberals were incensed that a man who had been a Conservative all his life could still fight under such a label. Nonetheless, it was not until 1970 that John Nott, who had taken over from Howard in 1966, dropped the National Liberal label and fought as a straight Conservative. Lord Banks, who contested the seat for the Liberals in 1955, recalled occasions when Liberal canvassers encountered electors who subscribed to the "National Liberals" in the belief that they were the Liberal Party. Indeed, if the name had not been an election asset, there would have been no reason to continue to use it.⁵⁷

Liberals have battled with Labour for second place, and, while never having lost their deposit, they have only been runners-up in 1969 and twice in 1974. Lee has referred to the seat as reflecting a "more traditional pattern of 'resort' political behaviour".⁵⁷ As in North Cornwall, the main beneficiary of the migration of retired up-country settlers is the Conservative Party.⁵⁸

The Truro division in the 1950's and 1960's consistently returned a Conservative, H.G.B. Wilson, who stood down in 1970. The Labour candidate was regularly the runner-up at elections, with the Liberals trailing behind. Indeed, the local Liberal executive was so embarrassed at its lack of organisation that it decided not to nominate its candidate in 1951.⁵⁹

Although the Liberals subsequently re-entered the political arena they failed to make much headway, even

57. W.B., 12 January 1950; Correspondence, Lord Banks, 23 August 1979; cf. R. Douglas, History of the Liberal Party, pp. 254-6.

58. A. Lee, 'How Cornwall Votes', p. 16.

59. W.M.N., 5, 11 October 1951.

with a strong local Methodist candidate, like William Hosking, or with more prominent Liberals from outside. Indeed, in 1970 with the Tory majority within striking distance, it was thought that the Labour Party was poised to make a killing. But the strong Conservative swing in the election gave their candidate, Piers Dixon, a London stockbroker, the largest majority a Conservative has ever won in the seat.⁶⁰

However, the challenge to the Conservatives was to come from the Liberals. In February 1974, David Penhaligon added 12,000 votes to the Liberal tally, pushing the Liberals to within 2,561 votes of Dixon. In October 1974, Penhaligon displaced his opponent by the slender margin of 494 votes. The collapse of the Labour vote in 1979 allowed Penhaligon to substantially increase his majority and confound the national swing.

Penhaligon's success was partly due to the failure of the Conservative member to consolidate his 1970 victory and also to the Liberal revival at the time of the first of the 1974 elections. Penhaligon's own Cornishness, as against the metropolitan image of Dixon was another factor of importance. The momentum generated in February carried the day in the October. Tactical voting on a large scale and again perhaps an unwise choice of candidate by the other parties were other factors.

Since the Second World War, four of the five seats in the county have changed hands. Only St. Ives has been consistent in its allegiance and this initially seems to have owed much to the capture of a portion of the Liberal vote by the emphasis placed on the National Liberal label. The one seat Labour has held was won with increasing Labour majorities against the tide of opinion flowing to Conservatism in the 1950's, and in the 1970's it has been won by a Conservative, once again resisting

60. W.M.N., 5 June 1970.

national swings in the two 1974 elections. The two seats with the strongest Liberal traditions, after periods of Tory hegemony in the 1950's, flirted with Liberal allegiance in the 1960's and 1970's. Hence, in the post-war years the Cornish seats have proved more volatile than many other rural areas. It seems, to coin Johnson's phrase, that Cornish politics have not been fully "nationalized".⁶¹

In party terms, the Conservatives have fared best in post-war Cornish elections both in the number of seats won and compared with its past fortunes in the county. They have placed much emphasis on wooing the Liberal vote, but this has had its problems. In 1959, for instance, Bodmin Conservatives issued a poster entitled, "If you want a Socialist Government, vote Liberal". At the request of North Cornwall Conservatives, where the Liberals were pressing them hard by squeezing the Labour vote, the poster was withdrawn.⁶²

The Labour Party conversely has not established a strong presence in the county. Since 1919, as Lee has noticed,

the pattern that emerges in the Cornish constituencies is of the Liberal vote running consistently at a level approximately 15% above the national average, and the Labour vote approximately 15% lower. Overall the only divergence from this pattern was between 1950 and 1959.

The more industrialised areas of the county have become Labour strongholds, but whereas in a county like Norfolk, the strength of the National Union on Agricultural Workers was a means of Labour strongholds, but whereas in a county like Norfolk, the strength of the National Union on Agricultural Workers was a means of Labour penetration of rural seats, in Cornwall this has not happened. The large number of smallholdings and small farms in Cornwall, limiting unionisation, are the

61. R. Johnson, *op.cit.*, p. 63.

62. *W.M.N.*, 2 October 1959.

most likely explanation of this.⁶³

Furthermore, while the Labour Party has contested every Cornish seat at each election, in some constituencies the campaigns have hardly been more than token efforts. The repeated use of outsiders, the late adoption of candidates and a concentration on national issues have characterised Labour campaigns, and contrasts with the style and emphasis on local issues of Labour's most successful candidate, Harold Hayman.⁶⁴

Miller and Raab, in their study of the religious alignment in twentieth century English elections, gave two reasons why Labour might be expected to fare poorly in religious areas. They were,

First it might be connected with atheistic socialism, perhaps more by its opponents than by its own choice. Second...areas of high religiosity might be more strongly committed to the old pre-1918 partisan alignment and so less ready to desert either side of that alignment for the new Labour Party.⁶⁵

Both reasons are applicable to Cornwall, but are of declining importance as religious strength declines.

The Liberal Party's decline in the inter-war years continued in the early years after the Second World War. This was reflected in Cornwall where the Liberals failed to win a seat from 1950 to 1964. The widespread, general distribution of the Liberal vote made it the "almost impotent organisation of a ubiquitous minority".⁶⁶ The last bastion of Liberal strength is often referred to as the "Celtic fringe" and includes Cornwall. However, this title must not be taken literally, because Liberal successes in the South West have been in Devon, not part of the "Celtic fringe", and in the eastern half of Cornwall, generally reckoned to be the least "Celtic" part of the county.

Liberal organisation in the county has not been

63. A. Lee, 'Cornwall: Aspects of Regionalism and Nationalism', p.10; R. Johnson, *op.cit.*, pp.20-22.
 64. A. Lee, 'How Cornwall Votes', p.8; Correspondence, Mr. R. Scott, 1 June 1980.

strong, especially in the 1950's when one man was the Liberal agent for Truro and Bodmin, as well as for the Plymouth seats. Liberals, however, have been able to mount a campaign at every post-war contest in Cornwall with only two exceptions. This is an essential difference between the politics of Cornwall, and, for instance, those of Norfolk where Labour usurped the Liberal position. Continuity in contestation has been an important factor in retaining the loyalty of electors.⁶⁷

On the two occasions Liberal candidates have not stood in Cornwall, the Conservatives appear to have been the beneficiaries. In Truro in 1951 the Liberal vote was estimated to have split five to four in the Conservatives' favour. In 1959, Liberal re-intervention at Falmouth-Camborne after sitting out the 1955 contest, hurt the Conservatives more than it did the Labour Party. This tallies with the findings nationally of Butler and Stokes and gives some weight to the comment of an old Cornish Liberal, who argued that while Liberals loathe Tories, they loathe Socialists even more.⁶⁸

The outworking of this in practice can be seen in the tendency of the Liberal vote to strengthen during periods of Conservative rule, by picking up support from disillusioned Tory voters, and to decline when a Labour Government was in office. Certainly, the years of the Labour Government from 1945 to 1951 were the darkest days for Cornish Liberals, while those of subsequent Tory Administrations were years of gradual recovery. The exceptions to this rule, Pardoe's victory in North Cornwall in 1966 and Penhaligon's capture of Truro in October 1974, owed much to tactical voting and charismatic personality.

65. W. Miller & G. Raab, op.cit., pp. 245-6.

66. H.G. Nicholas, The British General Election of 1950 (London: Macmillan, 1950), p. 300.

67. R. Johnson, op.cit., pp. 8-9.

68. W.M.N., 20 May 1955; Cornishman, 15 October 1959; David Butler & Donald Stokes, Political Change in Britian: the evolution of electoral choice (2nd edition, London: Macmillan, 1974), p.410; Interview, Mr. G. Webster, 21 June 1979.

Indeed, the importance of the personality of the candidate is a characteristic of Cornish politics. One aspect of this is whether or not the candidate is Cornish. Hayman, Penhaligon and Mudd are conspicuous examples of successful Cornishmen, and Mudd attributes part of his popularity in the Falmouth-Camborne division not simply to being Cornish, but to being a Falmouth lad.⁶⁹ There is an obvious limit to the importance of this factor. A number of Cornishmen of impeccable background have failed to make much impact.

Nonetheless, in Cornwall the local M.P. is, as it were, a big fish in a small pond. The importance of the vote for the individual man, Cornish or up-country, is a recurring theme in the views of local political observers and past candidates. It is also found in local elections, since, in rural areas like Cornwall, the social structure has remained sufficiently stable for individuals to be well enough known to be elected on criteria other than a party label, whether that local prominence is due to a church or chapel connexion, or to another factor. The insistence in Nonconformist circles on the importance of a candidate's character may have helped to buttress this tradition. Local politics in Cornwall has some similarities with the politics of rural Wales and the Highlands of Scotland in this respect.⁷⁰

Another characteristic of Cornish politics in recent years has been the emergence of a Cornish nationalist movement. This has developed out of a growing interest in Cornish culture and in a linguistic revival of the Cornish language, which has its roots in the nineteenth century. In 1951, Mebyon Kernow (M.K.) was founded. Apart from cultural objectives, it aimed "to maintain the character of Cornwall as a Celtic nation, to promote the interests of Cornwall and the Cornish

69. Interview, Mr. D. Mudd, 18 January 1979; personality can also have an adverse effect on elections: see David Butler & Dennis Kavanagh, The British General Election of 1979 (London: Macmillan, 1980), pp.404-5.

70. R. Johnson, op.cit., p.36; A. Lee, 'How Cornwall Votes', pp.11-12; Municipal Year Book, 1979, pp794ff; P. Madgwick, op.cit., pp. 228-9; James G. Kellas, The Scottish

people and to promote the constitutional advance of Cornwall and its right to self-government in domestic matters".⁷¹

As a political pressure group, M.K. gained the support of a number of M.P.s. Bessell, Pardoe and later Mudd all became members of M.K., but subsequently left as M.K.'s own political ambitions expanded. Like many such groups, M.K. has suffered from fissiparousness and has also found it hard to make much impact on local or national elections. M.K.'s membership in Cornwall stands at about 2,000. They have not attracted support from any particular social groups or religious denominations.⁷²

The emergence of M.K. is not so much an indication of nationalistic feeling, but rather a reflection of an undercurrent of discontent at the threat posed to Cornwall and its heritage by the opening up of the county to an ever increasing flow of tourism and up-county settlement. Many more people support the cultural activities of the Gorsedd and Old Cornwall Societies than associate themselves with the political activities of M.K. But M.K. has helped to articulate a widely felt sense of difference and separateness. The Liberal Party, which has been able to cast itself as the natural party of protest and articulator of local grievances, has benefitted most from this feeling and has most to lose, if M.K. support increases. Equally, the Liberals by playing this role effectively block M.K. expansion. A similar situation exists over environmental concern between the Liberals and the nascent Ecology Party.⁷³

It is apparent that in the emphasis placed on the personality of the candidate, the stress on the importance of local issues and the strength of feeling against

Political System (2nd ed; Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975) pp. 214-217.

71. P. Berresford Ellis, The Cornish Language and its Literature (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974) pp. 145, 147, 165, 177.
72. P. Ellis, op.cit., pp. 177, 182; Commission on the Constitution, Written Evidence, viii, England, pp. 35-37; Interview, Mr. Jenkins, 30 July 1979.
73. A. Lee 'Cornwall: Aspects of Regionalism and Nationalism', p. 15; Guardian, 5, 18 April, 1979.

centralisation and metropolitan domination, and cultural and environmental concern, Cornish politics diverge from the scenario of the major parties seeking representation at Westminster on the basis of national campaigns. The Liberal Party has remained comparatively stronger in Cornwall than elsewhere because of its ability to act as a vacuum cleaner for protest groups and in being more adaptable to the Cornish style of politics than the Labour Party. Furthermore, it has been able to produce charismatic candidates and has been able to build on a legacy of rural radicalism. The anti-Conservative vote in peripheral rural areas has tended to remain Liberal and Cornwall's five seats are all amongst the one hundred most agricultural in the country. The Conservative Party, has had less need to adapt to local conditions, although its most successful candidates have in some measure done so.⁷⁴

The Methodist Connexion.

Butler and Stokes in their study of British politics and Field in his study of London Methodism have concluded that in party terms the Methodist vote is divided, but with the Labour Party capturing the largest support. According to Butler and Stokes, there was a noticeable increase in Liberal strength when middle class Nonconformists were isolated. Their study, however, placed Cornwall in a large South West region, disguising any possible Cornish idiosyncracies. Other studies have confirmed the link between Methodism and Liberalism in the middle classes, while at Banbury an earlier survey of politics revealed a continuing, strong Free Church link with the Liberal Party. All seem agreed that Methodism has remained an anti-Conservative force in politics, in spite of the fact that generally speaking Liberals leaving the Party have been more attracted to the Conservatives than to Labour.⁷⁵

74. A. Lee, 'Cornwall: Aspects of Regionalism and Nationalism', p. 17; R. Douglas, op.cit., p. 292; Peter Pulzer, Political Representation and Elections in Britain (3rd edition, London: Allen & Unwin, 1975), p. 119.

75. D. Butler & D. Stokes, op.cit., pp. 156, 158; C. Field,

In terms of Methodist candidates, party allegiance is hard to establish since the Nuffield election studies after 1951 do not take more than a cursory glance at Nonconformist candidatures, while the Methodist Recorder's attitude to Methodist candidates fluctuates in thoroughness from election to election. However, it is clear that a solid core of Methodist-Labour candidates have stood at post-war elections with a fair record of success. Methodism has continued to supply a handful of Tory candidates, some of whom have reached Westminster, while Methodist-Liberal candidates have fluctuated widely in numbers. As in the inter-war period, there has been a major difference between the ability of Methodist-Labour candidates to be elected and their Liberal counterparts, a consequence of party rather than religious label.⁷⁶

Seventeen Nonconformist candidates can be identified in post-war Cornish elections. Only two of them, Bessell and Mudd, have been elected. One of them, Rev. White, is a Methodist minister, while others are Nonconformists mainly by upbringing. Scott, for example, in his contest at Truro, let it be known that he had a Methodist background.⁷⁷ Equally, there have been those who have been thought to be Methodists, who have not been connected with the chapels. This perception may have been as influential as the truth of the matter. It may have been a case of mistaken rumour or wishful thinking. Hayman and Penhaligon are examples of this.

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- 'Methodism in Metropolitan London', p.320; Michael Hill & Peter Wakeford, 'Disembodied Ecumenicalism: A Survey of the Members of Four Methodist Churches in or near London', Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britian, 2, edited by David Martin (London: S.C.M., 1969), p.24; Margaret Stacey, Tradition and Change: a Study of Banbury (London: O.U.P., 1960), pp. 38ff.
76. D. Butler, The British General Election of 1951, p.38; M.R., 28 June, 5 July 1945, 19, 26 January, 2, 16 February, 2 March 1950, 18 October 1951, 26 May 1955, 8, 22 October 1964, 14 April 1966, 4, 11 June 1970, 14, 21 February, 19, 26 September, 3 October 1974, 5, 12, 19, 26 March 1979.
77. Correspondence, Mr. R. Scott, 1 June 1980.

Mudd provides a different difficulty. Turning to Methodism as an adult, he is a frequent writer in the Methodist Recorder and speaker in Methodist chapels, but he is not technically speaking a Methodist member. He refuses to show "favouritism" to any one of the chapels in the five Methodist circuits in his constituency by joining it.⁷⁸

Fig. 9:7. Nonconformist Candidatures in post-war Cornish elections.⁷⁹

	Meth.	Cong.	Bap.	Quaker	Total
Liberal	9	1	1	1	12
Labour	3	1	0	0	4
Conservative	1	0	0	0	1
Total	13	2	1	1	17

From Figure 9:7 it can be seen that in the Cornish context, Liberals remain the party of Nonconformist candidates and that Methodist, often local men, make up the bulk of these. Nonconformist candidates have been most utilised at Bodmin and at Falmouth-Camborne. But simply as a source of candidates, Nonconformity has declined in importance compared with previous years.

A survey of former parliamentary candidates for Cornish seats⁸⁰ revealed that few would go as far as to say that there was a "chapel vote", but nearly all pointed to a continuing GENERAL attachment of Methodists to the Liberal Party. E.M. King recalled that he was consistently told by his supporters to be careful of the chapel vote, but did not in fact find a great deal of evidence that it

78. Interview, Mr. D. Mudd, 18 January 1979.

79. These were: P. BESSELL (Cong.,L.), R. Blank (Meth.,Lab.), R. Blindell (Cong.,Lab.), A. Davey (Meth.,L.), D. Foot (Meth.,L.), J. Foot (Meth.,L.), N. Gibson (Bap.,L.), E. Hambly (Quaker,L.), P. Harris (Meth.,L.) W. Hosking (Meth.,L.), D. MUDD (Meth.,Con.), T.S. Roseveare (Meth.,L.), E. Sara (Meth.L.), R. Scott (Meth.,Lab.), G. Sharp (Meth.,L.), J. Trewin (Meth.,L.), Rev. M. White (Meth.,Lab.).

80. see Appendix II for further details.

existed. Another Conservative candidate of the 1950's expressed the typical response to the subject, commenting, "We simply thought they were quite likely to vote Liberal". He added, "I also assumed that I must watch my words carefully when talking to Methodists, as it was assumed that their morals were stricter than other people's".⁸¹

When asked about the issues to which they, as candidates, found Methodists particularly sensitive, there was no consensus of opinion. Scott-Hopkins made the point that basic moral attitudes were identical to all church and chapel goers. But on moral issues chapel influence was said to be strongly weighed against the "liberalisation" of society. Bessell noted that in spite of this, he did not find any opposition from Methodist Liberals to his votes on topics like abortion. The importance of Overseas Aid, an awareness of international affairs and opposition to nuclear armaments were mentioned as other areas of Methodist concern. Teetotalism had all but disappeared, but in some local Liberal associations, Methodist influence was apparent in its opposition to raising money by lotteries.⁸²

The influence of Methodism seems to have varied from seat to seat. In Bodmin in the 1960's Bessell estimated that roughly one third of the Liberal vote (about 8,000) came from Methodists or former Methodists and another 1,000 from other Free Church voters, especially from his own denomination, the Congregationalists. The Methodist-Liberal vote appears to have been strongest in rural areas and small towns like Callington and Lostwithiel. In some places, for instance, Torpoint, Saltash and Bodmin, there was some Methodist-Labour support, while at Liskeard and Fowey a larger minority supported Conservatives. Methodists were particularly important as officeholders in the division,

81. Correspondence, Mr. E. King, 22 May 1979, Mr. N. Nicholson, 30 May, 1979.

82. Correspondence, Mr. J. Scott-Hopkins, 27 May 1979, Mr. P. Bessell, 15 August 1979, Baroness Seear, 24 May 1979, Mr. M. Steed, 5 July 1979, Mr. R. Scott, 1 June 1980; Interview, Mr. D. Mudd, 18 January 1979.

and until 1970 every Liberal candidate in post-war elections in the constituency has had a Nonconformist background. However, in the 1979 contest, it was believed that Methodists were moving towards Conservatism in increasing numbers.⁸³

In Falmouth-Camborne Methodists were again an important factor in the divisional organisation, wielding an influence disproportionate to their numbers in the electorate. Sara, a Methodist-Liberal candidate for the seat in October 1974 and a Cornishman who has spent his working life outside the county, was of the firm opinion that more Methodists are Liberals in Falmouth-Camborne than in other areas of the country. However, this strength is largely confined to what Mudd has called Methodist-Liberal hamlets, like Stithians, since under the influence of Hayman a definite Methodist-Labour link developed. One Conservative candidate in the 1960's also recalled numbering amongst his leading supporters some of the leading traditional Methodist families in the area, continuing a long tradition.⁸⁴

North Cornwall too shows a continuance of the Methodist-Liberal tradition both in providing the local association with officers and as a basis of Liberal support, particularly in remoter areas like Altarnum, Delabole and St. Breward. The Conservative, Scott-Hopkins, who Pardoe defeated in 1966, felt at the time, "Liberalism flourished amongst the chapel congregations, not anything like 100% but quite considerably". It is interesting to note in North Cornwall the comparative lack of Nonconformists as Liberal candidates. This may be due to the fact that being such a good seat for Liberals, there has been a tendency to offer it to leading Liberal candidates up-country.⁸⁵

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83. Correspondence, Mr. P. Bessell, 15 August 1979, Mr. J. Faull, 30 June 1980; Interview, Mr. G. Hobbs, 20 June 1979.
 84. Correspondence, Mr. E. Sara, 30 May 1979; Interview, Mr. D. Mudd, 18 January 1979, Hon. R. Boscawen, 10 July 1979.
 85. Correspondence, Mr. S. Day, 4 September 1980, Mr. J. Scott-Hopkins, 27 May 1979.

In the St. Ives division it is again the country areas, notably in the Lizard peninsula, and also at St. Ives in which the legacy of Methodist-Liberal strength is strongest. Trewin, for many years the chairman of the local Liberal association and a Methodist, observed that on Liberal committees a good number of those with whom he fraternised attended the local Methodist chapels. But equally he did not believe that he was able to win the whole Methodist vote when he stood as the Liberal candidate in 1966. Indeed, Nott, the Conservative member since 1966, was of the opinion that he won a sizeable proportion of Methodist support at the last election, a view not disputed by the Labour agent.⁸⁶

Finally, in the Truro division those activists and candidates interviewed once more pointed to a legacy of Methodism and Liberalism in small villages, like Tywardreath. In the clay areas, voting seems to have been determined on class lines and a definite Methodist-Labour vote existed, although the 1979 election results suggested that the clay villages turned Liberal. However, while a tradition of Liberal voting amongst Methodists has lived on in some areas, the resurgence of Liberalism under Penhaligon has not been dependent on this, beyond the Nonconformist vote providing part of the basis upon which Liberals built. It is interesting to note that the Labour candidate Penhaligon pushed into last place in the first election of 1974 was a Methodist minister.⁸⁷

The picture that emerges is a varied one. The link between Methodism and the Liberal Party seems to hold, but mainly in rural areas in the county and amongst the older age groups. This fits in with the findings of other observers. In many cases, the Methodist-Liberal vote is an unthinking one, along the lines of "What we belong to do, we continue to do". Methodists have played a crucial role in sustaining the Liberal Party in Cornwall in the bleak

86. Interview, Mr. J. Trewin, 26 July 1979; Correspondence Mr. J. Nott, 12 July 1979; Interview, Mr. M. Hawkey, 24 July 1979.

87. Interview, Mr. D. Penhaligon, 14 September 1977; Correspondence, Mr. M. Steed, 5 July 1979, Rev. M. White, 12 June 1979.

years of the 1950's and organisationally have occupied many of the positions on the local associations. However, the last few decades have seen a weakening of the Methodist-Liberal vote, and hence, the revival of Liberalism in the 1960's and early 1970's owes little to it. Indeed, looking to the future, the passing of time will probably weaken further the Nonconformist link, as those age cohorts in which Liberalism is strongest die and assuming a continuing fall in Nonconformist membership. Furthermore, the Liberal Party has shown a tendency to cultivate ideas and interests antithetical to those of its traditional Nonconformist supporters, which may be undermining the existing link.⁸⁸

The Methodist factor is in decline and it is at most only one of a mix of cultural and socio-economic factors affecting Cornish politics. It has some mileage in explaining the survival of Liberalism in Cornwall, but Methodism's numerical decline and loss of political consensus have limited its effect. Rev. Hubert Luke, a former chairman of the Cornwall District recalled one Methodist service he had taken in the 1950's where he saw three men present, who had been busy in the week campaigning for three different parties. However, occasionally the legacy surfaces. It was not too many years ago that a Methodist, inexperienced in leading Liberal political meetings, sought to close a Liberal gathering by singing the National Anthem, only to strike up the Doxology by mistake.⁸⁹

88. D. Butler & D. Stokes, op.cit., p. 161; P. Pulzer, op.cit., p. 115; S. Koss, Nonconformity in Modern British Politics, p. 8.

89. Interview, Rev. R.H. Luke, 2 September 1977, Mr. C. Leese, 24 June 1977.

CHAPTER TENCONCLUSION

In order to draw out the themes of this study, the categories of Culture, Creed and Conflict are employed. Firstly, under the general heading of Culture, factors other than the religious which have been at work in Cornish politics are examined. Secondly, in the section entitled Creed, Methodism as a religious body is analysed, and thirdly, under the title of Conflict, Methodism as a political force is looked at. Finally, the changing relationship between Methodism and politics in these years is categorised.

CULTURE

Peter Madgwick introduces his study of the politics of Cardiganshire with the comment :

The 'Celtic fringe' has long figured in accounts of politics in the remote Western areas of the British Isles. There are good reasons for the persistence of the term. Scotland, Wales and South-West England are indeed peripheral in a highly centralised, London-focussed society; and they are Celtic by historical origins... In Scotland, Wales and South-West England, the distinctive nature of Celtic politics has been expressed to some extent in nationalism, but most notably in support for the Liberal Party.¹

Hence, a link is made between the Celticness of some areas of Britain and Liberal politics.

The term "Celtic fringe" needs to be carefully defined. Devon is not historically regarded as being Celtic and yet provided the springboard for post-war Liberal revival in the South West. Although historically Cornwall's Celtic credentials are unimpeachable, unlike Wales the language died out and was lost as a custodian of culture. Furthermore,

1. P. Madgwick, op. cit., p. 15.

the most Celtic part of the county is the western half, whereas Liberal support has continued most strongly in the eastern sector of Cornwall. It is in the case of the South West of England that the correlation between Celtic origins and continuing loyalty to the Liberal Party is least convincing.

It is true, however, that Cornish society has been affected by its geographical position as a peripheral area. Consequently, it has tended to be isolated from or lagging behind developments in the country as a whole. The distance from Cornwall to Westminster combined with the increased powers of central government have led to an anti-metropolitan approach to politics, from which Liberals with their emphasis on devolution have benefitted. This has been reinforced by the opening up of the county by improved communications, increasing tourism, second homes and up-country migration. Other peripheral areas, like north and west Wales, have experienced similar changes.² In the case of Cornwall, these developments have led to attempts to preserve the Cornish heritage, and indeed to rediscover it, under the guise of rousing a dormant nationalism. But Cornish nationalism is at best the decorative icing on the political cake rather than an expression of Celtic politics.

Madgwick went on to comment on the problem of defining Celtic politics in his own study :

The distinctiveness may be related to the Celtic element, to culture and nationality - but alternative and additional explanations lie in the social characteristics of the Celtic fringe, in the nature of a rural society based on small farms, a few small towns and the chapel. Cardiganshire politics may be in fact either Celtic, or non-conformist, or essentially rural and agrarian. In this way a political culture which appears to be unique may have qualities characteristic of many other areas: Dorset or Norfolk, for example, or Scotland or Scandinavia.

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2. D. Butler & D. Kavanagh, The British General Election of 1979, pp. 403 420.
 3. P. Madgwick, op. cit., p. 15.

An example of this can be seen in Cornwall and the South West by concentrating on ruralness rather than Celticness as an indicator of Liberal voting. Although Devon and Cornwall have given the Liberal Party a higher percentage of the vote than most other areas of Britain, most of the seats in these counties are listed amongst the most agricultural seats in the country. Likewise, amongst the most agricultural seats can be found the majority of Liberal seats and nearest misses in the country as a whole. Indeed, Miller in his study of elections commented, "Analyses restricted to seats with Liberal candidates or to the South West region showed that AGRI, the percent employed in agriculture, was the best predictor of Liberal voting".⁴

It has been noted, however, that in two agricultural areas of high Nonconformity and strong Liberalism, namely Cornwall and East Anglia, there has been a divergence of political paths in the post-war period. The Liberal Party has retained its position as one of the two major parties in Cornwall. In East Anglia it has been eclipsed by the Labour Party.

Vincent has suggested that the difference in political behaviour between two religiously similar areas is a product of their contrasting agrarian structures. He wrote, "It corresponds to the division between corn and grass, large farms and small farms, capitalist and peasant types of agriculture". While in East Anglia there has been a move towards larger farms since the Second World War, the average size of a Cornish farm in 1970 was estimated to be only twenty eight acres. A clash of interests between the increasingly unionised agricultural workers and the farmers has added to the appeal of the Labour Party in East Anglia. In Cornwall, the independent position of the smallholder has made him resistant to unionisation and unimpressed

4. David Butler & D. Kavanagh, op.cit., p.385; The British General Election of February 1974 (London:Macmillan, 1974), pp. 278-9; The British General Election of October 1974 (London: Macmillan, 1975) p. 326; William L. Miller, Electoral Dynamics in Britain since 1918 (London: Macmillan, 1977), p. 63.

by socialism with an emphasis on nationalization.⁵

This illustrates that the explanation of continuing support for Liberal candidates is not simply a product of a Nonconformist legacy and a rural setting. It appears that in Cornwall the agricultural system and land ownership pattern have had the effect of enhancing the support for Liberal politics. It must also be pointed out that that the dispersed settlement pattern with its small towns and numerous smallholdings is more typical of the "Celtic fringe" than elsewhere. Elsewhere, different kinds of agricultural systems and land ownership patterns have favoured other political developments.

The different political behaviour of rural and industrial areas provides another example of other factors at work in politics. Although all five of Cornwall's constituencies are among the one hundred most agricultural seats in Britain,⁶ in the more urban and industrialised parts of the county, the Labour Party has made progress. It has been from an industrial and urban base that the Labour Party has reached out to rural areas.

But one of the biggest difficulties facing the Labour Party in Cornwall has been the weakness of the trade unions in the county. Not only has the prevalence of small farms and smallholdings inhibited its development in rural areas, but the decline in mining has also made it difficult to make much progress in industry. The Labour Party did not have a platform of strong trades unionism on which to build, although the career of Conybeare illustrates that in the Mining Division that there was a depth of radical feeling. After the Great War, this slowly gravitated towards the Labour Party, culminating in the success of Hayman in the 1950's and 1960's.

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5. J. Vincent, Pollbooks: How Victorians voted, p. 43; R. Johnson, op.cit., p.18; Commission on the Constitution, Written Evidence, viii, England, p. 27.
6. D. Butler, & D. Kavanagh, The British General Election of October 1974, pp. 326-7.

The old fashioned organisation of the tin and copper mining industry in Cornwall has been considered by some to be the explanation of the weakness of class conflict and political militancy in the county. But perhaps more important still was the decline in the mining industry in the latter half of the nineteenth century, at the time when trades unionism was developing. Hence, the experience of Cornwall differs from coal mining areas, like South Wales and Durham, which were not only areas of strong Nonconformity but which also became strongholds of the Labour Party at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Miller, "Mining always correlated with pro-Labour deviance and almost always with anti-Conservative".⁷ In Cornwall, it was the latter effect which was the more evident.

It has been argued that Methodism, too, played an important part in limiting the salience of class conflict with its teachings directing attention towards the acceptance of conditions and away from political action, with the "counter-attractionist" effect of the pulpit against the political platform, and with Methodism's direct vocal opposition to movements like Chartism. But Methodism's views on political action have altered with the passing of time and the changing of its theological basis, and also, as the writings of Wearmouth illustrate, Methodists outside of Cornwall played prominent roles in the trades union movement. The experience of Cornwall, therefore, seems to have owed a great deal to its peculiar economic history.⁸

This study has concentrated on Methodism and looked at Anglicanism and other religious bodies only when they affected the issues under discussion. But the religiosity of an area is also an important consideration as Miller's recent study has indicated. He concluded, "The largest

7. W. Miller, op.cit., p.216.

8. see above, p.294ff; J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', p. 383; R. Wearmouth, Methodism and the Struggle of the Working Classes, pp. 171-209.

religious effect evident in our analyses was not sectarian; it was the anti-Labour religiosity effect".⁹ This can only have hindered the Labour Party's endeavours to make progress in a county like Cornwall.

This all points to the fact that there are factors other than the religious involved in Cornish politics and groups other than Methodists responsible for Cornish Liberalism. Cornwall's distinctive settlement pattern, land ownership structure, idiosyncratic economic history, peripheral geographical position and previous history have facilitated the development not only of Methodism but also of Liberalism in a complex web of interacting processes. Hence, while the framework of the study has been to investigate religion and politics in a particular context it can be seen how the context itself has had an important influence on developments in both the religious and political history of Cornwall.

But the swift growth and great strength of Methodism in the county over the last two hundred years have meant that the tone and tenor of Cornish society itself has been influenced by Methodism. In other words, Methodism has become part and parcel of the Cornish heritage. The direction of the flow of influence does not follow any simple path. It is more like a spaghetti junction than a one way street. X

CREED

The Rise and Fall of Cornish Methodism

Writing in his Journal on leaving Cornwall after the last of his visits there in 1789, John Wesley had written of Cornish Methodism, "...there is a fair prospect in Cornwall from Launceston to Land's End". His judgment was a good one. By 1821 just under 5% of the population of the county were Methodist members and twenty one years later

9. W. Miller, op.cit., p. 227.

the figure had increased to over 10%. Membership remained steady in the middle of the century, but, as the Cornish population fell back in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Methodism further increased as a proportion of the populace, reaching over 12% in 1891. These figures exclude a large body of adherents, who were not members, and the children in the Sunday Schools. In the twentieth century the trend has been a downward one, until in 1971 the situation in terms of membership related to population size was roughly that of 150 years earlier. The difference is that then Methodism was an expanding, youthful and dynamic force, but now it is a contracting and ageing body.¹⁰

The question arises as to why it was that Methodism developed so strongly in Cornwall. Answers to this question have been given from many different angles. An explanation of Methodism's success in Cornwall put forward by Rule points to an association between the prevalence of folk beliefs and Methodism's own emphasis on Providence. In short, that between Methodism and magic the gap was small. It is true that folk beliefs were particularly strong in Cornwall, especially in mining and fishing communities where the role of chance was large, and also that it is possible to find examples of an unofficial mixing of folk beliefs and Methodism.¹¹

One weakness with this explanation is that Methodism was not alone in emphasising a doctrine of Providence. Why was it that the Calvinistic Methodists, for example, failed to make any great impression in Cornwall? Moreover, folk beliefs were not confined to Cornwall. The point of similarity between Methodism and folk beliefs is that they

10. J. Pearce, *op.cit.*, p. 170; Robert Currie, Alan Gilbert & Lee Horsley, Churches and Churchgoers: Patterns of church growth in the British Isles since 1700. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), pp. 65-66.

11. See above p.66ff; J. Rule, 'Methodism and Recreational Confrontation in West Cornwall', (Paper given to the Society for the Study of Labour History, Univ. of Sussex, 1975), p. 21.

both seek to explain otherwise irrational phenomena with reference to the Supernatural. However, it is suggested that the difference between a belief in a superintending Providence based on a belief in a holy, yet loving Creator God and a belief in ill-wishing is greater than Rule alleges.

Another explanation that has been offered appeals to the Celtic heritage of Cornwall,¹² but the links tend to be overdrawn and the strength of Methodism in non-Celtic areas, like Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and the Shetlands, point away from this as a factor. It is evident, however, that Methodism developed as the major non-Anglican alternative in Cornwall. The Bible Christians even became an anti-Anglican force in the country areas.

Martin has noted how in Britian religious dissidence often expresses opposition to English dominance, commenting, "Even quite local patriotism, such as that of Celtic Cornwall, achieved some degree of religious differentiation through the spread of Methodism". This is perhaps an effect of Methodism in Cornwall rather than a cause. While it may have been one factor influencing people to attend Methodist chapels as opposed to Anglican churches, what was more important initially, both in bringing people to chapel and in their continued adherence, was a perception of religious need rather than cultural discontent.¹³

More important factors in the success of Methodism were its evangelical message and the religious and economic environment in which it developed. The strong zeal of early Methodists in preaching the Gospel meant that they went everywhere. This same "enthusiasm" as it was called caused people to think, rejecting it as extremism or too demanding, or considering it in greater detail and possibly accepting it.

12. see T. Shaw, Saint Petroc and John Wesley, pp. 20ff.

13. David A. Martin, A Sociology of English Religion (London: Heinemann, 1967), p. 85

Cornish Methodism in its early years was characterised by a series of revivals. The emotional excesses of these and the subsequent falling away meant they have been much criticised, although the evidence of transformed lives must be kept in mind to balance the picture. But the growth in Methodism was maintained, not because of its emphasis on revivalism, but because of its stress on conversion, especially amongst those outside Methodist circles. Some of the Methodist offshoots were caused by this desire not to grow lax in evangelism.

Wesley concentrated his energies in the newly emerging centres of population. West Cornwall was one of these. The message that he and his helpers preached was an uncomplicated explanation of salvation and a challenge to accept it, with a stress on a disciplined, fruitful and holy life following this. The upheavals of the industrial revolution emphasised the harshness of life and proximity to death in which many lived. Methodism gave meaning to life and offered friendship, purpose and hope at a time when the traditional anchors of life had been swept away. The social and economic conditions in Cornwall were therefore propitious for Methodism.

It is interesting to note the association of Methodism, initially and at its height, with the mining areas of the county. This connexion has been found in other mining districts. As Inglis has commented,

It was perhaps in a certain type of village and smaller town that Methodism had its firmest hold on working class people. In mining villages its success was often striking ... There was something about the social relationships of a community neither agricultural nor urban that Methodism found congenial.¹⁴

In terms of church organisation, an important factor was the weakness of the Established Church. Cornwall,

14. K. Inglis, Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England, p. 10.

ineffectively supervised from Exeter and with the poverty of its livings encouraging pluralism and absenteeism, provides a good example of this. Moreover, with its dispersed settlement pattern and the new centres of population springing up around the mines, the parish system was peculiarly inappropriate to Cornwall. The collapse of Evangelicalism among Cornish Anglicans, because of clerical or episcopal disapproval, or the non-replacement of Evangelical clergymen with those of like mind when they died or moved on, also meant that Methodism became the main alternative for Cornish evangelicals.¹⁵

Old Dissent was also weak in Cornwall, being present mainly in some of the towns where support was strong enough for a chapel and pastor to be maintained. Although Old Dissent revived under the Evangelical Awakening, Cornwall presented a good opportunity for Methodism to take root in that institutional religion was comparatively weak. The initial flexibility of the circuit system enabled Methodism to reach areas of the county hitherto unreached by Nonconformity and its system of classes and opportunities for lay participation ensured that converts were well shepherded and able to utilise their talents.

Having brought forward a series of factors which appear to have facilitated the rise of Methodism in Cornwall, there is then the task of accounting for its subsequent decline. There have been developments in Cornwall itself which have been detrimental to Methodism. The decline in mining has led to the break-up of many of the communities in which Methodism was so strong. It also led to the emigration in the late nineteenth century of many of the chapels' potential leaders. The continuing poor economic climate in Cornwall this century has encouraged up-country migration of young people in search of employment, again with an adverse effect on Methodism.

15. L. Elliott-Binns, op.cit., pp. 351-2.

Furthermore, population shifts have left Methodist chapels today in a similar position to that facing Cornish Anglicanism in the late eighteenth century.

But Methodism is in decline in the country as a whole and there are evidently national factors at work. Within Methodism with the passing of time, there has been a change in the message preached, becoming more inclined to theological liberalism and to a social orientation. The theological pluralism, which now characterises Methodism, means that its challenge to society is confused and contradictory. Furthermore, ecumenicalism, in part a response to declining numbers, by concentrating efforts on ecclesiastical politics has acted as a distraction from evangelism. The evangelical zeal which led early Methodists to preach at every opportunity and in any location has evaporated to the extent that in many places it is hard to fill the local preachers plan.

However, the problem is wider even than Methodism, since nearly all the major Christian denominations are registering a decline in support. There are changes in society which have adversely affected the churches. The increase in the scope of Government action, in education and the social services for instance, has dislodged the churches from their central place in society. An increase in the standard of living and in a materialistic outlook on life have led to a diminution in people's perception of the need for religion and have opened the way to a more hedonistic approach to life.

Improved international communications and immigration have facilitated the spread of non-Christian religions, while the rejection of a materialistic society by some has led to a mushrooming of cults. There is therefore greater religious competition to the traditional Christian churches. In these circumstances, they find themselves one religious alternative among many.

Moreover, the presumed battle between Science and the Bible, and the rise of philosophies like Marxism, have made

the times appear intellectually unpropitious for the Christian faith. Man has an increasing belief in his own capacity to solve his own problems. Heaven is to be reached by the correct political formula. Salvation may involve a revolution, but it perceived to rest in man's own hands.

The reasons brought forward to explain religious decline are legion. But the operative factors seem to be the internal problems facing Methodism in Cornwall, the more widespread problem of the loss of direction, meaning, purpose and zeal within Methodism generally, combined with the development of a less responsive, even hostile environment. It must be remembered, however, that as far as Cornwall is concerned, the county is on the end of this decline. Methodism comparatively is still strong.

Sociologists of religion have developed a theory of the secularisation of society in the light of this decline, although secularisation has become an "omnibus" word. A consistent, though perhaps reluctant, exponent of this theory is Bryan Wilson. He wrote in 1966,

It is taken simply as a fact that religion- seen as a way of thinking, as the performance of particular practices, and as the institutionalisation and organisation of these patterns of thought and action - has lost influence in both England and the United States in particular as it has in other western societies.¹⁶

Wilson attacks those who have argued against the theory of secularisation on two counts. Firstly, he notes that implicit in their argument is the assumption that man has an in built "fund of religiosity" and he ponders how this can be proven. Secondly, he dismisses the concept of an unchanging human psychology by which means it is argued that since man's basic needs which religion satisfies do not change, if one form of religion declines, another expression of religion emerges to meet these needs.¹⁷

16. B. Wilson, *Religion in Secular Society*, p. xi.

17. *Ibid.*, p. xv.

However, Wilson's own assumptions are open to criticism. How does he arrive at his own conviction "that religious ideas and religious institutions are understandable only in social terms?" How, on the basis of the sociology of religion, does he know that man is not a religious animal? As Lenski has pointed out, "Human existence compels men to act on unproven and unproveable assumptions and it makes no exceptions". The idea that theories propounded by sociologists of religion explaining the function of a religious idea in society are the whole picture is also a leap of faith.¹⁸

The key issue in the controversy surrounding the concept of secularisation is that of definition. Secularisation demands that something is being secularised and presupposes a time when it was non-secularised. Rightly has Martin wondered "how far a culture can be secularised without really ever having been thoroughly Christianised". The ambiguity of the concept can be seen, for example, in the establishment of the Welfare State. This can be viewed either as evidence of the "disengagement" of society from religion, or as a victory for the outworking of the social implications of Christianity.¹⁹

Having made these reservations about the concept, it is evident, as Martin has written, that "given careful definitions of 'secular',...some shifts can be discerned away from the 'religious' over particular periods of time in given cultures under specified circumstances". This has been the recent experience of religious practice in Britian and Cornwall. But even here the model of a cyclical pattern of church growth and decline fits the facts better than a broad, long term theory of secularisation. As with the Liberal Party, so with religion, there is a distinction

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18. Ibid., p.xiii; Gerhard Lenski; The Religious Factor: A Sociological Study of Religion's Impact in Politics, Economics and Family Life (1961; New York: Doubleday, rev.ed.1963), p. 332 fn.6.
19. David A. Martin, The Religious and the Secular, pp.55-129-130. Michael Hill, A Sociology of Religion (London: Heinemann, 1973), pp.232ff.; see also David A. Martin, Fifty Key Words: Sociology (London: Lutterworth, 1970), pp. 66ff.
20. D. Martin, The Religious and the Secular, p. 154; R. Currie et al, op.cit., pp. 39, 44; C. Cook, op.cit., p. 341.

to be made between its decline and downfall.²⁰

The Changing Face of Methodism.

With the passing of time, the religious body known as Methodism has undergone change. These changes have been the subject of much debate amongst sociologists of religion, armed with typologies. Brewer, writing of American Methodism, concluded,

The Methodist Episcopal Church began with a heavy dominance of the sect type over the church type traits and has moved along the sect-church continuum to a point where there is moderate dominance of church type over sect type characteristics.

Chamberlayne, comparing British Methodism of the 1740's with that of the 1930's, also decided that Methodism had moved from a sect to a church type.²¹

Martin sought to establish the validity of the denomination as something fundamentally different from a second generation sect, as it had been described by Niebuhr. For him, "The history of Methodism..begins in a 'Spiritual Brotherhood' or 'Holy Club' which in turn becomes 'Ecclesiola in Ecclesia', and finally a denomination, but at no point approximates to a sect" It is because Methodism was founded by Anglican clergymen and because the early Methodists attended the parish churches that some have initially classified it as a religious order rather than a sect.²²

However, the division of sects into sub-categories by Wilson allows one to place Methodism in its early years in the ranks of the conversionist sects. According to him, these are, "fundamentalist evangelical sects, emphasising

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21. Earl D.C. Brewer, 'Sect and Church in Methodism', Social Forces, 30 (1951-2), p. 407; John H. Chamberlayne, 'From Sect to Church in British Methodism', B.J.S., 15 (1964), pp. 142, 147.
22. David A. Martin, 'The Denomination', B.J.S., 13 (1962), p.3; Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches, trans. by Olive Wyon (London: Allen & Unwin, 1956), p. 723.

literal interpretations of the Bible, and being primarily concerned with converting sinners, often by revivalist techniques".²³

Methodism was initially a theology of individual salvation followed by a joining together in a tightly knit fellowship in pursuit of holiness and the performance of good works. The strict discipline and membership requirements of early Methodism contrasted strongly with that in the Established Church. In addition to this, the emphasis on conversion, the spontaneity of revivals, the search for holiness governing attitudes to other activities and the important roles played by laymen in the chapels, all point to the sectarian nature of Cornish Methodism until the middle of the nineteenth century.

The early Methodists concentrated on meetings with a distinctly religious purpose and followed a vigorously puritanical ethic, which distrusted amusement as sinful and abhorred idleness. Hence, some of the traditional Cornish sports, like hurling and wrestling, and old feasts and customs, like Padstow's hobby horse, were attacked by Methodists. Obelkerich found a similar Methodist hostility to certain old customs which were deemed sinful in South Lindsey.²⁴

Sabbatarianism was a strong point of Methodists and early Bible Christians adopted a plain Quaker-like style of dress. As the nineteenth century progressed, temperance and then teetotalism became hallmarks of Methodist social attitudes. Therefore, as Methodism grew, its influence on the social life of the county can be seen to have increased. This was especially the case as leading Methodists became increasingly active in the multiplicity of municipal bodies controlling local affairs.

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23. B. Wilson, Religion in a Secular Society, p. 196; see also Bryan R. Wilson (Ed.), Patterns of Sectarianism: organisation and ideology in social and religious movements (London: Heinemann, 1967), pp. 23-24.
24. J. Rule, 'Methodism and Recreational Confrontation in West Cornwall'; pp. 4, 8-9; J. Obelkevich, op.cit., p. 85.

Equally, with the passing of time, as Methodism grew, the gradual loss of religious zeal and the dropping out one by one of many of the religious meetings can be traced. The decline of the class meeting is one example. Originally as well as, but in time instead of religious meetings, a host of social activities sprang up as Methodist chapels were built. In this way, Methodism became a community religion in the sense that much of the social life of many people in the villages and towns revolved around the chapel.

One effect of this broadening of Methodist influence on Cornish society was its loss of depth in the life of the individual. Methodism's influence on the surrounding community became not so much the salvation of the sinner as the imparting of an ethos and moral code of behaviour. A consequence of the extensive role played by the chapel in the lives of Methodists was that it tended to insulate them from society, absorbing much of their time and detracting from interest in evangelism. Agencies initially intended for evangelistic or teaching purposes sometimes proved able to function admirably as a means of entertainment.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the social meant the development of superior forms of entertainment have adversely affected the chapels and the effects of rising affluence have shown the truth of Pickering's contention that "the enemy of religion is a pleasure seeking society". In an attempt to accommodate to changing times and to retain the allegiance of the children of Methodist parentage, attitudes to literature, sport and other hitherto frowned upon activities were relaxed. In the twentieth century, the activities which had filled the Cornish chapels in previous years had largely ceased by the time of the Second World War. As Probert remarked, "A church which was married to one age was becoming a widow to the next age".²⁵

25. W.S.F. Pickering, 'Religion-a Leisure-time Pursuit?', in Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britian, 1, edited by D. Martin (London: S.C.M., 1968), pp. 81-82; J. Probert, Fore Street Methodist Church, Redruth, p. 36.

The change in moral standards in the country at large and in Cornwall has also produced changes in Methodist ethics. The less dogmatic views held on divorce, homosexuality, sabbatarianism and temperance are examples of this. Hence, it can be seen that not only does Methodism influence its environment, but so also that environment influences Methodism.

Behind these shifts in the social and religious outlook of Methodism is a change in what Methodists believe. The development of theological liberalism has been well documented. The rise of Higher Criticism and the theory of evolution cast doubt upon the credibility of Genesis and its Mosaic authorship, and in turn upon the Deity of Christ, who believed in both. The eternal duration of hell was questioned by some and by others hell was abolished. Without hell, the prospect of heaven, the evilness of sin, and the need for salvation, all in turn lost meaning. There was nothing from which to be saved. There was no longer any Gospel. A stress on the social outworking of the Gospel became an alternative to the Gospel.²⁶

These developments have not been confined to Methodism, though Methodism has seemed to be particularly susceptible to them. They have been general trends in thinking and not unanimous shifts in belief. The point of noting them, however, is to assert that one reason for the decline of an evangelical body, like Methodism, is that it ceases to be evangelical. An organisation and a structure are left, the vitality, the power and the dynamic have gone.²⁷

The extent of the erosion of belief has been highlighted by Turner's study of Methodism in Leeds. Questioned on three basic dogmas, the existence of God, the divinity of Christ and life after death, some degree of uncertainty was expressed by one third of the respondents.²⁸

Methodists in the pew appear to be confused in their beliefs

26. R. Currie, Methodism Divided, pp. 112 ff.

27. R. Wearmouth, The Social and Political Influence of Methodism, p. 253.

28. B. Turner, op.cit., p. 92.

and yet faced with a plurality of opinions, which has made theological categories as important as denominational labels in determining a person's beliefs.

A number of factors help to account for this situation. Firstly, being weak on systematic doctrinal teaching, Methodism has been more easily penetrated by the new schools of theological thought. Secondly, the change in theology may have been partly induced by the change from what has been called allogenous growth, the conversion of outsiders, to autogenous or biological growth, the offspring of Methodists following in their parents' footsteps. The effect of this is that Methodism is not only made up of the "converted", but also includes those whose Methodism is no more than an inherited interest in a particular chapel.

Declining numbers are a third impetus towards theological change, as well as perhaps being in part a product of it, for one means of seeking to explain the decline is with reference to old fashioned beliefs and to seek to reverse it by trimming views to keep up with the times. Fourthly, there is the phenomenon of ecumenicalism. A prerequisite of this is the breaking down of theological barriers which divide the different religious groups. A fifth factor at work has been the rise in social class experienced by Methodism. This and the increasing dependence on autogenous growth coincide to provide pressure for a respectable and moderate, but not too demanding form of Methodism.

The change in those social classes from which Methodism draws its support is interesting. Wickham has asserted on the basis of his study of Sheffield that the working classes have always been outside the churches since the industrial revolution. The evidence for Cornwall suggests that this was not the case, although on the basis of the research of Field, the extensive penetration of the working classes by early Methodism in Cornwall was exceptional. Initially in Cornish Methodism, miners and in some areas fishermen provided a large proportion of the members and farmers and shopkeepers were prominent amongst the leaders.

Landowners and the professions were notably missing.²⁹

The formation of "denominations" is usually taken as evidence in McGavvan's words that "Men like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers". Hence, it has been argued that the divisions in Methodism were a reflection of the social divisions in Victorian society. In Cornwall, however, this does not seem to have been generally the case. This tendency existed in the towns, where there was more than one chapel from which to choose, but in rural areas the chapel was all embracing, whatever branch of Methodism it represented.³⁰

Rupp has remarked, "like an escalator, the sociological stratum in which Methodism lived, moved slowly upward". This was true in Cornwall, as elsewhere. A number of leading Methodist families in the county had prospered through the mining industry, and they represent a more general phenomenon. As Wilson has asserted, "What the history of Protestant denominationalism makes evident is that there is no agency so effective in providing men with improved status and respectability in this world as that which promises them these things in the next".³¹

The simple categorisation of Methodism today as a "middle class structure" is misleading, since some of its activities penetrate the working classes. The problem is that it is disproportionately middle class. It seems to be that the changes in Methodist theology are such as to give Methodism a greater appeal to the middle classes than to others. Martin has commented on the free churches that "To the extent that they penetrate deeply into the

29. E. Wickham, op.cit., p. 215; C.D. Field, 'The Social Structure of English Methodism: eighteen-twentieth centuries', B.J.S., 28 (1977), pp. 199-225; J. Probert The Sociology of Cornish Methodism, p. 23.

30. McGavvan quoted in Third Way, 13 July 1978, p.17; M.S. Edwards, 'Cornish Methodism: a study in division', pp. 240ff.

31. Rupp quoted in J. Chamberlayne, op.cit., p.141; B. Wilson, Religion in Secular Society, p. 201.

the middle classes they often either succumb to Anglicanism or to theological liberalism". Both responses have occurred to some extent in Cornwall.³²

It can be seen, then, that Methodism has changed in three fundamental areas, namely in its social and religious life, in its doctrinal basis and in its social class composition. As Cornwall illustrates, membership requirements were being lowered as members came from both converts and birthright. Methodism was more accommodating in its standards of behaviour and the spontaneous revivals of early years passed away. It retained some restrictions, notably on gambling and alcohol, and increasingly concentrated attention on the education of its ministers and its young people. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, Methodists decided to appropriate to themselves the title of Church. In fact, these changes indicate that in sociological terms they had become closer to the denominational type.³³

Typologies are meant to facilitate comparisons on a wider basis. Cornwall is not, therefore, the most productive base on which to make comparisons. But it does help when viewing Methodism through time to break it down into its component parts. The division of non-Wesleyan Methodists into "offshoots" and "secessions", depending on whether their original was to recapture the initial evangelistic enthusiasm of Methodism or to reform its mode of church government, facilitates a comparison with conversionist and reformist sects. The Bible Christians in Devon and Cornwall and elsewhere the Primitive Methodists fit the former pattern, while the U.M.F.C. and M.N.C. approximate to the latter. The differences between them, however, were still not that great.³⁴

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32. Lewis Burton, 'Social Class in the Local Church: A Study of Two Methodist Churches in the Midlands', Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain, 8, edited by Michael Hill (London: S.C.M., 1975), p.27; D. Martin, The Religious and the Secular, p. 126; A. Dunstan & J. Peart-Binns, op.cit., p. 19.
33. C. Field, 'Methodism in Metropolitan London', pp. 361-2; B. Wilson (Ed.), Patterns of Sectarianism, p. 25.
34. A. Gilbert, op.cit., p. 110; B. Wilson, Religion in a Secular Society, pp. 195-7.

In the twentieth century, under the impetus of ecumenicalism, Methodism, reunited in 1932, has sought further union, notably with the Church of England. Sociologically, Methodism has still not gained the essential characteristics of a church, namely a territorial, ethnic or universal base. But the increasing emphasis on the sacraments, the further adjustment of moral standards to those round about them and the increasing dependence upon birthright membership illustrate an increase in church-like traits in Methodism. It can be seen that Methodism is not a simple phenomenon to understand and that it has changed its nature with the passing of time. In sociological terms, it has been the development of a conversionist sect into a denomination, which has increasing church-like characteristics.³⁵

CONFLICT

The Methodist Approach to Politics

At the time of the General Election of 1945, the Methodist Missionary Society placed an advertisement in the Methodist Recorder under the title "How will you vote?" It read as follows,

This is the divine policy: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation".
This is the divine election: "Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you that you should bear fruit".
This is the divine choice:³⁶ "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

In short, Methodism, in Cornwall and elsewhere, has not been primarily a political but a religious phenomenon. This must always be remembered, but, having said this, being a Methodist has affected a person's approach to politics.

Butler and Stokes have identified three basic motives for voting at elections. They are instrumental (to elect a government one desires), expressive (to identify oneself

³⁵. D. Martin, A Sociology of English Religion, p. 79.

³⁶. M.R., 21 June 1945

with the party one prefers) and normative (a sense of civic obligation). Whatever else may influence a Methodist voter at a specific election, one constant factor has been the view of the franchise as being a trust from God. Voting was not so much a civic obligation, as a divine one. This responsibility is repeatedly enjoined on Methodists at election times.³⁷

A corollary of this in Methodism has been the ideal of the responsible citizen. It was in part a product of the rise in social class of Methodists. Their integrity in financial matters and the ample opportunities for public service in local government in the latter part of the nineteenth century were also factors. But Methodism itself gave both a stimulus and a sanction to involvement as an expression and outworking of one's faith. In local elections, the chapel vote was powerful and able to be roused on certain issues connected, for example, with education or burials. The decline in Methodist strength this century has affected the extent of this role, but in Cornwall tradition lives on.

Wesley argued that one of the first criterion when voting was to select a man who feared God. His election advice in 1744 was,

...(i) to vote without fee or reward for the person they judged to be most worthy (ii) to speak no evil of the person they voted against, and (iii) to take care their spirits were not sharpened against those that voted on the other side.

This particular extract from Wesley's writing was quoted, for instance, in the Methodist Recorder in the 1945 election and again in the 1979 contest one minister wrote to repeat Wesley's advice. This emphasis on a candidate's character has been another constant in the Methodist approach to politics.³⁸

37. D. Butler & D. Stokes, op.cit., p.38; Western Evening Herald, 3 May 1979.

38. J. Wesley, Works, ix, p. 196; M.R., 14 June 1945; Cornish Guardian, 3 May, 1979.

In the Victorian period especially, attempts were made at character assassination of parliamentary candidates by casting doubt on his religious or moral orthodoxy. The most persistent of these was the guilt-by-association charge of atheism brought against the Radical Conybeare in the 1885 Camborne contest. Conservative candidates were more likely to face charges of Puseyism or Catholicism, but in the eyes of Methodists they were all potentially damaging. The reverse side of the coin was the wooing of the Nonconformist vote by candidates by attendance at chapel and financial support of chapel causes. These are perhaps by-products of an emphasis on a candidate's character.

The stress on the importance of a candidate's character and the importance of one's own behaviour was the highest common factor in the attitudes of all Methodists to politics. It was the most that could be said without showing a party bias. The hymn, "O God who holdest in Thy Hand", omitted from the 1932 Methodist Hymnbook, contained a verse, quoted at elections, which sums up well the Methodist attitude. It read,

The heat of party strife abate,
 And teach us how to choose,
 Good men and wise to guide the State,
 The evil to refuse.³⁹

Wesley was well known for his loyalty to the King and Methodists reacted to charges of Jacobitism and Jacobinism by making staunch declarations of support for the monarch. But the important point is that Methodists, when they took part in politics, were not a revolutionary force seeking to overthrow the Constitution. In the debate over the role of Methodism as a stabilising force in England at the time of the French Revolution, even the opponents of this theory concede the docility of Cornish Methodists. The hostility of Methodism to Chartism in Cornwall underlines this point.

Incidences like the Truro Church Rate Riot were

exceptional, and even passive resistance on such a key question as education in 1902 met with only lukewarm support in Cornwall, particularly among the Wesleyans. In both these cases, there was a tendency for the Bible Christians to be more involved than the Wesleyans, but the difference was one of degree rather than of a fundamentally different approach to politics. Methodists worked within the framework of the law.

In its early years, while not eschewing politics, Methodism was essentially a religious movement. Politics, especially with the bribery and corruption involved in the days of the unreformed Parliament, was seen as a threat to spirituality. Perhaps an important factor in determining this attitude was that, in Cornwall at least, politics were not in the control of those classes in which Methodism was strong. Most Methodists in the first half of the nineteenth century would not have possessed the franchise. Involvement in politics was a question which raised itself increasingly in Methodist minds as the nineteenth century progressed. More and more Methodists, climbing the social ladder, at the same time as the scope of politics was being opened up by the outworking of the 1832 Reform Act, not only found themselves with the right to vote but also with the encouragement to exercise that right.

One way in which Methodism sought to control the influence of politics on itself and, indeed, restricted its own influence in politics was through the convention known as the "no politics" rule. This was not a veto on political action itself. It was rather an attempt to keep chapels and pulpits free from the controversies of party politics, thereby enabling Methodists to concentrate their energies as a united force on what they agreed were more important matters. It was the product of an evangelical body, and, though they would not have seen it in this way, it implied a rejection of a social gospel and of political theology.

A frequent criticism of the rule is that it favours the status quo. Hence, it was argued that in the early and mid-nineteenth century that it benefited the

Conservative Party, although Moore in his research discovered that in this century the rule was believed to work to the advantage of the Liberal Party. In effect, it seemed to work to the advantage of the dominant group at the time.⁴⁰

In theory, however, the rule has no orientation to the left or right, since individual Methodists are free to become involved in politics. Implicit in it is not just a recognition of more important matters than politics, but also, in the case of Wesleyanism, the existence of a division on party issues. But it is notable that this convention existed in non-Wesleyan Methodism as well, which was less divided in partisan support. It was an idealistic rule which had to be repeated often, because many fell short of it. It was brought into some disrepute by its unfair operation under Jabez Bunting, though equally the rule meant that anyone voicing political opinions became a potential target for an allegation of having broken the "no politics" rule.

In time, there has been a relaxation of the rule, at least as far as ministers are concerned. In 1834 the Wesleyan minister, Joseph Rayner Stephens, was expelled from the Connexion because of his vocal support for the Liberation Society. Yet, Lord Soper, for instance, today can publicly declare his belief in the Labour Party as a potential vehicle to introduce his brand of Christian Socialism without a murmur. Furthermore, Methodist ministers now stand as parliamentary candidates. Rev. F.J. Hopkins, who on three occasions stood for parliamentary honours in Cornwall in the 1920's left the ministry in order to do this. But in 1974 Rev. Malcolm White stood at Truro without having to resign from the ministry and believing this to be an outworking of his faith.⁴¹

Methodist ministers have always been willing to act

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40. Robert Moore, 'The Political Effects of Village Methodism', Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britian, 6, ed. by Michael Hill (London: S.C.M., 1973), p.176; see above, p.123ff.
41. E. Taylor, op.cit., pp.149, 155; D. Soper, op.cit., p.109; M.R., 21 February 1974.

on specific issues which have roused Methodist feelings. But it was on the question of Irish Home Rule, when a former Wesleyan President of Conference and a number of Irish Wesleyan minister campaigned fervently against these proposals, that the barrier holding back ministers from a wider and more partisan political involvement was breached. Later on, the virulent reaction to Balfour's Education Act widened this breach.

Nonetheless, direct references to political parties from pulpits still remain controversial and exceptional. Here the "no politics" convention still rules, and political meetings are not held on Methodist premises. In its earlier years, Wearmouth has even suggested that it was this convention which enabled Methodism to survive the political turmoil of the first half of the nineteenth century.⁴²

Methodists and Political Issues

Looking at the areas in which Methodists as Methodists have entered the political arena, it is possible to identify four spheres of activity. These can be labelled (i) theological, (ii) ethical, (iii) Nonconformist and (iv) social, though the categories are not mutually exclusive and are intended only as general headings.

(i) Theological

This primarily concerns the attitude of Methodists to Roman Catholicism. Theologically, Methodism opposed Popery and the Papacy and this combined in Cornwall with popular anti-catholic feeling in the early nineteenth century to produce a strong reaction against any proposals to give political concessions to Roman Catholics. This was evident in the campaigns in Cornwall against Catholic Emancipation and the Maynooth grant, in which Methodists took an active part. This is all the more striking considering their comparative indifference to campaigns for political and economic reform which took place at the same time.

42. Guardian, 5 January 1980; M.R., 10 January 1980; R.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Gladstone's proposals for Irish Home Rule not only lost Cornish Liberalism a number of its wealthier supporters, but also provoked a marked response from Cornish Wesleyans, whose ears were open to the cry from Irish Wesleyans that Home Rule was tantamount to Rome Rule. There is evidence for believing that in Cornwall the strength of Liberal Unionism owed much to the defection of erstwhile Nonconformist (mainly Wesleyan) Liberals. In the years that followed, Liberal candidates found it necessary to tread warily over Home Rule.

The rise of the Anglo-Catholic movement in the Church of England incurred Methodist hostility for similar reasons as Roman Catholicism. The Wesleyans, who had remained closest to their mother church, moved away from her because of this. Even in this century, Cornish Methodists were amongst those who opposed the revisions of the Anglican Prayer Book in the 1920's, fearing concessions to Anglo-Catholicism in a county where the Established Church already displayed a strong tendency in that direction. In recent years anti-Catholic feeling has subsided in England and one of the most marked changes in Methodism has been in its official attitude to Roman Catholicism. Theological changes in Methodism and the ecumenical spirit have considerably lessened the antagonism to Roman Catholicism.

A second area of theologically inspired political action concerns Methodist sabbatarianism. Methodists were not alone in upholding the Sabbath, but it was particularly strong amongst them and in Cornwall this attitude had a noticeable impact on the county. Measures to secure the sanctity of the Lord's Day produced countless petitions from Methodist chapels, but in many cases, as for instance with the Cornwall Sunday Closing Bill, their lobbying for further legislation was unsuccessful. Nonetheless, they were effective guardians of the Sabbath

Day in the Victorian era, although the twentieth century has seen the erosion of support for it amongst the general public and even amongst Methodists.

(ii) Ethical

This umbrella title covers a number of issues, but one of the earliest in the period under study was Methodist support for the abolition of slavery in the British Empire, although in Cornwall other Nonconformists were more vociferous in their opposition to slavery than were Methodists. It was seen as inhumane, unchristian and a hindrance to missionary work. Missionaries touring the county fueled the feeling in the the chapels against slavery with their vivid accounts of conditions in the West Indies. On this particular issue success was eventually forthcoming. It is matched today by a continuing interest in Third World development, an extension and yet, in a way, a dilution of the missionary imperative. X

It was at the end of the century that missionary concern, defence of the native inhabitants of South Africa, a belief in the Empire as a preserver of peace and old fashioned patriotism combined in Methodist circles to lead to support for the Boer War. A vocal minority of Methodists, in Cornwall mainly from the ranks of the Bible Christians and the U.M.F.C., nonetheless opposed the war. Indeed, amongst Bible Christians support for the Peace Society was stronger than amongst other Methodists. However, in both World Wars Methodists fully supported their prosecution as "just wars". The establishment of international organisations to preserve the peace, the League of Nations between the wars and the United Nations subsequently, have been enthusiastically supported by Methodists.

A further set of ethical issues can be subsumed under the title of "social purity". Methodists were amongst those in Victorian society determined to defend moral standards. It is for this primarily that the Nonconformist conscience is remembered, although such matters were not solely the concern of Nonconformists. It was because he flouted these standards that Parnell was attacked when

news of his relationship with Mrs. O'Shea became public property. The Contagious Diseases Acts were similarly attacked, since by giving a legislative sanction to prostitution, they were seen as a threat to the institutions of marriage and family. The lewdness of the music halls and theatres moved Methodists to try to "clean them up", or alternatively to close them down. Gambling was perceived as an affront to the Methodist work ethic and as being opposed to a belief in Providence. The opium traffic was also a subject of persistent attack because of its degrading effects and as a hindrance to missionary work.

In this century there has been a move away from imposed moral standards and towards a permissive approach. This has been particularly the case since the Second World War. The effect of this on churches, like Methodism, has been to put them on the defensive. Instead of seeking legislation to uphold moral standards, they have been undertaking a rearguard action to preserve as much as possible of the ground won in the past. However, the result of less restrictive laws on such subjects as divorce and homosexuality is to create new pressures on churches to alter their standards as they find themselves having to cope with the consequences of the new legislation and with changing moral values in society. This has been the experience of Methodism.

(iii) Nonconformist

There were grievances which drew Methodists into politics and which stemmed from privileges granted to the Church of England. Initially, Wesleyans refused officially to ally themselves with Nonconformists and other Methodists on issues like disestablishment, although individual Wesleyan laymen may have supported them. As the nineteenth century progressed, it became increasingly difficult for Wesleyans to steer a middle course between Anglicanism and Nonconformity, especially with their dislike of Anglo-Catholicism and with the Anglican perception of them as Nonconformists. Hence, Wesleyans joined Nonconformists in the last quarter of the century in campaigning for amendments to the laws surrounding marriages and burials.

and matters relating to chapel sites and leases.

Nonetheless, Wesleyans were reluctant to become involved with the Free Church Council movement, lest they became too partisan in their political activity. Wesleyans preferred to work through their own Committee of Privileges. With the exception of disestablishment in England, which is no longer seen as desirable anyway, these Nonconformist grievances have been rectified. They are no longer a means of drawing Methodists into politics. It has been argued by Glaser that, when these grievances were removed, Nonconformity lost the iron in its soul, born of fighting discrimination, which had made it so distinctive.⁴³

The education question is also linked to the relationship between Nonconformists and Anglicans. The position of the Wesleyans differed from that of other Methodists and Nonconformists in that they had built a number of their own voluntary schools, like the Church of England. The schools gained a good reputation, but in Cornwall and nationally they only supplied a small proportion of the places needed.

The controversial aspects of education concerned the control of the schools and the type of religious education to be given. Nonconformists were suspicious of the priestly influence over their own children in church schools, particularly in rural areas, fearing the indoctrination of their children with Anglo-Catholic teaching. Nonconformists, therefore, sought to promote the undenominational school system which was publicly controlled by School Boards. Balfour's Education Act not only rescued church schools from their financial problems and abolished School Boards, but also perpetuated the church schools without giving, in the eyes of Nonconformists, adequate public control. Hence, Nonconformists, including Wesleyans presented a united front in opposition to the Bill.

43. J. Glaser, op.cit., p. 362.

With the passing of the Bill, the problem was one of how to proceed in opposition to the new law. In Cornwall there was not, as in Wales, a refusal on the part of the County Council to enforce the Act. Nor was the attempt to protest against the Act by passively resisting the payment of the education rate able to capture wholehearted support. In Cornwall the numbers involved in this were small. But it was a way of keeping the issue alive until the next election in 1906. The education question on that occasion played a decisive part in influencing Methodist votes, in bringing Methodists into the political arena more than ever before and in effectively counteracting in the minds of some Methodists the danger of Irish Home Rule associated with the Liberal Party.

The failure of the Liberal Government when elected to amend successfully the Education Act is not so much a token of the political weakness of Nonconformity, as an indication of the entrenched strength of the Established Church. However, the question has drifted from the political stage as education has become the responsibility of the Government rather than the churches. The religious education question, because of its prickly nature, has been allowed to slumber until at the present time the area of debate on this issue is, firstly, whether there should be any religious education at all, and secondly, if so, whether it should be specifically Christian.

(iv) Social.

For much of the nineteenth century temperance was the dominant issue in the field of social reform. It has always been an outworking of Methodism since Wesley, but from the 1830's onwards there was a debate within Methodism over whether temperance involved moderation in the use of alcohol or total abstinence. So strongly held were these views that a number of Wesleyans left the Connexion because of its opposition to their teetotalism. It is one of the great ironies of the temperance movement that in its early days it was characterised by intemperance of speech.

By the end of the nineteenth century teetotalism was the dominant view, being very strong amongst non-Wesleyan

Methodists and closely identified with Methodism in the public mind. Temperance feeling remained strong in the twentieth century until the inter-war years, when with the discrediting of prohibition and in the aftermath of war it was destroyed politically and weakened socially. In spite of this, a residue of temperance sentiment survives in Methodism.

Temperance was important for a number of reasons. First and foremost, the public house was seen as the main rival to the chapel. It was a hindrance to the Gospel and a potential stumbling block to the believer. The only sure means to avoid falling in this way was not to drink at all. Temperance was also seen as an antidote to many social problems of the nineteenth century. Intemperance was a cause of poverty, marital unhappiness, crime and ill health. Up to a point, this was all true. The weakness of this analysis was that it looked only at the outworking of the problems rather than their cause.

The movement was not a political one at the beginning. But it turned to politics in support of the Permissive Bill promoted by the United Kingdom Alliance and then in the pursuit of local option. While in this respect temperance reformers were unsuccessful, they did succeed in tightening up other aspects of the law pertaining to alcohol and made drunkenness socially unacceptable.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century there was a widening of the Methodist social conscience. Wesleyans made a point of seeking improvements in working class housing. Old Age Pensions and later the introduction of the Welfare state were developments generally supported by Methodists. A more sympathetic attitude was adopted towards trades unions. During disputes there was always a strong desire in Methodism for reconciliation between capital and labour, as in the General Strike of 1926. Since they had members on both sides, as for example in the China Clay strike in Cornwall in 1913, this was a natural response, but it also compromised their position. Justifying this increasing concern over political

involvement in social reform, Methodism newspapers would quote approvingly words like those of the Nonconformist Dr. Dale: "In Heaven, there is no poverty, no crime, which bad conditions have helped to create; there are no social wrongs to redress".⁴⁴

Changed attitudes towards the perceived scope of Government and technological developments have meant that the possibilities and expectations of social improvement have expanded. Similarly, in Methodism there have been theological developments which have paralleled this. Till the end of the nineteenth century, the spiritual was still seen as being more important than the social, but it was recognised that the social outworking of the Gospel had been neglected. A subsequent move from an "other worldly" to a "this worldly" perspective, has meant that the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven is seen in terms of social developments in this life rather than to do with in the life to come. In short, the trend has been towards accepting what were seen as social outworkings of the Gospel as the Gospel.

A similar theme was taken up by Norman in his 1978 Reith lectures. He pointed to the most remarkable change in the churches in recent decades as being the process of "politicization". He argued,

Politicization does not mean mere political activity...By the politicization of religion is meant the internal transformation of the faith itself, so that it comes to be defined in terms of political values- it becomes essentially concerned with social morality rather than with the ethereal qualities of immortality. Christianity today is, in this sense, being reinterpreted as a scheme of social and political action, dependent, it is true, upon supernatural authority for its ultimate claims to attention, but rendered in categories that are derived from the political theories and practices of contemporary society.⁴⁵

Norman's analysis does not deal primarily with Methodism, but to the extent that in Methodism, for example,

44. United Methodist, 23 May 1929

45. Edward R. Norman, Christianity and the World Order (Oxford: O.U.P., 1979), p. 2.

campaigns to combat racism or to promote human rights replace a belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, to that extent "politicization" has taken place. As Norman put it, "between a Christian knowledge of politics acquired in order to serve the interests of the church as an institution and the identification of the content of the faith with human attempts at social improvement, there is a fundamental difference". His critics have attacked the inability in practice of maintaining such a distinction, the lack of a clear alternative advanced by Norman and the potential consequences of seeking to follow his advice. In a sense, Norman was re-asserting the "no politics" rule, but the importance of his lectures is the way in which he has put his finger on the direction in which political attitudes in some of the Christian churches and in Methodism may be leading.⁴⁶

It is notable that Methodism has not made any great impact on the debates on the important political and economic issues of the period under study. This is not simply because such issues have only risen to preeminence in recent decades. They have always been important. The difference is that in this century the religious issues of the nineteenth century on which Methodists were united have lost significance, and therefore socio-economic issues have dominated the political stage all the more. However, matters of political organisation and economic policy were not those on which, initially at least, Methodism was able or willing to pronounce.

One criticism levelled both at Methodists and Nonconformists over their political attitudes in the nineteenth century has been that their approach was essentially negative. There is a genuine place for negative protest in order to check tendencies which, if unopposed, would result in a decline in moral values.⁴⁷ But it is also easier to identify and agree upon opposition

46. Ibid, p. 3, see Charles Elliott et al, Christian Faith and Political Hopes: A reply to E.R. Norman (London: Epworth, 1979).

47. E. Jordan, op.cit., p. 58.

to drunkenness and vice than it is to suggest and agree upon more positive aspects of social or economic policy.

Nonetheless, it has been a hallmark of the approach of Methodism to politics and political issues that it has been based on its understanding of the Christian faith. This has been termed the "moral" approach to politics, which through an emphasis on support for the Government and those in authority has issued in Wesleyan Toryism or, through a more aggressive attempt to ensure political issues are decided on considerations of morality, has resulted in the Nonconformist Conscience. Today, the Nonconformist Conscience tends to speak out either on matters of personal morality or on questions of social morality, and on both it is largely ignored.⁴⁸

Methodists and Political Parties

George Smith, the Cornish historian of Methodism, wrote in 1862, "Politics in their party meaning have no place in Methodism".⁴⁹ But outside the chapels, Methodists could and did support political parties. The picture usually painted begins with the Toryism of Wesley, which continued into the nineteenth century stifling a nascent Liberalism. This Liberalism found expression in the offshoots and secessions from Wesleyanism, and by about 1885 had come to dominate the Old Connexion, though a sizeable minority of Wesleyan Conservatives still existed, while in the twentieth century there was a substantial shift to the Labour Party.

The view of dominant Toryism in the early nineteenth century must be taken with a degree of caution. It must be remembered that the influence of quietism, at its strongest at this time, implies support for the existing order rather than support for Toryism. Nonetheless, it is true that the association of political radicalism with the French Revolution, Tom Paine and atheism, and the desire

48. B. Turner & M. Hill, op.cit., p.176; C. Driver, op.cit., p.8.

49. Quoted in C. Field, 'Methodism in Metropolitan London', p.300.

of Methodists to prove themselves loyal citizens, militated against support for political reform. Furthermore, it was in the early years of the nineteenth century that anti-Catholicism was the most potent political issue for Methodists. This proved in party terms a reason for supporting the Tory Ultras over Catholic Emancipation, but later on it led to the crossing of swords with Peel over the Maynooth Grant.⁵⁰

The evidence of Methodist political activity in Cornwall in the first half of the nineteenth century is slim and inconclusive. Methodists' political insignificance meant that their views were not reported. There is material from other studies to indicate that even Wesleyanism in this period contained a preponderance of liberal feeling in the years after the Great Reform Act. Vincent's analysis of the Methodist vote in pollbooks confirms this and in South Lindsey, Obelkevich found the balance among Wesleyans slightly inclined to the Liberals in the 1840's and 1850's. Currie has quoted the Boston Wesleyan who asserted in 1841 "FIFTEEN out of every TWENTY Methodists are favourable to a liberal government" and who argued that it was amongst a powerful group of Wesleyan ministers that Toryism had its stronghold in Methodism. This distinction between the views of the laity and the ministers is an important one.⁵¹

Taylor has argued that a correspondence exists between political allegiance and the attitude adopted by Methodists to the problems of Church government. In brief, if a Methodist held a high view of the ministry and believed in an authoritarian form of church government, he was likely to be a Tory in politics. If he held a lower view of the ministry and believed in a congregational form of church government, he was more likely politically to be a liberal. Hence, non-Wesleyan Methodists tended to be more outspokenly liberal than Wesleyans, although the history of nineteenth century Wesleyanism is the story of

50. E. Taylor, op.cit., p. 114; J. Kent, The Age of Disunity p.72.

51. J. Vincent, Pollbooks: How Victorians voted, pp. 69-70; J. Obelkevich, op.cit., p. 211; R. Currie, Methodism Divided, p. 49.

the successful infiltration into it of democratic ideas.⁵²

A weakness of this model is so far as Cornwall is concerned is that there were too many exceptions for this to be the rule. It happened, for instance, that the leading laymen in Cornish Wesleyanism defending its constitution at the time of the "Fly Sheets" controversy were also some of the county's leading Liberals. But there does seem to have been some positive correlation with Taylor's model.

In between the second and third Reform Acts, evidence can be found of politicians in Cornwall beginning to take notice of the chapel vote, and some attempts albeit unsuccessful, by Wesleyan Liberals to enter Parliament. In 1884 the canvass of West Cornwall by the Wesleyan Tory, Henry Atkinson, illustrated the Liberal predominance amongst Cornish Methodists in their response to his campaigning. It was notable too that many of the key positions in the local Liberal Party organisations were held by Methodists. Indeed, it was in the years following the Third Reform Act, when traditional influences had been curtailed but the mass electorate had not yet arrived, that Nonconformist political power was at its height. The chapel connexion provided both the potential bloc of voters and articulate activists who became, in Pelling's phrase, "the backbone of Liberalism in rural areas".⁵³

Bearing in mind the issues on which Methodism was united in entering the political arena, the ascendancy of Liberal politics in Methodism comes as no surprise. The close link, for instance, between the Church of England and the Conservative Party meant that the removal of the disabilities under which Nonconformists lived was only likely to come from the Liberal Party. As Vincent has pointed out, the 1851 Religious Census revealed that half the church-going population was Nonconformist. It was thus understandable for one of the two major political parties

52. E. Taylor, op.cit., pp. 13-17; see above p. 120-2

53. H. Pelling, op.cit., p. 173.

to become known as the party of the Nonconformist Conscience.⁵⁴ There remained a strong Anglican contingent in the Liberal Party, especially at the level of leadership, but Cornwall was an attractive proposition for outside candidates with good Nonconformist credentials.

Education was another issue on which the cleavage between Anglican and Nonconformist ran parallel with that of Conservative and Liberal, especially in the 1906 election. In the Victorian years, the association in the popular mind of the Conservative Party as warmongering Jingoës also drew Methodists, especially Bible Christians, into the Liberal camp. The Boer War, however, provoked both Methodists and Liberals to much heartsearching over its justification.

The temperance issue remained outside party politics until the 1870's when the Liberal Government passed a Licensing Bill, the effect of which was to cause the brewing interests to swing almost completely behind the Conservative Party. Although attempts were made to maintain the idea that the temperance lobby was still an independent pressure group, politically it was Hobson's choice. The overlap between Nonconformist, temperance and Liberal membership provided a strong link between each group.

Around the turn of the century, efforts were made to commit Methodists to specific legislative proposals on temperance and to put these same policies high on the Liberal Party agenda for action. However, Liberal leaders were wary of implementing temperance policy and those Methodists determined to vote Unionist did so in spite of the implication of Connexional temperance policy. The strength of temperance sentiment in Methodism is illustrated by the Liberal Wesleyan, Runciman, for whom one major stumbling block to his joining a Tory dominated

54. J. Vincent, The Formation of the British Liberal Party, p. 101

National Government in the 1930's was their association with the brewers.⁵⁵

It was also from the Liberal Party that advances in social reform were most likely to come in the Victorian era. There was a correlation between the individualism of laissez faire Liberalism and the individualism of evangelical Methodism. Furthermore, it must not be overlooked that socio-economic factors gave an additional impetus to some Methodists to vote Liberal. The increasing emphasis on class as a voting determinant in this century has had the effect of dividing the Methodist vote, but in Cornwall before the First World War the Labour Party had not made its entrance.

A final factor in the Nonconformist-Liberal link was the perception of the Liberal Party by Nonconformists as the one more likely to bring into the political arena a Christian dimension. Gladstone, though an Anglican, was revered by many Nonconformists because of his Christian convictions.⁵⁶ In Cornwall an examination of the reasons given in speeches as to why Methodists voted for one party rather than the other revealed that Methodist-Liberals were more likely than Methodist-Conservatives to justify their political convictions as an expression of their Christian faith.

The biggest threat to Liberal ascendancy in Methodist hearts came from the proposals to grant Irish Home Rule. This particularly affected Wesleyans as they were the most sensitive to the cry from their Irish brethren that "Home Rule means Rome Rule". A numerous body of Methodists were detached from Liberalism in this way, and together with local Whigs and some of the local incumbent M.P.s, they won several of the Cornish seats with Tory backing as Liberal Unionists. Some, but not all of the Methodist-Liberal Unionists returned to the Liberal fold over

55. Runciman Papers, W.R., 221; see also R. Moore, Pit-Men, Preachers and Politics, p. 160.

56. D. Bebbington, 'Gladstone and the Nonconformists', p. 382.

Balfour's Education Act. Liberal Unionism, however, was strong in Cornwall, not as Pelling suggested because St. Ives fishermen felt threatened by the prospect of a self-governing Ireland,⁵⁷ but because anti-Catholicism was a strong, longstanding element in Methodism and in Cornish society, which had no countervailing force.

There existed throughout the late Victorian and Edwardian years, a number of wealthy Methodists, mainly Wesleyans, typified by Sir George Smith, who were active Conservatives. The extent to which they reflected the opinions of ordinary Methodists remains problematic. After 1886 they were joined by those Methodists who opposed Irish Home Rule. The use made of such men at elections by the Conservatives at elections is evidence in the reaction they sometimes provoked from Methodist-Liberals that their numbers were small, but they were influential in Cornish society and powerful voices in Methodism. Their numerical smallness and the desire not to divide chapels on politics may explain why leading Cornish Methodist-Unionists, like Sir George Smith and R.G. Rows, never stood as parliamentary candidates, in spite of frequent invitations and rumours to the contrary.

Since the First World War, the confusion and division within the Liberal Party, the rise of Labour, in addition to the problems faced by Methodism itself, have all assisted in the disintegration of this established political alliance. Nonetheless, in Cornwall the traditional Methodist Liberal vote has been largely maintained. However, as the issues linking Methodists with Liberal policies declined, it has become a vote given out of habit rather than conviction. There is evidence of individual Nonconformists quitting the Liberals for the Labour Party, and of class emerging as the determinant of voting behaviour in the more industrialised areas of the county. The Conservatives, the main beneficiaries in seats of this division of the radical vote, have also gained from a trend, typified by Runciman at St. Ives,

57. H. Pelling, op.cit., p.173.

whereby some of the wealthier Methodist-Liberals have gravitated to Conservatism via National Liberalism.

The Liberals found that Nonconformity, hitherto one of the several groups supporting them before 1914, was one of the few continuing to do so after the First World War. In the inter-war years the Nonconformist vote was still considerable, particularly in Cornwall.⁵⁸ With the relentless fall in Methodist numbers, this has inevitably lost its electoral power, but the testimony of oral history points to the continuation of the Methodist-Liberal link even after the Second World War, though declining in recent years and increasingly associated with the older age groups. The role of Methodists was particularly important through the key posts they held in constituency parties, helping to sustain the Liberal Party through difficult years. In the recent revival of Liberalism in the county, Methodism has not been a significant factor.

The question must be asked as to how typical of Methodism as a whole Cornish Methodist political attitudes in these years have been. Butler and Stokes put forward the view that Methodists today were among those groups which showed "large Labour majorities", though in the context of their evidence Labour accounted for only 45% of the sample's partisan image. Field in his study of London Methodism argued that the Labour Party has captured the Methodist vote since 1932, but again, on his own evidence, support for the Liberal Party was as strong, if not stronger, than that for the Labour Party. Hill and Wakeford's survey, however, revealed strong blocs of Conservative and Liberal voters with Labour a poor third. Johnson could write of the popular view of the Methodist vote being predominantly Labour, "That this is a myth is angrily asserted by the Conservatives, reluctantly conceded by Labour, and indignantly proclaimed by most Methodists."⁵⁹

58. M. Kinnear, op.cit., pp. 125-9; see above, p.341.

59. D. Butler & D. Stokes, op.cit., p.156; C. Field, 'Methodism in Metropolitan London', pp. 317-20; M. Hill & P. Wakeford, op.cit., p. 24; R. Johnson, op.cit., p. 22.

It would seem, therefore, that the Methodist vote today is more evenly divided among the parties than has hitherto been believed. This finds some support in Miller's work. Seeking to isolate the political effect of the Wesleyan tradition, he notes that at every election between 1918 and October 1974 it was anti-Conservative. Until 1955 it was usually pro-Liberal, but after that it was pro-Labour. Compared with the effects of other branches of Nonconformity that of Wesleyanism was on the whole smaller.⁶⁰

There may be variations in the Methodist vote. In Cornwall, for instance, the weakness of the Labour Party, the land ownership pattern, rural environment and perhaps even the Radical legacy of the Bible Christians may mean that the Methodist-Liberal vote has remained proportionately stronger than elsewhere and the Methodist-Labour vote correspondingly smaller. The rise in the social class of Methodists increases the pressure on them to vote Conservative, but at the same time the rejection of class based politics by Methodism may in fact promote support of the Liberal party as the non-class Party (in spite of the cultivation by the Liberals of interests antithetical to those of the older school of Nonconformists-Liberal). Certainly, one needs to beware of an over-concentration on Primitive Methodist mining communities and to be suspicious of the representativeness of Methodism as a whole of Lord Soper's political preferences.

The equation under examination is therefore largely verified. Cornwall has been both a Methodist and a Liberal stronghold. In the county and in the country in the later Victorian and Edwardian years the two have walked hand in hand. In this century in Cornwall their paths have continued to run along a similar track, though elsewhere this has not been so apparent.

60. W. Miller, op. cit., pp. 177, 221.

RELIGION AND POLITICS

It is possible to identify six approaches to politics which have all been reflected at various times and in varying degrees in this study of Methodism and politics in Cornwall. They are not an exhaustive typology of religion and politics by any means, being most relevant to Nonconformist political attitudes, but others may be able to draw comparisons and contrasts with these changing political responses of Methodists.

(i) The first category is the deliberate and complete eschewing of politics because of the dictates of one's religion; in short, quietism. In sociological terms, the orientation of this religious approach is "other worldly", whereas politics are perceived to be "this worldly". Expressions such as "Here we have no abiding city", "Our citizenship is of Heaven" and "Our politics are the Gospel", hold sway, and suffering, persecution and hardship are accepted as in the will of God. Ultimate justice is envisaged as belonging to the world to come and impossible to establish in this age of fallen humanity. Obedience to authority is emphasised and religion is consequently a non-radical force in society.

Methodism, in Cornwall as elsewhere, was largely characterised by this approach in its early years and until the middle of the nineteenth century. It was a time when Methodism was drawing its converts largely from classes in society which were politically powerless, when politics were openly corrupt and when Wesley's helpers were strictly told, "You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore, spend and be spent in this work". It accounts for the failure of Methodists to take an active part in radical movements like Chartism. Furthermore, an examination of the lives of some of Cornish Methodism's leading characters reveals that political activity belonged to their pre-conversion days. Samuel Drew could speak of ceasing "to venture on the restless sea of politics", experiencing a "bliss of ignorance on political topics", while of William Carvosso it was said that nobody could

ever draw him aside to embark on "vain politics".⁶¹

This quietistic attitude has continued in Methodism in some circles. There is some evidence that after the passive resistance movement and the General Election of 1906, some Nonconformists reacted against this by opting out of politics. More recently, it is perhaps the deliberate choice of those who, given political rights, find it hard to choose between the political parties and, therefore, opt out of the process of voting. They perhaps adopt the view that "an election means taking one lot of sinners out and putting another lot in".⁶² This more recent form of quietism serves as a way out of political responsibility, based more on indifference, indecision and ignorance than on a theological foundation.

(ii) The second approach is one which is more often claimed than it is practised. It is the complete subordination of one's political views to one's religious views. It is the idea of religion giving one a complete "Weltanschauung" and totally governing one's approach to politics. It was possible for this view to lead to quietism, but those political views developing as the outworking of religious beliefs were usually held passionately and with moral fervour.

The Bible Christian minister who believed that God had as firmly called him to passive resistance as He had called his daughters to missionary service illustrated this view.⁶³ It was perhaps Wesley's approach. But the difficulty of this attitude, so far as Methodists were concerned, was that it often proved difficult to find or to agree upon a Christian view of a subject like economic policy. Hence, this meant that Methodists as Methodists only entered the political arena haphazardly in the middle of the nineteenth century, when the issue could be clearly defined in moral or religious terms.

Notions of liberty and equality based on theological

61. J. Wesley, Works, viii, p. 310; J. Drew, op.cit., pp. 102-3; W. Carvosso, op.cit., p. 25.

62. E. Jordan, op.cit., p. 112.

63. J. Munson, op.cit., p. 140.

beliefs in some cases filled in these more obvious gaps in political opinions. Thus, the priesthood of all believers spelled opposition to Popery and Episcopacy and equality of all in God's sight encouraged support for political reform and for the amelioration of the lots of the poor. However, the evangelical nature of Methodism, with its belief in the Fall, limited Methodists' political expectations. As the Methodist Recorder put it after the 1906 election, "We have sufficient knowledge of political human nature to prevent us from thinking that the return of the Liberal Party to power is the first scene in the great spectacle of the Millenium".⁶⁴

(iii) The most common relationship between religion and politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a relaxed version of this second approach. It was a compromise. One's Methodism determined attitudes to matters like temperance or relating to Nonconformist grievances. Issues, like economic policy, were governed by other factors; socio-economic class, self-interest or whatever. This helps to explain the strength of Liberal politics amongst those classes in society who were largely Nonconformists and who gained most, for instance, from free trade. While for many the overlapping of self-interest and religious conviction reinforced the link between Nonconformity and Liberalism, for others, like the Wesleyan Conservatives, it strengthened their divergence from the Methodist norm. This was the solution to the problem of how to approach politics when Methodism itself was unable to give clear guidance on a subject and on those occasions when it had two different answers to the same question, as, for instance over Irish Home Rule.

One explanation of this in the case of Methodism, or any non-Anglican body which is in a minority, refers to the additional cultural effect which Methodism served of nurturing community. Hence, issues which were seen as badges of membership (for example, temperance for nineteenth century Methodist and pacifism for Quakers) are deemed of great significance, while other issues, like economic ones, are not matters of common testimony or agreement and people

are left with only a few very vague and non-binding guidelines. The more Church-like Methodism becomes, the fewer and less significant are these badges of membership, especially in areas away from belief.

(iv) This is even more evident in the fourth attitude where religion and politics are completely compartmentalized, so that the two do not consciously influence each other. It differs from quietism in that it is not a withdrawal from politics. It has been largely a phenomenon of the twentieth century, notably since the Second World War, although some Methodist Conservatives in the nineteenth century voiced this view. Henry Atkinson, for instance, in his canvassing of West Cornwall in 1884 specifically justified his views on these grounds.⁶⁵

In more recent days, David Mudd, the Conservative member for Falmouth-Camborne since 1970, openly admits that there is no link between his Methodism and his politics. Nor does he seek to find a connexion or think one is necessary.⁶⁶ This view is encouraged by the fact that religious and moral issues are no longer partisan in the same sense as they were in the late nineteenth century and it is perhaps sometimes the product of apathy towards political involvement and nominalism in belief. It may also be a response to an increasingly "secularised" society.

(v) The very importance of religion in Victorian politics meant that in a few cases the suspicion emerges that political factors were governing their religion. This occurs mainly amongst parliamentary candidates. In these cases, religious belief seems to have been nominal, perhaps by birthright membership, and influenced by the desirability in a Nonconformist stronghold of being seen in chapel on Sundays or of being seen as orthodox in belief. Porrit noted in the 1906 election, "Men who had always relied on

65. C.R.O., DDPV (290), 27.

66. M.R., 10 March 1977; cf. Correspondence, Mr. E. Sara, 30 May 1978.

their wives' church membership to get them into heaven woke up to the political advantage of the moment of having some slender link with Methodism or Congregationalism or Presbyterianism".⁶⁷

An example of this in Cornwall was the Labour candidate for Camborne in the 1930's who allowed his Cornish agent to persuade him to attend a chapel for the sake of appearances. An earlier example of a candidate's political opportunism in the 1890's was recorded in the Western Independent: "A Wesleyan divine came to Camborne in the course of the election and gave an address on the Armenia atrocities. Next day this poster appeared on the walls, "Vote for Strauss, who will help you to save Armenia".⁶⁸

Sometimes, however, it was not the candidate who made the running. A few months prior to the 1906 election, the Methodist trustees of the chapel at Mousehole, seeking to instal stained glass windows, wrote to the incumbent M.P. and adopted candidates in St. Ives, "Now, Sir, if you would like to place a window in this Church, or in any way help this good work, the Trustees will feel deeply indebted to you; and will remember with gratitude your gift in days to come". It displayed, as the author of the chapel history put it, "a degree of political acuteness".⁶⁹

(vi) The sixth and final category has developed as the political outworking of liberal theology and the Social Gospel. It marks the success in Methodism of the "this worldly" view over the "other worldly". It is the antithesis of quietism for it argues with Rattenbury that, "If there were more spirituality there would be more politics". The aim of this approach is the establishment of what is described as the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

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67. Arthur Porritt, The Best J. Remember (London: Cassell, 1922), p. 521.
 68. Correspondence, Prof. H. Greaves, 27 May 1979; Western Independent, 15 July 1945.
 69. J.J. Beckerlegge, Two Hundred years of Methodism in Mousehold (1954), p. 20.

The means of achieving this aim is through peaceful, political evolution. Its adherents, like Lord Soper, tend to see the Labour Party as the potential vehicle to accomplish their aims, or at least as the most promising political alternative.⁷⁰ This mixing of religious and political conviction gives to its adherents a moral passion in fighting for their cause, akin to that of the traditional Nonconformist Conscience.

This twentieth century development has rephrased the expression "Our politics are the Gospel" into reading "Politics is our Gospel". Perhaps it is an extension of this which Norman was attacking as "politicization" in his Reith lectures. It could only emerge when Methodist theology had moved from its original evangelical basis to a more liberal stance. Thus, paradoxically Methodism today is at its most politically-minded at the same time as it is declining in numerical strength.⁷¹

John Fletcher of Madeley once shrewdly observed, "Christian politics are a branch of divinity too much attended to by some and too much neglected by others".⁷² These categories highlight the truth of Fletcher's statement and the widely differing responses of Methodists to politics. They illustrate, too, the complex interweaving of religion and politics in society and the difficulties encountered in disentangling such a relationship. This study is a contribution to the unravelling of one corner of that web.

70. M.T., 11 January 1910; D. Soper, op.cit., p. 109.

71. E. Norman, op.cit., p. 2.

72. M.R., 18 January 1906.

APPENDIX I

METHODIST MEMBERSHIP FIGURES FOR CORNWALL 1851-1969

This Appendix is intended to give an indication of the changing strength of Methodism in Cornwall. Figures for the period from 1814 to 1857 can be found in the work of M.S. Edwards¹ and Rule² gives the Cornish Wesleyan membership from 1768 to 1798. In 1969, the annual membership returns were replaced by the Triennial statistics. These figures have been compiled from the Minutes of Conference of the various branches of Methodism and are of full members only.

Notional figures of the strength of Methodism in the county have been built up by including all the Cornish circuits and some of the circuits which overlap the Tamar boundary. A circuit has been deemed Cornish if its main centre is in Cornwall, and Devonian if its centre is in Devon. The problem is a comparatively small one as it only exists on one border of the county. Furthermore, it is often the case that the centre of the circuit contains the largest chapel and congregation in the circuit.

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1. M.S. Edwards, Cornish Methodism: a study in divisions 1814-1857, pp. 246 ff.
 2. J. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall', p. 217.

(i) 1851 - 1907

	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860
U.M.F.C. ³	3095	3065	2769	2698	2685	3213	3721	3912	4380	4719
P.M.	1879	1829	1741	1704	1668	2059	2083	2187	2292	2479
M.N.C.	132	108	116	130	123	135	125	175	243	223
B.C.	6445	6178	5682	6260	6068	7525	7129	7789	8382	8578
Non.Wes.	11551	11180	10308	10792	10544	12932	13058	14065	15297	15999
Wes.	23346	21194	19972	19042	18018	18682	19359	19717	21196	22792
TOTAL	34897	32374	30280	29834	28562	31614	32417	33780	36493	38791
	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870
U.M.F.C.	5043	5161	5376	5377	5283	5398	5299	5171	5128	4892
P.M.	2420	2702	2818	2942	2936	2808	2681	2705	2442	2437
M.N.C.	445	939	1099	1001	1048	991	909	993	928	928
B.C.	8217	9413	9546	9490	9394	9144	9081	9170	8796	8571
Non.Wes.	16125	18215	18839	18810	18661	18341	17970	18039	17294	16828
Wes.	23173	23903	25292	25143	24887	24538	23477	23292	24120	23206
TOTAL	39298	42118	44131	43953	43548	42879	41447	41331	41414	40034
	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880
U.M.F.C.	4889	4775	4699	4420	4726	4673	5238	4900	4702	4554
P.M.	2417	2395	2494	2517	2462	2686	2856	2894	2709	2483
M.N.C.	645	487	550	539	533	498	510	520	458	443
B.C.	8588	8927	8618	8347	8339	9125	9526	9047	8287	8571
Non.Wes.	16539	16584	16361	15823	16060	16982	18130	17361	16156	16051
Wes.	22387	22618	22786	22203	22550	22243	23883	23273	22643	21844
TOTAL	38926	39202	39147	38026	38610	39225	42013	40634	38799	37895
	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890
U.M.F.C.	4582	4758	4955	4847	4828	4755	4679	4705	4744	4905
P.M.	2424	2402	2391	2277	2291	2273	2114	2051	1996	1960
M.N.C.	424	473	439	440	364	394	411	377	374	399
B.C.	8732	9473	9316	9152	8740	8840	8950	8900	8857	8752
Non.Wes.	16162	17106	17101	16716	16223	16262	16154	16033	15971	16016
Wes.	22499	23387	24131	23872	23352	23119	22445	22364	22875	22910
TOTAL	38661	40493	41232	40588	39575	39381	38599	38397	38846	38926

3. from 1851 to 1856 the U.M.F.C. figure is that of the W.M.A.

	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1890
U.M.F.C.	4919	4913	4861	4837	4888	4814	4911	4967	4973	4960
P.M.	1949	1923	1987	2011	1978	1934	1810	1733	1648	1585
M.N.C.	397	430	433	447	434	377	360	374	369	372
B.C.	8978	8773	8953	9217	9220	9180	9477	9391	9424	9293
Non.Wes.	16243	16039	16234	16512	16520	16305	16558	16465	16414	16210
Wes.	22656	22732	22096	22072	21987	21246	21283	21382	21076	21435
TOTAL	38899	38771	38330	38584	38507	37551	37841	37847	37490	37645

	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907
U.M.F.C.	4840	5035	5049	5061	5008	5130	5021
P.M.	1580	1580	1601	1597	1585	1675	1624
M.N.C.	340	338	352	360	384	395	380
B.C.	9394	9349	9419	9704	9969	10111	10124
Non.Wes.	16154	16302	16421	16722	16946	17311	17149
Wes.	21318	21622	21543	21151	21098	22100	22016
TOTAL	37472	37924	37964	37873	38044	39411	39165

(ii) 1907 - 1932

	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916
U.M.C.	15515	15132	14903	14427	13854	13046	13034	12986	12741	12309
P.M.	<u>1624</u>	<u>1640</u>	<u>1577</u>	<u>1646</u>	<u>1673</u>	<u>1639</u>	<u>1631</u>	<u>1579</u>	<u>1552</u>	<u>1499</u>
Non.Wes.	17139	16772	16480	16073	15527	14685	14665	14565	14293	13808
Wes.	<u>22016</u>	<u>21548</u>	<u>21255</u>	<u>20997</u>	<u>20470</u>	<u>19992</u>	<u>19813</u>	<u>19720</u>	<u>19714</u>	<u>19514</u>
TOTAL	39155	38320	37735	37070	35997	34677	34478	34285	34007	33322

	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926
U.M.C.	12239 ⁴	12034	11734	11476 ⁴	11426	11590	11624	11823	11852	11869
P.M.	<u>1465</u>	<u>1403</u>	<u>1402</u>	<u>1360</u>	<u>1251</u>	<u>1240</u>	<u>1264</u>	<u>1273</u>	<u>1193</u>	<u>1199</u>
Non.Wes.	13704	13437	13136	12836	12677	12830	12888	13096	13045	13068
Wes.	<u>19206</u>	<u>19208</u>	<u>18914</u>	<u>18444</u>	<u>18104</u>	<u>17907</u>	<u>17960</u>	<u>18183</u>	<u>18411</u>	<u>18468</u>
TOTAL	32910	32645	32050	31280	30781	30737	30848	31279	31456	31536

	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932
U.M.C.	11914	11911	11847	11755	11727	11681
P.M.	<u>1243</u>	<u>1214</u>	<u>1193</u>	<u>1159</u>	<u>1080</u>	<u>1063</u>
Non.Wes.	13157	13125	13040	12914	12807	12744
Wes.	<u>18264</u>	<u>18048</u>	<u>17641</u>	<u>17306</u>	<u>17078</u>	<u>16820</u>
TOTAL	31421	31173	30681	30220	29885	29564

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4. The figures for the U.M.C. membership are incomplete for the Cornish circuits in the Plymouth and East Cornwall District in 1917 and 1920. The figures for the previous year have been substituted instead.

(iii) 1932-1969

	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941
Plymouth D.	9097	9058	8950	8931	8833	8680	8621	8529	--	--
Cornwall D.	<u>20539</u>	<u>20638</u>	<u>20576</u>	<u>19508</u>	<u>19736</u>	<u>19495</u>	<u>19170</u>	<u>19042</u>	<u>18798</u>	<u>18275</u>
TOTAL	29636	29696	29526	28439	28569	28175	27791	27571	--	--
	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951
Plymouth D.	--	--	--	--	7992	7940	7795	7669	7613	7621
Cornwall D.	<u>18011</u>	<u>17872</u>	<u>17720</u>	<u>17357</u>	<u>17276</u>	<u>17204</u>	<u>17071</u>	<u>17139</u>	<u>17256</u>	<u>17059</u>
TOTAL	--	--	--	--	25268	25144	24866	24808	24869	24680
	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
Plymouth D.	7559	7584	7602	7580	7606	7597	2792 ⁵	2777	2767	2749
Cornwall D.	<u>16990</u>	<u>16920</u>	<u>16968</u>	<u>17034</u>	<u>16886</u>	<u>16985</u>	<u>21700</u>	<u>21706</u>	<u>21718</u>	<u>21667</u>
TOTAL	24549	24504	24570	24614	24492	24582	24492	24483	24485	24416
	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969		
Plymouth D.	2754	2634	2611	2596	2545	2508	2461	2424		
Cornwall D.	<u>21271</u>	<u>21257</u>	<u>20924</u>	<u>20659</u>	<u>20469</u>	<u>20226</u>	<u>19886</u>	<u>19575</u>		
TOTAL	24025	23891	23535	23255	23014	22734	22347	21999		

5. In 1957/8 the circuits and districts were rearranged. A number of Cornish circuits in the Plymouth District were transferred to the Cornwall District and the Plymouth and Exeter Districts were joined together.

APPENDIX II.

Details of the survey of Cornish parliamentary candidates and M.P.s.

In the spring of 1979, a postal survey was undertaken of former parliamentary candidates for Cornish seats. Each candidate was asked to comment on the basis of their experience on :

- (i) the existence or otherwise of a "chapel vote".
- (ii) any evidence of the strong attachment of Cornish Methodists to any particular party.
- (iii) any evidence of a distinctively "Methodist" attitude or approach to politics.
- (iv) any issues to which Methodists were particularly sensitive.
- (v) the reasons for the comparative strength of Liberalism and weakness of the Labour Party in Cornwall.

Those not responding to the first reply were sent a second letter in the summer of 1980. Approximately 10% of those for whom addresses were found failed to respond at all. Those listed below kindly participated in the survey. An asterisk denotes that the respondent was also interviewed.

- Comr. Sir Peter Agnew (Con. M.P. for Camborne, 1931-50).
- The Lord Banks (L. cand. for St. Ives, 1955).
- Mr. Peter Bessell (L. M.P. for Bodmin, 1964-70).
- Hon. Robert Boscawen* (Con. cand. for Falmouth-Camborne, 1964, 1966).
- Mrs. Rosemary Brown (Con. cand. for Truro, 1979).
- Mr. A.G.S.T. Davey (L. cand. for Falmouth-Camborne 1970, 1974(F), Ind. Liberal cand. for same seat, 1974(O)).
- Mr. Simon Day (Con. cand. for North Cornwall, 1970).
- Mr. Jeremy Faull (Ecology cand. for North Cornwall, 1979).
- The Lord Foot* (L. cand. for Bodmin, 1945, 1950).

- Mrs. Trixie Gardner (Con. cand. for North Cornwall, 1974(F)).
- Mr. John Gorst (Con. cand. for Bodmin 1966).
- Prof. H.R.G. Greaves* (Lab. cand. for Camborne, 1935).
- Mr. Robert Hicks (Con. M.P. for Bodmin, 1970-74(F),
1974(O) -).
- Mr. William Hosking* (L. cand. for Truro, 1964, 1966).
- Hon. Greville Howard (Con. M.P. for St. Ives, 1950-66).
- Mr. Richard Jenkin* (M.K. cand. for Falmouth-Camborne, 1970).
- Mr. Evelyn King (Lab. M.P. for Penryn-Falmouth, 1945-50).
- Mr. David Mudd* (Con. M.P. for Falmouth-Camborne, 1970-).
- Mr. Gerry Neale (Con. M.P. for North Cornwall, 1979-).
- Mr. Nigel Nicolson (Con. cand. for Falmouth-Camborne, 1951).
- Rt. Hon. John Nott (Con. M.P. for St. Ives, 1966-).
- Mr. John Pardoe* (L. M.P. for North Cornwall, 1966-79).
- Mr. David Penhaligon* (L. M.P. for Truro, 1974(O)-).
- Mr. Maurice Petherick (Con. M.P. for Penryn-Falmouth,
1931-45).
- Mr. Stuart Roseveare* (L. cand. for Bodmin, 1951, 1955).
- Dr. A.L. Rowse (Lab. cand. for Penryn-Falmouth, 1931, 1935).
- Mr. Edward Sara (L. cand. for Falmouth-Camborne, 1974(O)).
- Mr. Reginald Scott (Lab. cand. for Truro, , 1966).
- Mr. James Scott-Hopkins (Con. M.P. for North Cornwall,
1959-66).
- Baroness Seear (L. cand. for Truro, 1955, 1959).
- Sqdn. Ldr. Denis Shipwright (Con. M.P. for Penryn-Falmouth,
1922-23).
- Rt. Hon. Peter Shore (Lab. cand. for St. Ives, 1950).
- Mr. Michael Steed (L. cand. for Truro, 1970).
- Miss Alison Tennant (Con. cand. for Falmouth-Camborne, 1959).
- Mr. John Trewin* (L. cand. for St. Ives, 1966).
- Mr. Paul Tyler (L.M.P. for Bodmin, 1974(F)-1974(O)).
- Dr. James Whetter (M.K. cand. for Truro, 1974(F), 1974(O),
C.N.P. cand. for Truro, 1979).
- Rev. Dr. Malcolm White* (Lab. cand. for Truro, 1974(F)).
- Mr. Gerald Whitmarsh (L.cand. for Truro, 1950, and L. cand.
for St. Ives, 1959, 1964).
- Mr. A.M. Williams (Con. M.P. for North Cornwall, 1924-29).
- Lady. Wright* (Con. M.P. for Bodmin 1941-45).

APPENDIX III.

Schedule of interviews undertaken during the research.¹

- Mr. Ralph Bennett (Methodist, Treasurer of North Cornwall Liberals, 1952-9). 27 April, 1977, Newquay.
- Canon H. Miles Brown (Cornish Church historian).
1 September 1977, St. Winnow, Cornwall
- Mr. Malcolm Brown (Liberal election agent, Truro).
1 August 1979, Truro.
- Mr. H.L. Douch (Curator, Truro Museum and the Royal Institution of Cornwall). 22 December 1976, Truro.
- Rt. Hon. Michael Foot (son of Isaac Foot).
2 January 1979, London.
- Rev. A.B. Franklin (Methodist minister, former Chairman of the Cornwall District). March 1978, Truro.
- Mr. Stanley Goodman (nephew of Isaac Foot).
30 August 1977, Plymouth.
- Rev. Ian Haile (Methodist minister, Chairman of the Cornwall District). 11 February 1981, Truro.
- Mr. F.L. Harris (Methodist, County Councillor).
15 September 1977, Truro.
- Mr. T.R. Harris (Methodist local preacher, local historian).
16 March 1978, Camborne.
- Mr. and Mrs. C.T. Harvey (Methodists, both former Secretaries for social responsibility in the Cornwall District). 30 July 1979, Camborne.
- Mr. Michael Hawkey (Labour election agent, St. Ives).
24 July 1979, Truro.
- Mr. J.S. Hurst (Senior Staff Tutor, Dept. of Extra Mural Studies, Univ. of Exeter) 7 September 1977, Truro.
- Mr. Gary Hobbs (Methodist local preacher, Labour candidate for Exeter, 1979). 20 June 1979, Harrowbarrow Cornwall.

1. this excludes those referred to in Appendix II.

- Miss Vera Jago (Conservative divisional secretary, Bodmin, 1928-60). 21 June 1977, Liskeard.
- Rev. Dr. John Kent (Professor, Dept. of Theology & Religious Studies, Univ. of Bristol). 10 February 1978, Bristol.
- Mr. Roger Kirkup (Liberal, co-author of short history of Cornish Liberalism). 22 April 1977, Plymouth.
- Mr. C.E. Leese (Liberal, retired Cornish schoolmaster). 24 June 1977, Oxford.
- Rev. R.H. Luke (Methodist minister, former Chairman of the Cornwall District. 2 September 1977, St. Breward, Cornwall.
- Mr. Norman Lyne (County Councillor, son of A. Browning Lyne, Methodist-Liberal proprietor of the Cornish Guardian). 5 May 1977, St. Mabyn, Cornwall.
- Mr. G. Pawley White (Methodist local preacher, founder member of M.K.). 31 July 1979, Camborne.
- Miss H. Platt (Secretary of the Cromwell Association founded by Isaac Foot). 8 August 1978, Reigate, Surrey.
- Mr. John Probert (Methodist, Cornish Methodist historian and archivist). 13 September 1977, Redruth.
- Dr. John Rowe (Cornish historian, Senior Lecturer, School of History, Univ. of Liverpool). 4 May 1978, 10 May 1979, Liverpool.
- Rev. Thomas Shaw (Methodist minister, Cornish Methodist historian) 5 May, 12 September 1977, St. Columb Major, Cornwall.
- Prof. Charles Thomas (Director, Institute of Cornish Studies). 16 March 1978, Pool, Cornwall.
- Mr. A. Venning (editor of the Cornish & Devon Post, Launceston borough archivist). 27 April 1977, Launceston.
- Mr. D.C. Vosper (Methodist-Liberal, chapel historian). 18 June 1979, Saltash.
- Rev. R.K. Walker (Superintendent minister, Methodist Central Hall, Plymouth). 19 June 1979, Plymouth
- Mr. G. Webster (former Liberal agent, Truro, Bodmin & Plymouth). 21 June 1979, Bodmin.

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- A. Manuscript Collections.
- B. Official Papers.
- C. Newspapers and Periodicals.
- D. Works of Reference.
- E. Contemporary Sources.
- F. Biographies.
- G. Secondary Authorities.
- H. Articles.
- I. Theses.

A. Manuscript Collections.

- (i) In Libraries, Museums, Record Offices and private collections.
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- Basset Papers : C.R.O., Truro (C.R.O., AD 55).
- Bickford-Smith Papers : by courtesy of Mr. P. Bickford-Smith.
- Camborne Conservative & Unionist Association, Records of the : by courtesy of the Falmouth & Camborne Unionist Association. (C.R.O., DDX 387).
- Campbell-Bannerman Papers : British Museum.
- Courtney Papers : British Library of Political & Economic Science.
- Cromwell Association, Records of the : by courtesy of Miss H. Platt.
- Falmouth Conservative Association, Records of the : Cornwall County Library. (C.R.O., DDX 394/90).
- Foot Papers : by courtesy of Lord Caradon & Lord Foot.
- Vis. Gladstone Papers : British Museum.
- W.E. Gladstone Papers : British Museum.
- Greaves Papers : by courtesy of the late Prof. Greaves.
- Hanson Papers : by courtesy of Sir John Hanson.
- Horniman Papers : Horniman Museum, London.
- Independent Order of Rechabites, Records of the : by courtesy of the District Secretary, Devon & Cornwall District. (C.R.O., DDX 472).
- Maclean Papers : Bodleian Library.
- W.A. McArthur Papers : C.R.O., Truro. (C.R.O., AD 366).
- National Liberal Club Papers : University of Bristol Library.
- North Cornwall Unionist Association, Records of the : by courtesy of North Cornwall Conservative Association. (C.R.O., DDX 381).
- Pendarves Vivian Papers : by courtesy of Mr. H. Graham Vivian & C.R.O., Truro (C.R.O., DDPV 8 & DDPV (290)).
- E.W. Rashleigh Papers : by courtesy of Mr. P.S. Rashleigh of Stoketon. (C.R.O., DDR(S)).
- Rashleigh Papers : by courtesy of Mr. Philip Rashleigh of Menabilly. (C.R.O., DDR.).
- Runciman Papers : University of Newcastle Library.
- Rundell Papers : by courtesy of Mrs. Lamer (C.R.O., DDX 415/2).
- South East Cornwall Unionist Association, Records of the : by courtesy of the South-East Cornwall Conservative & Unionist

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(ii) Local Methodist Collections.

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