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ABSTRACT

Bishop Hensley Henson and the Post-War Social Problem 1918-1926

Patricia Lyons Van Dyke in Candidacy for the Degree
of Master of Arts, University of Durham, 1991

Upon examination of the Church of England during the period after the Great War, one cannot help but notice the internal division which existed amongst Churchmen. This discord was especially apparent as the Church attempted to aid in the mitigation of the social problems created by industrialism in the nineteenth century, and highlighted by the political divisions and economic depression of the post-war years.

This study examines the Church's struggle to answer the social questions of the period. It traces the development of prevailing social thought from the mid-nineteenth century through the First World War and examines the movements within the Church which attempted to aid in the cure of the ills experienced by the industrial working-classes. It then studies the Church as it emerged from the war and dissects the programmes and policies which best reflected dominant social thinking.

More specifically, this study examines one Churchman, Hensley Henson, and his criticisms of the prevailing social thought within the Church. Henson's criticisms of specific programmes are studied in depth in order that we might better understand the assumptions behind his views as they had developed into a manifesto for dissenting social attitudes in the 1920s. It is in such a study that we are able to uncover the theological, ecclesiastical, and intellectual contributions of one of the most prominent leaders of dissenting thought within the Church during the post-war period.

Most importantly, this thesis examines the range of internal division in a specific area within the Church of England as it struggled with the pressures placed upon it by the external post-war world.

BISHOP HENSLEY HENSON AND THE POST-WAR SOCIAL PROBLEM
1918-1926

PATRICIA LYONS VAN DYKE

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

1991

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- 8 SEP 1992

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INTRODUCTION

In studying the Church of England and its handling of social issues as it emerged from the Great War, one cannot help but notice its internal divisions. This discord hampered much of the potential development of coherent proposals and programmes by the National Church to help mitigate the social problems created by the nineteenth century industrial system and exacerbated by the economic depression and political divisions of the post-war years.

Through this internal division, one man emerged as a voice from outside the predominant circles - always questioning the theology, the secular assumptions, and the conclusions of the prevailing social thought among the Church hierarchy. Hensley Henson was a clergyman who was desperately loyal, perhaps not in a conventional way, to a Church which had found itself muddled in change after the Great War. This loyalty made him feel a deep obligation to speak for those who were not heard in upper Church circles. As he wrote in 1926:

The Archbishop of Canterbury ever maintains that I express the lay mind in an unusual degree, and carry more influence among the ordinary lay folk than other ecclesiasticks. On the whole, I think, this is probably true; but then ordinary lay folk have ceased to count in the Church of England.¹

Henson saw himself as a spokesman for the laity who

¹ Hensley Henson Journals, vol. 40 (28 April 1926), Dean and Chapter Library, Durham, p. 195.

wanted their clergymen to possess the intellectual liberties for which he fought. This became particularly obvious when, after six years, he left the Durham Deanery in 1917 to take up the Bishopric of Hereford. The controversy surrounding Lloyd George's appointment of Henson to the see of Hereford, referred to by Owen Chadwick in his memoir of Henson as sending "an armoured car into an orchard of apple trees",¹ foreshadowed Henson's future role in the Church. Henson, a gifted writer and orator, had in lectures, in sermons and in print, flaunted his liberal theological disbelief of the miracles - generally considered to be central to the Apostles' Creed - on the Virgin Birth of Jesus and His Bodily Resurrection. In doing so, Henson stood for the right of other members of the Church to question, and even deny, earlier Church dogma and yet continue to hold offices as priests in the Church of England. His actions caused uproar amongst Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals alike. They perhaps felt shocked by Henson's modernist interpretations - believing that if he were made a bishop, his views might be regarded as the official teaching of the Church. For Henson, the controversy over his promotion was the start of an isolation which he felt throughout his career as a bishop.

The controversy also confirmed his dislike and distrust of a group of High Churchmen who believed that the New Testament alone held the answers to the post-war

¹ Owen Chadwick, Hensley Henson: A Study of Friction Between Church and State (Oxford, 1983), p. 133.

social questions: the Christian Socialists. As seen especially in his private writings, Henson often prejudged this group and their activities because, in contrast, he was certain that the New Testament held only part of the solution. Answers to the social issues facing British society following the Great War, Henson believed, could only be found by combining knowledge derived from secular experience with New Testament ideals. This disagreement proved to be one which played a major role in Henson's views on prevailing Church social policy from 1918.

A generation earlier the problems facing the Church were due mainly to external pressures. Disestablishment and disendowment hung heavily on the minds of many within the Church in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Both of these had arisen from State and public pressure to weaken the power of the National Church.

The Great War, however, caused a large amount of introspection amongst the different circles of thought within the Church with regard to social issues. The questions they asked were simple, but the thought and discussion which they produced was extensive and forced Churchmen to question the Church's role in post-war society.

The perils of the Church of England are no longer from without, but from within. Can it vindicate its own authority over the anarchic tendencies within its pale? Can it maintain its sane and sober conception of truth and duty against the tide of superstition and immorality

which is sweeping over Christendom in the wake of the Great War? Can it again win the audience of the English people for Christianity?¹

In the three questions Henson asked, he outlined his alarm about the problems facing the Church of England in the immediate post-war years. These fears, as will be illustrated, greatly influenced Henson's own attitudes towards the post-war social issues, and appear constantly when one reviews Henson's criticisms of different programmes and policies within the Church. Firstly, Henson pointed to the 'anarchic tendencies' within the Church. Here he meant especially the Anglo-Catholic faction, whose influence rose steadily and reached a pinnacle during the post-war period. Secondly, he hinted that he believed that 'superstition and immortality' were overrunning the fundamentals of Christian civilization. The threat to Christendom was something which Henson believed would cause the destabilization of human nature, leading ultimately to the collapse of civilized society as it had developed in Western Christendom. These threats arose from forces within society which had gained a greater following since the end of the war. For Henson, the rise of trade unions, the influence of the Labour party, and the ensuing industrial disputes all seemed to foreshadow a revolution. Consequently, he distrusted those clergymen who sympathized with the cause of Labour. Thirdly, Henson asked if the Church could

¹ Hensley Henson, Quo Tendimus? The Primary Charge Delivered at His Visitation to the Clergy of His Diocese in November 1924. (London, 1924), p. 133.

retain its status as the National Church in the face of such upheaval within society. In order to do so, the Church would have to win back the support of the English people, many of whom had begun to abandon it prior to the war. It would be unable to do this, however, if it let itself be swept up by the same despair and disillusionment which the rest of the country was experiencing. The Church, Henson believed, must therefore stand above the rest of the country and act as its moral and spiritual pillar as it faced the hard facts brought on by the post-war economic, political and social situation.

The years between 1918 and 1926 provide profound insights into the development of Henson's attitudes towards the Church's handling of social issues. In 1918, the committees of the National Mission of Hope and Repentance published their reports. These reports, especially the Fifth Report entitled "Christianity and Industrial Problems", set a course for the Church leaders to follow as they developed attitudes, pastoral messages and policies on social issues in the post-war period. It was during these years that Henson developed his theological, ecclesiastical, moral, political, economic and social ideas into a coherent doctrine on social issues.

This doctrine of Henson's was severely and painfully tested by the General Strike of 1926 which seemed to be the culmination of disillusionment and despair experienced by many in Britain after the Great War. Not

only were Henson's principles placed on trial by the General Strike; so were those of the rest of the Church. Henson's position provides invaluable assistance in evaluating the Church's actions throughout the General Strike in light of the social gospel which had become the Church's major influence in the area of social reform. For it is in examining Henson's criticism of the predominant Church thought on social questions that one is best able to dissect that body of thought.

Henson's writings, both public and private, have previously been studied and analysed in relation to the postwar social issues. John Oliver presented Henson as a preacher of melancholy - a "redoubtable conservative" whose "gloomy" and "disagreeably cynical" nature kept him from agreeing with the programmes and policies put forward by Christian Socialists after the war.¹ Where Oliver used Henson to measure dissenting thought, Edward Norman used him to explain where the prevailing thought on social issues went astray.² Norman's thorough research of Henson allowed him to write a fairer evaluation of Henson's views on social issues. Adrian Hastings also attempted to evaluate Henson, but here, as with Oliver, Henson's surface was merely scraped.³ Unlike Norman who pointed out the complications of the theology behind Henson's views, neither Hastings nor Oliver gave much

¹ John Oliver, The Church and Social Order. Social Thought in the Church of England 1918-1939 (London, 1968).

² E.R. Norman, Church and Society in England 1770-1970 (Oxford, 1976).

³ Adrian Hastings, A History of English Christianity 1920-1985 (London, 1987).

attention to his basic assumptions. All of these men, however, were hindered in their study of Henson by the breadth of their own topics.

Henson deserves more thought and consideration than the above mentioned were able to give him. Owen Chadwick's memoir of Henson does this, but fails, like the others, to address Henson's assumptions. Chadwick was sympathetic to Henson's loneliness and isolation in the Church. He emphasized this point so often that he seemed, at times, to lose track of Henson's theological, moral, and ecclesiastical principles. Chadwick spent much effort describing the changes in Henson's views during his early career, which he did in a comprehensive manner, but this description softens Henson's antagonistic character which was one of his most powerful traits. His appreciation for these changes in Henson's youth and early career allowed Chadwick to illustrate Henson as a more human character - something which is lacking in the others who wrote about Henson.

Henson is probably best understood through careful examination of his autobiography.¹ This gave him the opportunity to explain the confusion, loneliness and humility which accompanied his younger years and strongly affected his adulthood. It also enabled Henson to illustrate the confusion upon which his early religious views were based: a childhood submerged in Calvinism; a short, but nevertheless powerful acceptance of

¹ Hensley Henson, Retrospect of an Unimportant Life, 3 vol. (London, 1942-1952).

Anglo-Catholicism; and the powerful turn back towards Protestantism. Henson was seventy-nine when the first volume was published and in his eighties when the subsequent two volumes appeared. He did an admirable job of recalling his youth, his time at Oxford, his early years in the Church and the Hereford controversy in the first volume. However, perhaps due to age, Henson became heavily dependent on his journals for the second and third volumes. Yet he seems to have purposely avoided inclusion of those journal entries which elaborated on such controversial social, industrial and political issues as the Conference on Politics, Economics and Citizenship (Copec), the increased influence of Labour and the trade unions, and the General Strike of 1926.

Henson's writings, both public and private, his speeches, his letters and his sermons must all be examined if a comprehensive understanding of the way he interpreted the role of the Church with respect to post-war social issues is to be achieved. Such understanding also requires examination of the views of those within the Church whose principles Henson was criticizing. The first two chapters of this thesis therefore concentrate firstly on the Church as it emerged from the Great War, and secondly on one character, William Temple, who was the chief spokesman of those expressing the social gospel within the Church. These two chapters provide the essential context for an interpretation of Henson. For it was in his criticisms that Henson most clearly revealed his own views on social

issues.

The third chapter explains the foundations upon which Henson's theological and ecclesiastical arguments were based. More specifically, it analyses Henson's view of man and his relationship to religion, morality and duty. In doing so, the chapter establishes a background for his criticisms of various Church views regarding social issues related to industry. His criticisms of specific programmes and policies are studied in the final two chapters.

Overall, this thesis attempts to interpret the thoughts and actions of a man who acted as both a preacher and an episcopal governor, and place them objectively within the framework of the post-war Church. In doing so, it evaluates the theological, ecclesiastical and intellectual contributions of Henson. It also examines the social, political and economic dilemmas faced by British society and reflected through the Church in the years following the war. Most importantly, this thesis measures the extent of internal division which existed in a particular area of thought within the Church of England as it tried retain its waning influence on the nation in the immediate post-war years.

CHAPTER I

The Church and Social Issues 1850-1920

1. The Rise of Anglican Social Consciousness in the Nineteenth Century

Before the First World War, a substantial number of Anglican clergy questioned the Church's role in British society. Between 1848 and 1854, the short-lived Christian Socialist movement had focused attention of many within the Church upon the vast social problems which had accompanied rapid industrialization in the early nineteenth century - particularly in towns and cities where much of the working-class population lived and worked in squalid conditions. More importantly, the Christian Socialists proposed a new way of tackling social issues. This approach utilized the 'social gospel' which advocated intensified pastoral care amongst the poor in its attempts to alter attitudes towards social ills. Its advocates initially aimed the social gospel in the direction of the wealthy to seek voluntary aid in assisting its reforms. Later, it was directed towards public authorities, including the central government, in the hopes that they might assist in providing social reform. The social gospel was taken up by several groups within the Church, but especially by High Churchmen, who carried it with them into the twentieth century.

The work of the Christian Socialists represented new departures in Anglican social thought. There remained, however, those in the Church who shied away from directly addressing social issues, particularly where industry was concerned. Some still looked towards a system built upon laissez-faire attitudes, believing that it would in time produce a greater and more widespread prosperity. Others did not believe that it was their place to address the economic and political issues emphasized by the deep poverty and appalling conditions brought on by industrialization. Still others, a very small minority, clung fervently to the romantic but dying idea of a rural parish which left the care of social ills to the conscience of each individual within {area.

Social concerns tied to the working-classes carried a negative aura - not only did they require discussion on both a moral and religious level, but they also required political and economic attention. There was a broad trend towards a new liberalism - influenced in part by the Christian Socialists - which pushed on from the traditionally accepted individually based morality towards that of a social, community based nature.

Much of the now famous nineteenth century social legislation was founded on religious ideals not only espoused by the Church of England, but by the nonconformist churches as well. Attention was given to public health and education, improved housing, temperance reform, education, prostitution, gambling, and unemployment. The idea was to get workers to help

themselves. Those born into industrial conditions were told:

If you will take a little more pains to ask God to give you Grace to get rid of lust, intemperance, all that keeps you down...there is no country in the world...in which the honest, sober, industrious man has so good a chance at raising himself to a position of independence as in England.¹

Much of the work accomplished in the name of the Church, was done for two reasons: social concern - to improve the living conditions of the poor, and ecclesiastical concern - to retain and increase church attendance. The Church knew that the working-classes did not, and would not, choose to be directly involved in Church affairs. Therefore, they attempted to capture the attentions of the middle-class and tried to carry out programmes which would mitigate any tensions between the classes. The two groups, so perfectly matched because the Church continued to be steeped in traditional middle-class attitudes and values, "worked together in a mixed spirit of Christian altruism and enlightened self interest" to prevent class warfare.²

By the late nineteenth century a collectivist view was developing within politics and economics, best illustrated by the 'new liberalism,' Fabianism and Socialism. The Liberal government between 1905 and 1916 had strong ties to both nonconformist and 'new liberal'

¹ Thomas Hughes, James Fraser, Second Bishop of Manchester. A Memoir 1818-1885 (London, 1888), p. 211.

² Desmond Bowen, The Idea of the Victorian Church (Montreal, 1968), p. 256.

ideas, and were therefore willing to take the initial steps in addressing the problems of the working classes. Yet within the Church of England, especially in rural areas, many continued to believe that the Church's role remained in spiritual spheres rather than temporal spheres and felt that the Church should remain isolated from the increasing debate on social issues.

The work of F.D. Maurice, one of the pioneers of Christian Socialism, best represented the new departure in the Church's attitudes towards social issues. His philosophy was based on the use of co-operative enterprise. Theologically, Maurice supported the principles of the Incarnation and the Kingdom which steadily rose in influence during the nineteenth century. This represented a break from the doctrine of Atonement, popular in the early nineteenth century, which tended to view mankind as naturally sinful and required man to achieve salvation only through self-exertion and conversion. The doctrine of the Incarnation, on the other hand, stressed God's immanence in the world, rather than his being a solely spiritual ruler, and man's status as naturally innocent and therefore God's specially chosen creature. Thus mankind's moral failures were the result of human agencies such as poor living standards, low incomes, oppression, and ignorance. If these conditions were to be removed from society, man's innocence would be apparent. Incarnation was therefore used to justify public intervention to help the poor.

Economically, the Christian Socialists were neither

collectivist nor socialist. They believed that laissez-faire economics had to be replaced because while seeing economic freedom as of paramount importance, they thought the freedom which such economists as Adam Smith had condoned - freedom from legal restraint for the sake of gathering personal wealth, rather than for the purpose of the development of general prosperity - was wrong. This optimistic view of worldly progress and development, stressed by the ideal of the Incarnation, easily tied in with the theory that God's Kingdom could be developed on earth. "Religion and morality loomed large in their normative economics, but it was a sentimental, one-sided religion, Godly rule by reward and not punishment."¹ If wealth was to be used for worldly development, what better way to use it than for the progression and spread of Christianity, especially for the development of God's Kingdom temporally?

Maurice believed that the purpose of the Church was to warn men that what they have is not their own and that they are entrusted with wealth and material in order that they may do with it what is right for the community. Using this as their foundation, Maurice and his colleagues hoped for a peaceful and voluntary supersession of capitalistic industry by co-operative industry to be initiated from within the middle-classes.

The socialism advocated by the Christian Socialists was not the same as that understood by the Marxists,

¹ Boyd Hilton, The Age of Atonement: the Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795 - 1865 (Oxford, 1988), p. 321.

Fabians or Independent Labour Party. Instead, the Christian Socialists' emphasis was placed on a less materialistic ideal stressing the rise of working-class conditions without much redistribution of wealth. They also did not support the idea of "state socialism" which, they believed, rejected Christianity and exploited the workers.

The Christian Socialists thought that the most effective improvement of working-class conditions could be produced with the help of self-supporting, profit-earning organizations, but they did not realize that this would increase man's reliance on the State to provide programmes such as general education which would, in turn, decrease the power of the Church. The group came to an end as a coherent whole in 1854 when Maurice refused to accept a pamphlet by one of its members, Lord Goderich, favoured democracy. The Christian Socialists had failed, but certainly the seeds were laid by men such as Maurice and Thomas Hughes for Christian social thought to spread further into the consciousness of the Church of England.

Stewart Headlam embodied a fusion of the two dominant streams of social thinking in the Church of England during the second half of the nineteenth century: the Maurician and the Tractarian. His views owed much to Maurice's theology of Incarnation and the Kingdom, and to the example set by the Christian Socialists of 1848 to 1854, but added to that was the Tractarian emphasis on devotional life which used scriptural revelation as the

only guide to truth, in economic spheres as well as any other. The Tractarian Movement led to the strong Anglo-Catholic movement, which would come to the height of its power after the Great War.

Headlam's Guild of St. Matthew was an active attempt at a propaganda society, open to all Churchmen and dedicated to the recovery of the Church's right to criticize and, if possible, change the social order in the light of Christian principles. It also attempted to awaken in Churchmen an understanding of the social implications of their faith. By 1886, Headlam joined the Fabian Society, but he was quick to declare that he was a liberal, always more anxious to expound on the social implications of Christianity rather than to preach political cures for society's woes or garner sympathy and pity for the poor. Headlam remained ambivalent towards secular socialism throughout his life. He was a Churchman first, and within the parameters of the Church he believed that man had an obligation to criticize and change social order according to Christian principles.

There were others like Headlam who carried on the work of the Christian Socialists in the late nineteenth century. By 1889, the Christian Social Union (CSU) was founded, with B.F. Westcott as its President, a predecessor of Henson's as Bishop of Durham. Charles Gore who, as we will see, became a leader of social thought in the early twentieth century, was among the CSU's founders. The CSU had three main objects: to claim for Christian law the ultimate authority to rule social

practice; to collectively study the application of the moral truths and principles of Christianity to contemporary social and economic problems; and to present Christ to the people as a living master and king, the enemy of evil, wrong and selfishness, the power of good, righteousness and love. The CSU saw its mission in the awakening of the Church to an awareness of the social implications of its creeds and sacraments. As an apolitical organization, it emphasized its reluctance to associate itself with any party, particularly the Labour Party, and avoided any sort of association with ecclesiastical parties. From its beginnings, it was led by academic theologians and patronized by many of the bishops.¹

The objects of the CSU left much room for interpretation, and this probably worked against them. For although they had considerable influence within the inner circles of the Church hierarchy and strongly influenced successive Lambeth Conference reports, the CSU

...failed both in its object of creating a lively social conscience in the majority of the clergy and laity and in extending its influence to the trade unions far enough to make any effective impression on the labour movement.²

The CSU's failure is critical in that it emphasized the Church's lack of understanding of the issues affecting the working-classes, and their subsequent inability to cater to the needs of working-class

¹ For two differing views on the CSU, see Oliver, pp. 4-11 and Norman, p. 221.

² Oliver, p. 5.

communities. The message of the CSU, led and supported mostly by Church leaders and academics, could not be filtered down into the clergy and laity within the working-class communities. Nor was the CSU able to break through to, and amalgamate with, the message of the labour movement which was perhaps more critical because of its swiftly growing influence.

It is through the work of the CSU that the social gospel moved to the forefront of thought and discussion in some circles of the Church towards the end of the nineteenth century. Its influence is particularly apparent at the 1897 Lambeth Conference where the committee on The Office of the Church with Respect to Industrial Problems emphasized four principles on which social order should be based: brotherhood, to counterbalance man's instinct for competition; labour, as both the task and privilege of all; justice, the opportunity for all men to lead a happy and useful life; and public responsibility, for the character and upkeep of the economic and social order. The committee went so far as to repudiate laissez-faire principles which, they claimed, allowed economic conditions to be manipulated solely by material causes and the laws of economics, rather than be influenced by moral laws or responsibilities. It was also suggested that committees be set up on the local level, consisting mainly of laymen, to study social and industrial problems such as

unemployment.¹

2. Growing Concern for Social Issues 1900-1918

The number of different groups and organizations founded to address social issues emphasized the varying schools of thought which existed in the Church prior to the First World War. The Charity Organization Society (COS) was a more individualistic, self-help organization. Its work fostered a paternalist spirit reminiscent of Thomas Hughes as it made pioneering efforts in housing and housing management under Octavia Hill, C.S. Loch and two Anglican priests, W.H. Fremantle and S.A. Barnett. The COS operated under a strict policy of opposition to any state or municipal action to mitigate poverty. Self-help, they preached, was the only cure for poverty.

The Student Christian Movement (SCM) was evangelical in origin, missionary in orientation and primarily middle-class in membership. After its 1909 conference, a group of senior SCM members broke off and formed the Collegium. Under the leadership of William Temple, the Collegium tried to understand the relationship of Christian doctrine to modern society. The group's object was to publish essays reflecting general aspects of society; however, in practice the Collegium, like the CSU, only tackled one subject - economic and industrial competition.

Another group was the Church Socialist League (CSL),

¹ Conference of Bishops of the Anglican Communion July 1897, Encyclical Letter from the Bishops with the Resolutions and Reports (London, 1898), p. 136-145.

founded in 1906 by P.E.T. Widdrington and predominantly composed of High Church clergy. From its birth, there were disputes within the CSL as to whether it should place its emphasis on the political or theological message of the Church. By 1912, the group had begun to publish a monthly magazine, Church Socialist. After a year, the publication was plagued with controversy because its original political enthusiasm had given way to a stronger emphasis on the League's duty towards those in the Church and those Christians who were not sympathetic with the theology of the CSL.

These groups, despite their differences and failures all represented the continuance, and growing influence of the social gospel before the Great War. They also highlighted the different interpretations within the Church of its mission with regard to social issues.

Churchmen during this period could be divided into three theological party groups: Anglo-Catholic, Liberal Modernist and Evangelical. The Anglo-Catholics believed that the Church, led by the bishops and priests,

...must be master in his own house and once master, then it should put the house in order by reasserting in another way too the rights of Catholic tradition, so long suppressed by the heirs of the Reformation.¹

Catholics within the Church tended to be inclusivist and semi-established. They saw themselves as heirs to the medieval character of a strongly-bound church and society. It is not surprising, with the growing

¹ Hastings, p. 52.

influence of Anglo-Catholicism, that four of the most powerful Churchmen were all Anglo-Catholics: Charles Gore, Bishop of Oxford (1911-19), and previously mentioned for his involvement with the CSU; Cosmo Gordon Lang, Archbishop of York (1908-28) and Davidson's successor at Canterbury (1928-42); Edward Talbot, Bishop of Winchester (1911-24); and A.F. Winnington-Ingram, Bishop of London (1901-39). On the other hand, the Liberal Modernists were more Protestant in their beliefs. They saw the Church as a 'gathering' of believers, differentiated from society in their beliefs. The authority of the Church did not lie within the Church, but instead it rested in the hands of Parliament. The Anglo-Catholics and the Liberal Modernists would near their peak influence and coherence towards the end of the Great War. The Evangelicals, distinguished by their "old-fashioned Protestantism",¹ encountered a series of disputes between its conservative and liberal wings which seriously weakened its influence in the early twentieth century and forced the liberal Evangelicals to reassess their role within the Church. Theodore Woods, Bishop of Peterborough (1916-24) and Bishop of Winchester (1924-32), typified this emerging group of liberal evangelicals who were committed to ecumenicism and social application of the gospel.

The Church of England in the post-war years was dominated by a group of leaders whose experiences between 1914 and 1918 prepared them to provide seasoned

¹ Hastings, p. 80.

leadership during the post-war years and beyond. William Temple was certainly one of the most dominant Churchmen of this period. As Bishop of Manchester (1921-29), Archbishop of York (1929-42) and Archbishop of Canterbury (1942-44), Temple was one of the most outspoken Church of England leaders of the twentieth century. Like Henson, Temple proved to be a leader whose views were widely publicized and debated. There were others as well who emerged after the war as voices representing the various schools of thought within the Church. J.A. Kempthorne, Bishop of Litchfield (1913-37), and J.E. Watts-Ditchfield, Bishop of Chelmsford (1914-23) were just two of these men.

One of the most important characters in the Church of England during the Great War and its aftermath was Randall Davidson. Davidson had been Archbishop of Canterbury for eleven years when the war broke out, and in many ways, the Church could not have had a more stable leader for its people at a time when it was most required. As Alan Wilkinson has written, "he was of lay rather than priestly mind", meaning that his concern for the Church lay in the broader context of his concern for God's Kingdom on earth.¹ There were few better qualities to possess when leading a religious institution during a time of such death, destruction and bereavement as the Church faced during the First World War. Davidson was not without weakness however. Rather than being a

¹ Alan Wilkinson, The Church of England and the First World War (London, 1978), p.7.

theologian, he was a pragmatist who remained throughout his career somewhat out of touch with the universities and therefore "he was not one to realize how searching were the theological and ethical questions being wrung out of men's hearts by the experience of war, and how much the Church needed to change".¹ Davidson found it difficult to adjust to the further social concern towards which the Church was swiftly moving. By March 1923, after the Church Assembly made a decision to set up a permanent Social and Industrial Committee, Davidson was contemplating resignation because he doubted whether he was sympathetic enough with the increasingly popular social interpretation of Christianity. Added to the Church Assembly's decision, it seems almost certain that the particular occasion of Davidson's doubt was the forthcoming Conference on Politics, Economics and Citizenship (Copec).²

In studying the Church of England up until, and during, the Great War, it is easy to break the Church into groups. It must be remembered, however, that the groups within the Church remained complex and internally divided on many issues. The attitude of the Church towards social ills caused by industry remained confused throughout the war. Many clergymen, as well as laymen, remained indifferent, while the various schools of thought amongst Church leaders continued to debate, publish, and preach. The magnitude of the problem was

¹ Wilkinson, p. 7.

² Oliver, p. 65

emphasized simply by the fact that the topic remained an issue within the Church during wartime.

3. The Fifth Report of the National Mission

In 1918, the Archbishops' Fifth Committee of Inquiry of the National Mission published Christianity and Industrial Problems, the famous Fifth Report. This was, without a doubt, the most coherent statement of Church of England thought on social questions up until that date.

The National Mission of Hope and Repentance had been a huge and adventurous undertaking in 1916; a time when many felt the Church's energies should be placed elsewhere, especially with those who had been shocked and bereaved by the war. It had been established on the recommendations of a group of twelve priests representing different schools of thought within the Church. Davidson had brought the group together because he wanted to know what was being done, and what could be done, by the Church to minister to the British people during the war. In October 1915, the group recommended that there be a National Mission, led by the Archbishops, to respond to the needs of the nation in wartime - to discharge its sense of vocation to act as the Christian conscience of the nation. It also asked why the religious revival which many had predicted before the war had not occurred. Its aims would be to remove commonly held misconceptions about the Gospel, to call people to repentance - on both a corporate and personal level - and so to claim that the 'one sure hope lies in the Living Christ'.

Temple, as one of the Mission's secretaries, felt that there were signs of repentance in national life already illustrated by the way people had turned from selfishness to sacrifice due to the war. The nation must repent and return to God to work for the Kingdom through Christ, as seen in the fellowship of the Church. There had been too much individualistic Christianity in the past, and the nation now needed to return to the Old Testament belief that God deals with all nations as nations and not individually. Temple felt, however, that this repentance should be of an ethical, rather than a religious nature, but that it must be rooted in religion if it was going to last when the crisis of war was over.¹

As he travelled around the country, the Mission's chairman, A.F. Winnington-Ingram, admitted that the Church was too far out of touch with organized labour and that there was no brotherhood between the classes. But, he assured his audiences, as duke and ploughman had fought and died together during the war, the classes had come to understand each other better and, as a result, the Church would make efforts to better adapt to the needs of its people.²

From its beginnings, the Mission was hindered by confusion from outside as well as within the Church. Winnington-Ingram transmitted a rather surface message which ignored much of the underlying indifference or animosity the laity had for the Church. Those Churchmen

¹ Wilkinson, p. 72.

² Ibid., p. 73-74.

with an evangelical background tended to emphasize the need for individual repentance while those influenced by the Christian Social movement laid an emphasis on 'corporate sin'. This left many confused as to the aim of the Mission. Was the Church aiming to convert the individual or to Christianize the social order?

Another problem which faced the Mission was the fact that the Church was losing its status in the eyes of the laity as a National Church. What could the Church do, the Mission asked, to uphold its position as the National Church? By 1917, it had become obvious to the Council that there were no signs of renewed desire on the part of the English people to identify themselves with a National Church.

In a sense, the National Mission was obviously a failure: it did not achieve its intended goals. However, some good did come out of the Mission's efforts. It forced the leadership of the Church of England to reflect upon its mission to the nation not only during the war, but also for the period after the war. It made many in the Church come to see that the Church as a whole needed to reconsider its interpretation of its role within British society⁽¹⁾

Five committees were appointed to study problems which had become apparent during the Mission. Each of the committees published reports in 1918, all of which were saturated in the language and idealism found in the social radicalism prevalent in the Church during the

¹ Wilkinson, p. 79.

years just before the onset of war. They were theologically conservative; assuming they knew what Christianity was, but that the Church as a whole had a hard time trying to proclaim it adequately.

The report most concerned with social policy was the Report of the Fifth Committee on 'Christianity and Industrial Problems'. It was a piece of work which most indicated the extent to which the ideals of the CSU had permeated the leadership of the Church of England. It gave rise to the most discussion, and it became the charter for the Industrial Christian Fellowship, created in 1919 and primarily concerned with the evangelization of the whole of industry. The fifth committee included Edward Talbot, (chairman); G.K.A. Bell, Chaplain to Davidson (1914-24), Dean of Canterbury (1924-29) and Bishop of Chichester (1929-57); Kempthorne; Gore; and Woods. Also included were a number of lay Churchmen: George Lansbury, Labour MP (1910-12, 1922-40), editor of the Daily Herald (1913-14, 1919-22) and leader of the Labour Party (1931-35); Albert Mansbridge of the Workers' Educational Association; R.H. Tawney, Labour publicist and economic historian; and two Conservative MPs, Lord Henry Bentinck and W.C. Bridgeman.

The Report listed five main points which the committee considered relevant to the application of the Christian faith to both economic and industrial problems.

* 1) Firstly, Christian moral teaching applies as much to society, industry and economics as it does to the individual - a statement sure to cause debate amongst the

various schools of thought within the Church. Secondly, 2) emphasis must be placed on New Testament teaching about the dangers of wealth, and as guidelines for its legitimate use. Thirdly, since Christ taught the supreme 3) importance of personality, men should never be seen as mere instruments of production. Fourthly, the high 4) regard Christianity places on the individual should be complemented by its insistence of the duty of service in man's corporate life. Fifthly, society must accept 5) responsibility for the welfare of its members.¹ These five points answered the question about the Church's involvement in social issues by making it clear that there was no aspect of life which could be considered to be outside of Christian teaching, even the industrial system.

The industrial system carried with it a great defect, as many at the time would have willingly agreed, and the Report made constructive suggestions for change in social attitudes towards the worker. The great defect of industry was the treatment of men simply as hands. In contrast, the Report stated that the industrial system should be inspired by cooperation for public service rather than competition for private gain. Britain must secure a 'living wage' and reasonable working hours for its workmen in order to allow them adequate leisure. It further recommended that attempts be made to deal with deplorable housing conditions. Unemployment figured

¹ Archbishops' Fifth Committee of Enquiry, Christianity and Industrial Problems (London, 1918).

strongly in the Report as Christians were urged to direct their attentions to condemning the evil of insecure employment and 'casualization' by insisting that industrial change take place with the full consultation of the workers, by the promotion of public works by the authorities at times of high unemployment, and by the extension of the provisions for unemployment insurance. 'Industrial autocracy' should be displaced by the participation of workers in the running of industry, and excessive profits should be checked. More power should be given to local authorities so that they could undertake the provision of more goods and services. More of the national income should be put into education, which the Report stressed as the remedy for the vicious circle of ignorance and poverty: the status of education and the teaching profession needed to be raised in order to break this circle. Children and youths should not be regarded primarily as wage-earners; the school-leaving age should be raised to fifteen, and eventually to sixteen. The employment of women, made necessary by the war, should continue to be looked at positively and encouraged further.

Finally, the Report dealt with the issue of clergy drawn from the working classes. The Report gave four suggestions for increasing the helpfulness and influence of the parish priest in industrial society. It urged the Church of England to make an effort to attract clergy from all classes and to include economics and social science in their training. The Committee stated that no

boy should be prevented by poverty from a vocation. Cyril Garbett, in the Report's appendix, underlined further the need for clergy from the working classes. Clergy were encouraged to be more active in campaigning against social evils and should also encourage the laity to do so, particularly by taking part in local government.

It was in the section on co-operation between employers and workers where a split in the Committee's opinion could be seen. Some insisted that in the interest of economic progress and efficiency, the responsibility for decisions on industrial policy and organization must always be placed in the hands of those individuals who remain unrestrained by subservience to what they see as a superior authority. Others wanted to see the workers taking increased responsibility in the organization of their industries. Their eventual goal was to see the status of both employers and managers reduced to the same level of the ordinary workers. They would be fellow-servants within the community which, with all other workers, would make up a producers' co-operative.

There was one weakness of the Fifth Report which was overlooked in 1918. The Report made wide demands for a living wage and adequate leisure, but it gave no suggestions of how these calls might be met. The Committee proposed no alternatives to the existing order of society, and therefore, could not expect that radical changes would take place. They would have to be content,

it seemed, in seeing only the spirit of the Report being carried forward.

The Anglo-Catholics, as mentioned, came to the height of their power after the Great War. Their emphasis on Church and society being strongly bound together led many Anglo-Catholics to forge close links with Christian Socialism. Christian Socialism was therefore used to interpret the Church's mission with respect to social issues affecting the working-classes, and those issues seemed to be highlighted by the political and economic atmosphere of those years.

As John Oliver points out in The Church and Social Order: Social Thought in the Church of England, 1918-1939,^{*} this was a time in which many in the Church of England saw an opportunity to sway public opinion towards dismantling Victorian capitalism and replacing it with something which, in their opinion, would be more socially just.

The chance for the Church to influence the course of events by pressure on public opinion was perhaps unprecedented; certainly it was not likely to recur. It was eagerly seized by many Christians, and if they seem to have had little immediate success it was partly because of the way in which their effort was dispersed over a wide field and channelled into so many different and sometimes contradictory schemes.¹

As Oliver mentions, there are few successes seen in the Church's attempts to seize the opportunities which lay open to it immediately after the war. Christians had difficulties taking advantage of the opportunities

¹ Oliver, p. 45.

because their attempts were scattered over such wide areas and directed into such diverse plans of action. The Church of England, one body constructed of so many varying schools of thought, provides a fine example for the study of the many different interpretations held of the Church's role in relation to the social questions involving industrial issues.

One group which was relatively successful in its attempts to influence the course of social change was the Industrial Christian Fellowship (ICF). The group included among its influential members Kempthorne, P.T.R. Kirk, and G.A. Studdert-Kennedy. Due to their work in the ICF, they became, as a unit, the most vocal Churchmen on social issues after the war.

Created in 1919 out of the Navy Mission, the ICF was an Anglican organization which operated as a propaganda society for the evangelization of the whole of industry. In the year of its founding, it absorbed the CSU, which gave it the foundation to stand at the forefront of Church social thought during the post-war period. The ICF was a rather conservative organization which is best reflected in Studdert-Kennedy's philosophy. Material poverty was seen as the outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual disgrace. Studdert-Kennedy saw all problems as ultimately moral and spiritual, and was therefore reluctant to support the more practical theories of social reform. Although he sympathized with the radical viewpoint on social reform and agreed that wealth was poorly distributed, he believed that the

existing system would naturally give way to a better one. Redistribution of wealth could be achieved only through increased production. He was deeply suspicious of any reforms which ignored man's need for redemption, and felt that movements aiming to abolish the existing system would have no higher motive than that of self-interest and were offensive to Christian ideals. A moralized form of capitalism, therefore, would be the only likely way in which poverty could be abolished.

The philosophy of the ICF was the natural extension of Christian Socialism and the social gospel as the Church moved into the post-war period. As an Anglican organization, it represented the predominant social thought within the Church as its members formulated policies to combat social ills. The ICF also stood as perhaps the strongest advocate of the ideals expressed in the Fifth Report of the National Mission.

* Before to the end of the war, Archbishop Lang delivered a speech to the House of Lords in which he distinguished between the temporary causes of unrest - the strains and difficulties of the war - and what he, and many others within the Church, saw as the more serious problems needing to be tackled after the war - the unequal distribution of the rewards of industry, and the dehumanizing way in which industry was organized. Lang made it clear that he felt it essential that labour should have a share in both the control of industry, and

its profits.¹ This same issue was debated in the Upper House of Canterbury Convocation during 1918. The fact that it was so hotly debated showed that many bishops were greatly troubled by the situation that was to be created by the end of war. The discussion also highlighted the radical measures which some members of the Church were prepared to take in order to deal with the circumstances.

Bishop Woods introduced the Convocation debate by ~~×~~ calling for bold and adventurous schemes of reconstruction. The spirit of both the age and of Christianity, Woods explained, drove him to support a radical reorganization of society based on industrial fellowship. He stressed that he was not a "professional socialist", but he had come to believe that man was required to rethink his religion, repent for his corporate sins, and reshape his life. This was necessary in order to avert possible conflagration between the workman and the government:

I am afraid that at no time during the War has the industrial situation been so grave and so pregnant as it is today...The temper of the workman is dangerous, and the unyielding attitude of the Government is bringing the Country to the verge of industrial revolution.²

Kempthorne agreed with Woods. For him, Christ's victory was won in the spiritual sphere, but its rewards were to be revealed throughout man's life: redemption

¹ Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates (Lords) 1918, Vol. 26, Col. 914-917 and 920-925.

² The Convocation of Canterbury, Chronicle of the Convocation of Canterbury 1918 (London, 1918), p. 215.

would be manifest not only in individuals, but in society as well. Kempthorne believed that the working-classes wanted industrial and economic freedom which would complement their political liberty. In order to achieve this freedom, workers should enjoy some part in the control of industry, a living wage, reasonable amounts of leisure time, and protection against unemployment. In his contribution to the debate, Kempthorne called for nationalization of vital industries, better housing, town-planning, regeneration of rural life, and better education for all children, irrespective of ability.¹

This debate opened a gamut of discussion concerning the involvement of the Church in temporal issues. Kempthorne put forward some questions which reflected the uncertainty of many within the Church of England about the Church's position within British society after the war. Should Christians, especially Church leaders speaking in an authoritative capacity, he asked, suggest practical measures for the improvement of society? If not, how far is it possible to go in the permitted sphere without encroaching on the forbidden ground of technical details? If a bishop is justified in calling for better housing - as few would deny - is he also justified, or even obligated, to explain how it might be financed? Kempthorne went on to ask if it was not sometimes the duty of a Church leader to make practical, detailed, suggestions, if only to undermine vested interests and compel effective action when it would otherwise be

¹ The Convocation of Canterbury, 1918, pp. 265-269.

resisted for lack of energy or imagination? There was no general agreement about whether the Church should be concerned with social issues at all, but clearly the issue brought out much discussion from the different schools of thought within the Church.¹ When Garbett moved a resolution in the Lower House of Canterbury Convocation on May 1, 1918, he expressed the conviction of the House that the demands of labour for ^a national minimum wage, for state provision against unemployment, and for the recognition of the status of workers in the industries in which they are engaged were in accordance with Christian principles. William Temple, speaking, he claimed, as a member of the Labour Party, jumped to lend Garbett support. He vigorously condemned the argument that the principles of economics lie outside the sphere of moral or ethical concern because, he explained, all economic theory, as soon as it begins to be applied, makes ethical presumptions. A society inspired by a motive of common service, would be far more Christian than one inspired by private gain.² Opposition was also quick to surface. W.R. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's (1911-34), stressed that his adversaries had no right to mix politics with religion, or to suggest that there was ~~was~~ only one solution of the economic problem which was compatible with Christianity. He reminded them that there was much to be said against a minimum wage, and that there were plenty of economists who agreed that a

¹ The Convocation of Canterbury, 1918, pp. 318-321.

² Ibid., pp. 344-353.

system using unemployment insurance could easily find itself in great economic danger.¹ Some in the Church such as Gore, Talbot, Kempthorne, Woods and Temple believed strongly that it was both a right and a duty to criticize society in the light of Christian beliefs and standards. They disagreed, however, about the extent to which they believed society to be ill, and about which and how much the various remedies should be applied. Failure to resolve these issues was perhaps what weakened the Church in the eyes of many Britons during the post-war years.

It is not surprising that in 1920, the Lambeth Conference Committee on Industrial and Social Problems, appointed to examine the opportunity and duty of the Church in the social and industrial sphere, substantially agreed with the Fifth Report, but modified some of its conclusions. Following this, the full Lambeth Conference adopted a series of resolutions based on the report of the committee. One resolution emphasized that there must be fundamental changes made in the economic life of the nation, both in spirit and in mechanics, while another stressed the duty of the Church of England to work for the end of "inhuman or oppressive conditions of labour in all parts of the world, especially among weaker races".² Meanwhile, resolutions accepting the Fifth Report were passed by the Lower Houses of Convocation, while debates in the Upper Houses were saturated with its spirit.

¹ The Convocation of Canterbury, 1918, pp. 355-356.

² Randall Davidson, comp., The Six Lambeth Conferences 1867-1920 (London, 1929), p. 47.

4. Industrial Unrest After the Great War

At the end of the First World War, Great Britain had become a nation much different from that which had existed before August 1914. Although there was victory to be celebrated and reconstruction to be planned, there was also a tide of disillusionment and despair with many of the attitudes and values held in the pre-war years which heavily tainted British life. Several events occurred in the years directly following the Armistice which left a moral distaste amongst many. They felt disgust towards those who had indulged in wartime profiteering - the newly rich who had risen to financial power on the back of death and destruction. Others criticised the demagoguery of Lloyd George, and especially the vindictiveness and what some believed to be the materialistic squalor of the Versailles Treaty. The Treaty of Versailles carried with it a spirit of revenge which many feared would lead to further death, starvation, destruction, and despair on the Continent. The General Election of 1918, in which Lloyd George exploited the spirit of vengeance, was thought by many to be one of the most morally abhorrent elections in British parliamentary history.

Furthermore, problems which had existed before the war remained, and for many, they seemed worse. The most obvious example of this was the continued fighting in Ireland. The government's unsympathetic handling of the situation and their acquiescence in the cold-blooded

murders and reprisals by the infamous Black and Tans provoked bitter denunciations of the government. The peace at home was heavily marred by both domestic and foreign upheaval.

Despite the disillusion and despair, there was also a contentment to be found within British society. Great Britain was able to bask in the glow of her victory, and it can be seen from hindsight that the war broke down many of the barriers which had previously held back change. Many of these barriers had been of a social nature and had been firmly cemented within British society before the second half of the nineteenth century. The main beneficiaries of much of the uprooting of the barriers were the working-classes.

Nineteenth-century industrialization had spread fast and its effects on the industrial working-classes tended to be harsh. Their lives were hard, and there were few in the upper strata of British society who had any understanding of life in working-class Britain. Emigration was proceeding at a rate of 300,000 per year before the war. Immediately after the war, however, there was more money about meaning that there was no longer a need to emigrate in order to search for jobs and a better standard of living. There was an increased amount of work available for women. Fisher's Education Act, which raised the school-leaving age to fourteen was passed in 1918, the same year in which women were given the right to vote. By 1920, the Unemployment Insurance Act was passed and viewed as an immense advance on the first

National Insurance Act of 1911. The Liberal Government (1905-16) had left a very deep mark on British society. Their efforts, together with those of the Coalition Government (1916-22), had made encroachments into social welfare as no governments before it could claim to have done.

Another factor which stands out in the examination of the benefits felt by the working-classes after the Great War is the strength gained by the unions. In 1913, there had been 4,189,000 Trade Unionists. That number increased to 8,081,000 by 1919.¹ As the working classes benefited from the broken barriers after the war, they did not need to search far for a central power which would represent them. It was within the unions that many members of the industrial working-classes found their voice.

Initial post-war prosperity quickly gave way to a bout of seemingly chronic depression which tormented the British economy throughout the inter-war period. Many returning from the war felt as if they had been cheated as they encountered problems in finding both homes and jobs. The impetus of the campaign for reconstruction fizzled out by 1921 as unemployment rose sharply. The initial post-war figures illustrating unemployment of the workforce were as follows: 1918, 0.8%; 1919, 2.4%; 1920, 2.4%; 1921, 14.8%; and 1922, 15.2%. In 1924, unemployment fell to 8.1% before steadily rising to

Post-war depression

¹ Hastings, p. 19.

another peak in 1933.¹ The principle of uncovenanted benefit, otherwise known as the dole, was begun in 1921, but in order to put it into operation, a committee under the direction of Sir Eric Geddes cut £75 million from government expenditure on other programmes in 1922.

Industrial unrest became widespread in the post-war years. A particularly ugly strike at the start of 1919 brought talk of a revolution to Clydeside. The same year also brought a strike by cotton-operatives, ironmoulders, railwaymen and even among a section of the police force in both London and Manchester. The serious threat of a coal strike in 1919 compelled Lloyd George to appoint a commission, chaired by Sir John Sankey, a leading lay Churchman (Anglican Church of Wales), to examine the wages and hours of workers and to report on the question of nationalization.

The Sankey Commission issued three interim reports, approved by both the miners and the government, as a compromise in March. By June, four reports on nationalization appeared; all which agreed on recommending the nationalization of coal, the improvement of retail distribution and the appointment of a Minister of Mines. Within the Commission there was disagreement, however. The mineowners and two industrialists were unilaterally opposed to the nationalization of the industry while the third industrialist, Sir Arthur Duckham, proposed a compromise arrangement stressing

¹ Great Britain, Board of Trade, Board of Trade's 18th Abstract of Labour Statistics, 1926, p. 95 cited in Oliver, p. 44.

amalgamation. Meanwhile, the miners, economists and Sankey (seven of the thirteen members of the Commission) remained fully in favour of nationalization. It was Lloyd George who had the final say in the matter. By using a similar type of delaying tactics which had proved helpful in his 1918 General Election bid, he was able to divert public attention from the call for radical social reform. The issue of nationalization was dragged out until August when Lloyd George refused to accept the majority recommendation of nationalization. In the end, the Commission's advice had been ignored, and to many, this seemed to be a breach of the government's undertaking as a response to a request from the miners' representatives that the spirit and recommendation of the Sankey Report to be carried forth.

It is with hindsight that one can see both the short and long-term consequences of Lloyd George's tactics. The short-term include the hostility of the miners towards the government, while the long-term effects are much deeper and surely it would not be wrong to assume that Lloyd George's actions, or lack thereof, would be a contributory factor to the General Strike of 1926.

It was during this period of industrial discontent that the actions of many within the Church began to foreshadow its reaction to industrial disputes during the post-war period. Archbishop Davidson offered his services as a mediator in the 1919 strike, and although his offer was not taken up, it was welcomed by the railwaymen's leader, J.H. Thomas. The Church's

commitment to assist in the mitigation of industrial disputes was tested further during the coal strike of 1921. This dispute began when the miners called for a national pool for wages because of the heavy reductions in wages threatening particular areas. The dispute became so large that there was a threat of a general strike, which aroused special attention from leading advocates of the social gospel. In a Convocation debate on 27 April 1921, Bishop Kempthorne spoke out in support of the miners. He welcomed the desire of the miners to "help bear the burdens of the weak". If the arrangement were incompatible with private ownership, than that would be a "strong indictment indeed against the system of private ownership".¹ Bishop Woods seconded Kempthorne's motion, gave some technical information about the dispute and added:

If the Church could, by the influence which she exerted, spread the spirit of national comradeship, the peaceful revolution for which they hoped might be brought about; for it could only come by all sections working together, thinking together, and reconstructing together.²

Talbot and Garbett, now Bishop of Southwark, both spoke bitterly against those who were looking to beat the miners and smash their increasing power. Angered by such outbursts on behalf of the miners, the government - through the Secretary of Mines, W.C. Bridgeman - complained to Davidson about the one-sided nature of the

¹ The Convocation of Canterbury, 1921, pp. 241-263.

² Ibid., p. 250.

speeches. Davidson broadly agreed with Bridgeman, but explained that it was a reflection of the way in which the episcopal pendulum moved: the attention of the Church, previously denied to the working-classes, was now being lavishly placed upon them.¹

The attention which the Church gave to the working-classes can also be seen as a favourable result of the Great War. After the war, the prevailing social thought within the Church was heavily influenced by the social gospel which led many High Churchmen to understand better, and in many cases to sympathize strongly with, organized labour and its policies.

Not all within the Church of England agreed with the message of the Fifth Report when it was published. Few, however, could question the fact that the world of 1918 was dramatically different than that which had been left behind in 1914, and that the Church of England was no exception. While much attention was turned towards the war, the idealism of social radicalism which had developed in the Church before 1914 had matured and pushed its way to the forefront of Church leadership and doctrine. This was reflected in the Fifth Report which gave a clear sign of where Church social policy was to be directed in the post-war years. When the Mission's reports were published in 1918, there could be little, if any, doubt as to which direction many within the Church were taking into the post-war era. Nor could there be

¹ G.K.A. Bell, Randall Davidson. Archbishop of Canterbury (London, 1952), pp. 1045-1048.

any surprise expressed by the rise of the ICF or the steps Churchmen took in becoming involved in secular social issues. For as, Edward Norman has written, the first two decades of the twentieth century emphasized the "permeation of the Church of England by the ideals and attitudes previously largely confined to the enthusiasts of the Christian Socialist Movement".¹

¹ Norman, p. 221.

CHAPTER II

William Temple and the Social Gospel in the 1920s

In the previous chapter, the development of the social gospel in the Church of England was traced from the mid-nineteenth century until after the Great War. In order to specify more fully the kind of thought to which Henson was chiefly opposed after the war, it is necessary to examine more closely one individual who epitomized Christian Socialism and the message of the social gospel. As chairman of Copec, William Temple led the movement which many believed best characterized, and attempted to carry forward, the social gospel as it was expressed in the Fifth Report of the National Mission.

1. The Influence of Charles Gore

Temple was Charles Gore's successor as leader of the Anglo-Catholic group within the Church who aligned themselves with Christian Socialism. Gore, as previously mentioned, had been at the apex of his power and influence during the war when he served as Bishop of Oxford (1911-19). With his retirement, however, despite his continuing activities particularly amongst the Christian Socialists, Gore became a 'back-bench' member of the group of High Churchmen who preached the social gospel. Yet despite the absence of his physical presence in Convocation debates concerning social issues, Gore's influence within the Church remained strong. An

essential preliminary to studying Temple is an examination of the ways in which Gore steered social thought within the Church.

Lux Mundi (1889) was Gore's "most original contribution to theology".¹ In that collection of essays, its contributors emphasised the social God in their attempts to clarify man's relationship both to God and to each other. God's power, they claimed, was temporal as well as divine. Gore's particular concern was to establish an ethical economics in contrast to the prevailing political economy. In social circumstances, according to Gore, each man's rights must be bound by the claims of others. However, the worker has certain rights which he may fairly claim including decent working conditions, the security of maintenance, and opportunities for recreation and culture.⁽²⁾

By 1927 when he gave his Halley Stewart Lectures, Gore's ideals had been developed into a comprehensive set of social principles based upon four main theses. Firstly, the present state of society reflected both danger and fear. The transformation needed to restore the working man's rights was perhaps revolutionary, but it was required to evolve through gradual and peaceful means. Secondly, social evils are the result of human greed, recklessness, and selfishness, and cannot be negated by legislation alone. Man must have a change of

¹ David L. Edwards, Leaders in the Church of England 1828-1944 (London, 1971), p. 263.

² Charles Gore, ed., Lux Mundi, 2nd ed. (London, 1890), pp. 521-525.

heart in order to wipe away social ills. Thirdly, this change can only be achieved through the dedication and vigour of small groups, rather than by large group conversions. Fourthly, Gore stressed the eternal Christ whose status is that of a saviour and redeemer in both the spiritual and temporal worlds.¹

To Gore the Christ to whom he devoted his life did not display his godhead through omniscience; rather his claim on earth was spiritual and moral. Forty years after the publication of Lux Mundi Gore continued to insist that Christ's power was transcendent, yet he was also able to bring God's "tender mercies" nearer to the common man. Titles used for God by Jesus such as "Father", "Your Father" and "My Father" were not new; they had been used throughout the Old Testament. But the emphasis which Jesus laid on these titles was new, and this is where Gore's understanding of the God who is not only transcendent over the world, but also immanent within it, falls into place. According to Gore, Jesus did not just come into the world to act as a teacher or a prophet: he came also as the eternal Christ to save man from sin and to build the foundations of God's Church on earth. He was the bridge between the divine God and the Holy Spirit: he was God incarnate - the social character of the Church's doctrine of the Trinity.

Gore constantly stressed the communal Christ as the model for man's life and later claimed in his Gifford

¹ Charles Gore, Christ and Society (London, 1928), pp. 15-18.

Lectures of 1929-30 that Christianity "came into the world as a life to be lived by a community" which believed in the 'miracle' of Christ's resurrection.¹ This idea of community combined with his four theses provided a basis on which Gore claimed that the Church was obliged to an active concern for all spheres of human life, including those of a political and economic nature.

Gore's influence on social thought within the Church was vast. No man, however, seemed to exemplify his influence more than Temple who used the principles of the social gospel, preached by Gore and highlighted by the Fifth Report, and carried them one step further in his chairmanship of Copec.

2. Temple's Understanding of the Social Gospel

Temple believed that since man has been made in the image of God, as seen through Jesus Christ, then it is only man who is capable of acting as the direct vehicle or instrument for the divine nature. It is therefore man's duty to carry forward the Kingdom, as initiated through the work of Jesus, on earth. In this theory, Temple attempted to advance Gore's arguments of the social character of God. He developed principles upon which he believed man's nature to be based which aided in his justification of man's purpose within the community. Temple believed that man is constantly developing, but did not believe that he is shaped by his individual

¹ Charles Gore, The Philosophy of a Good Life (London, 1930), p. 198.

choices and decisions alone. Man cannot ignore his heredity, social environment, and education for the sake of retaining his individuality. For Temple, there were three aspects of the human personality, and individuality¹⁾ was only one of them. The other two elements served to strengthen the individual. The second factor was the²⁾ social dimension - the need for reciprocal relationships within society which helped to create unity. The third component was the element of service - which aids in the fulfilment of the self. Temple believed that man can³⁾ only be truly an individual after he realizes that the unity he seeks lies within God's call to promote universal love and self-sacrifice. This three dimensional view of man was central to Temple's views on the Church and its handling of the inter-war social questions.

Temple did not entirely nullify man's individuality. The primary concern of Christianity, is the individual, for it is through individuals that there exists hope for the improvement in the moral conditions of society. Thus, in light of post-war tendencies "...it is wholesome...to be reminded that the spring of all moral progress is the conscience and will of the individual".¹ Temple further developed Gore's fatherhood theme. Man's value, Temple believed, was not measured by the value he placed on himself, nor by the value placed on him by society, but rather his value in the eyes of God. Each

¹ William Temple, Essays in Christian Politics and Kindred Subjects (London, 1927), p. 19.

individual is a separate child within God's family. A system which aims at being harmonious with this philosophy is the ideal structure on which to base society.¹ This view exemplifies the development of the ideal of the Incarnation and represents its continued assimilation into the social gospel in the post-war years.

The Incarnation played a pivotal role in Temple's view of the mission of the social gospel. Temple admitted that the theory of Incarnation is not simple, but as man develops, his understanding of it also grows. Eventually man has become able to apply this inspiration to the problems which confront him in his daily life. Temple warned, however, that man should not expect to solve his problems completely; rather he will be better able to understand them through his knowledge of the Incarnation.

It can never be completely intelligible ... And we should be able to apply it progressively as a solving principle to all the problems that confront the mind. Not that we shall expect in any one book or in any one lifetime to find and give the solution, but we may expect to go steadily on, getting nearer to a complete grasp, though the final solution must be beyond us in this earthly life.²

Temple believed there was no doctrine needing more continual emphasis during those post-war years than the doctrine of the Incarnation. Because Incarnation stresses the 'Living God', Temple saw it as being able to counteract the enemies of Christianity. What were those

¹ Temple, Essays in Christian Politics, p. 9.

² Ibid., p. 171.

enemies? The enemy of Incarnation, is a philosophy which regards the world as a "closed system" where the "supreme principle...may be called a Spirit, but has no initiative, no special purpose beyond the general control of the world, and on no occasion takes any kind of particular action".⁽¹⁾ Those who believe in this closed system see God as the creator of the universe, but never being involved directly in it. The power of God, according to this philosophy is transcendent, but never temporal. This theory emphasizes a complacent God; one who created the world and then left it to rule as a figurehead, having no influence or power. If this were true, wrote Temple, there can be no Incarnation - because the Incarnate God acts through a medium of human life. The Incarnate God is a social God. As Temple believed, he is

...a personal and living God, who not only is the general ground of all existence, but retains undiminished His full right to act in his own proper Person as He may see fit at any point in the history of the world which He has made...²

incarnation

The spiritual power which God revealed through his Incarnation is exercised constantly through his Church on earth. *

To understand further the influence which the Incarnation had on Temple's views on social doctrine and the way he attempted to apply these principles to various

¹ Temple, Essays in Christian Politics, p. 19.

² William Temple, Christ in His Church (London, 1925), p. 7.

social questions during the post-war period, it is necessary to examine the way Temple believed both the Church and society should embrace the ideals of Christianity attempting to mitigate social ills.

Temple believed that in order for the social gospel to succeed two conditions must first be met. The first was that society must give each man the best possible education in order that he may develop fully his gifts* and faculties. The second condition required that the widest possible area of choice must be provided, because it is within choice that "personality manifests its most distinctive features".¹ Despite Temple's emphasis on* man's interaction within society, he left room for man to develop an individual personality with which to work within God's community - the Church.

For Temple, the Church was both a representative of the instilment of God's power into human nature and a sacramental body. By referring to the Church as a 'sacramental body', Temple meant that it is "a Body which exists to be the medium of the Divine Spirit".² Temple constantly stressed the communal "Body of Christ". All Christians are members of this body. Temple emphasized that there could be no higher calling than that of giving oneself to the maintenance of the body, and encouraged men to try to realise their fellowship with one another in their call to be members of the Christian body. It is through this dedication that man is able to understand

¹ Temple, Christ in His Church, p. 7.

² Ibid., p. 8.

his calling to the four social principles which Temple saw as imperative in the unity of society: liberty, fellowship, service and sacrifice.

The first two of these principles, liberty and fellowship, work together. Without one the other is not possible. The first, liberty, is the respect for personality in each man and woman. It demands both public service and public honour, which are also the requirements of the second ideal, fellowship. This Temple described as a "free seeking of the common good".

As the first Christian social principle is liberty or the sacredness of personality, so the second is brotherhood or fellowship. This is impossible without the first, for fellowship is essentially free co-operation, so that without liberty, there can be no fellowship. On the other hand, liberty without fellowship results in chaos, disruption, social collapse. Only if men use their liberty to pursue freely the common good in preference to their own is liberty even tolerable; and in fact men have in history many times rejected it and welcomed despotism in its place as a means to social order, when experience showed that the temptations incident to liberty were too strong for the moral character of the citizens.¹

Liberty and fellowship create a delicate balance within society. If fellowship is taken to extremes there is bound to be a denial of liberty and vice versa. The result of a break in this balance is disruption and often a society will be tempted to use collectivism assisted by force or tyranny in order restore harmony. Temple believed that society is not always wrong in exercising force on its members. But, when society does use

¹ Temple, Essays in Christian Politics, p. 12.

coercion, it moves further away from the Christian ideal.¹

The third social principle was the duty of service. The greatest sin that man can commit is to choose his work on purely selfish grounds. In choosing to do something he must first consider how he can best serve the community. Financial gain or the opportunity to pursue leisure interests should not be used in considering the area of work one is to enter. In entering one's work with an aim towards service, man advances the cause of fellowship and is able to overthrow the spirit of selfishness.

The fourth and final social principle is that of sacrifice. Real progress can only be made if there is self-sacrifice involved. In discussing this principle, Temple took his discussion away from the individual level and addressed sacrifice in terms of contemporary social problems. Because of the moral corruption within society, fellowship must be based on self-sacrifice. Innocents may suffer, but their suffering acts as the "healing balm for the wounds of the world".² When society is willing to suffer to help their fellow men, then God's Kingdom on earth will be complete.

When nations are ready to suffer rather than risk the sin of aggression, when Labour and Capital are ready to suffer rather than risk receiving unrighteous gain, when all of us are ready to suffer rather than risk the wickedness of consuming more than we contribute, - then, and not until then, will men have rest from

¹ Temple, Essays in Christian Politics, p. 2.

² Ibid., p. 18.

their troubles. The cross is the means of salvation.¹

In his discussion of sacrifice, Temple used the argument of Plato's Republic that if man is immortal, then anything which affects his character must be seen in regard to his eternal welfare. Temporal welfare must therefore be looked at only after the man's eternal welfare is tended to. All that comes in contact with human life is of a spiritual nature. Members of society are involved in the areas such as politics, business and industry; therefore, these areas of secular society must be intertwined with spiritual society. The primary function of the Church is to convert and sanctify individuals, but it also has a responsibility to the community and to those areas of the community in which individuals are involved.

For Temple, because of the spiritual influence which is found throughout mankind, no issue was beyond the realm of the Church. It is only with the intervention of this divine guidance that many of the world's problems can be solved. Therefore, Temple agreed with his contemporaries such as Gore, Talbot, Kempthorne, and Woods that it was both the right and duty of Churchmen to criticize any area of society in light of Christian beliefs and standards.² Nothing that comes into contact with human life lies outside of the touch of the divine spirit. All economic theory makes ethical presuppositions

¹ Temple, Essays in Christian Politics, p. 18.

² Oliver, The Church and Social Order, Chapter 3.

as soon as it begins to be applied.

Above all the Church will perpetually insist that no question touching human life is ever merely secular, merely economic, merely material. All that touches human life is fundamentally spiritual, and can only be rightly settled under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.¹

Temple warned that in turning its attention mostly to problems within the political, economic, and social spheres, the Church might become infected with the same problems it is attempting to solve. The greatest danger to confront the Church in this situation is for it to begin to identify with the same diseases, therefore, denying its own principles. Temple further warned that it is wrong to believe that man is made to be perfect first and social order perfected afterwards. Man must work within society and politics to perfect both himself and society. As this growth occurs, it will progressively establish a Christian social order on earth.

3. Temple and Industrial Issues

At this point, we may examine the way Temple used the social gospel to answer the various questions which the Church of England faced in relation to industry after the Great War. When Temple addressed industrial issues, he took his argument about the Church's obligation to secular issues further. One of the greatest evils Temple saw existing during his lifetime was the secularization

¹ Temple, Essays in Christian Politics, p. 78.

of large parts of life - the sense that things lie outside of the sphere of God. If the Church had been more involved with industrial issues at the commencement of the Industrial Revolution and had remembered "that all activities should be undertaken for God's service, and, if they cannot be used in His service, should not be undertaken at all, we should have been spared some of the worst horrors of nineteenth-century civilisation".¹ Man must clarify his thoughts about the meaning of God and the world, and if there are any ambiguities in his mind about these subjects, Temple stressed that man cannot rightly claim that secular areas, such as industry, are "in the strict sense of the word, Divine service".²

Industry, Temple believed, exists for public service. There would be no need for production if man had no needs or desires. Production requires a system whereby capital, management and labour cooperates, and if there is a breakdown of this cooperation, the industrial system is forced to stop. Industry must be approached as a means to common gain, and cooperation is the way by which industry can provide the best service to the community - and it is service which should be industry's primary concern.

There is therefore an absolute supremacy of the interest of the community, and of members of the community as such, over the interests of industry. There can be no proper conflict between these, for the only true interests of industry are those which subserve the interests of the community. This fundamental principle

¹ Temple, Christ in His Church, p. 29.

² Ibid.

is one of the roots of all forms of theoretical Socialism: and in itself is incontrovertible.¹

It is within Temple's deeply rooted belief of the importance of the community that one is able to observe more deeply his feelings on socialism, capitalism, and the Labour Party. Capitalism is a system which can easily fall into the evil of treating labour as a commodity to be bought and sold. When this occurs, wrote Temple, then the system is clearly not a Christian system: such a system is no different in principle from what is normally considered to be slavery. And indeed Temple did believe that the British industrial system during the post-war years exploited man's personality, and could therefore be designated as a form of slavery. Industry, as it was, wiped out any hope that spiritual development of men and women which Temple believed took precedence over all other development.

To buy men labouring for so many hours of the day or the week is an improvement on the old form of slavery, whereby one man bought another man for all the hours of the days that he might live; but it does not differ from it in principle, if the price paid is settled by the condition of the 'labour market'. There is still the same neglect of all rights of personality. To describe the prevailing system as one of 'wage slavery' is no doubt provocative; but it is a quite precise and just philosophical designation of it.²

Temple's emphasis on human sociality and citizenship led him to declare that no 'worker' is just a 'worker': he is also both an individual and a citizen. To use

¹ Temple, *Essays in Christian Politics*, p. 43.

² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

industry as a means to private gain, whether on the part of the owners or the workers, is wrong. The cooperation which Temple stressed must take place on both sides of industry, and must be an even effort on both sides. The one area which could cause the greatest amount of controversy is the amount of subordination each side required industry to give to the well-being of society.

If, then, those who are engaged in industry treat it as if it were competition for private gain, they are treating it as if it were what in fact it is not; it is they, and not the Christian idealists, who are indulging in illusions. If capitalists are primarily concerned about profits and workers about wages, then both are doing their work with their attention directed to what is not of primary importance.¹

Temple further disapproved of absolute ownership, declaring it both objectionable in principle and disastrous in result. He found it unjust that of the three "indispensable partners" - capital, skill, and labour - only capital is usually able to claim complete ownership of the product. Labour traditionally never shares in the reap of profits.

Temple was searching for a fellowship within industry, and that fellowship could be found within the ideals of socialism which, up until the mid to late 1920s, he saw as being espoused by the Labour Party. For X him, the one great achievement of the Labour Party in the post-war years was that it had fostered fellowship. He believed the ideal of the Labour Movement to be most

¹ Temple, Essays in Christian Politics, p. 13.

closely related to Christian ideals, and saw it as being an advance on the political ideals of Europe before its rise. Temple was, however, cautious in lending his full support to the Labour Party. He gave his support only to the principle of fellowship fostered within the Labour policy of nationalization.

It is the supreme moral achievement of the Labour Movement that it has made fellowship the ideal of the political party....The demand for nationalisation is a symptom of this; whether that demand be wise or foolish, it derives its influence and dynamic force from the conviction that nationalisation (in some form or other) is the economic expression of fellowship.¹

However, Temple wrote that the Labour Party would have a difficult time realizing its ideals because they rested upon hostility towards the existing social order. The only way to resist the forces produced by class loyalty is to redirect them. Temple lent his support to a "steady, gradual, yet perceptible conservative reform". Tories, Liberals, and Socialists must all work together~~X~~ as a united front in this reform because they would undoubtedly be threatened by the "diehards" and "revolutionaries" who "create, and largely depend for existence upon, one another".² As Temple pointed out, it was the principles of theoretical socialism with which he agreed, and there was plenty of indication that these principles were being put into use not by only the Labour Party, but by the Tories and Liberals as well.

¹ Temple, Essays in Christian Politics, p. 5.

² Ibid., p. 65.

The Labour Party is avowedly socialistic in aim; the Tory Party is manifestly socialistic in action, for its Electricity scheme and its Broadcasting scheme are plainly socialistic; and the Liberal Party has issued two manifestos - on Land and Coal - in which socialistic principles receive a fairly wide application.¹

The problem with socialism is that it is far too complicated a system to be undertaken by man without falling into trouble. The probability of mistakes would be too great when so much is entrusted to the state. Temple wrote that he would feel much more comfortable with a system which espoused both free industry with a greater spirit of public service. He admitted, however, that he did not feel the times conducive to such a system.

After three years as a member of the Labour Party, Temple resigned his membership, and by the mid-1920s he began to shrink away from radical movements in theology, the Church, and the State. It was the methods of the Labour Movement with which Temple grew to disagree. Temple began to see a blindness inflicting Labour Party. Increasingly, Temple found the Labour Party less receptive to the idea that the Church's priority was the teachings of the Gospel rather than political programmes, and could not himself always support Labour without prior knowledge of its intended programmes.

What form of government did Temple think post-war society could realistically achieve? Democracy would be the most ideal form of government, but it was liable to

¹ Temple, Essays in Christian Politics, p. 44.

the greatest amount of corruption, especially if it is not based upon religious values. Irreligious democracy would, he wrote, be "a more horrible form of tyranny than could ever be established by despots or nobility".¹ Despots or nobility can be overthrown or killed, but, he continued, "you cannot kill 'the people'".

Man must accept democracy because it is the established form of government in the modern world. In accepting it, however, the Church must also accept the responsibility of elevating democracy, thereby helping in the creation of the ideal political structure.

...And if I were asked if there were one task which more than any other could be said to be the task of the Church to-day in relation to the political life of mankind, I should say it is this: to spiritualise democracy.²

This, then, is the vocation of the Church within the community and the Church must be united in its goal. As Alan Suggate argues in William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today, an integral part of Temple's philosophy was his belief in the power of vocation. Temple insisted on the importance of unity - to exert the necessary pressure on the community for change, but that pressure must be within certain limits and it must be for the ultimate good of the community. "What each one can do alone is always very little," he says, "but the way great things are done is by all doing that very little

¹ Temple, Christ in His Church, p.99.

² Ibid., p.100.

unitedly".¹

4. Temple's Leadership of Copec: Trying to Put the Social Gospel into Action

A united front in combating industrial issues was one which Temple sought to achieve with Copec. Temple, as the inspiration of Copec, insisted that its origins went back to 1909 when he was chairman of a conference of the SCM under a discussion on 'Christianity and Social Problems'.² Copec, from its beginnings, was Temple's attempt to carry forward and actively spread the teachings of the social gospel on an interdenominational level. It was, in a sense, the presentation of the matured Christian Socialism rooted in the nineteenth century and developed throughout the early twentieth century. Most importantly, Copec endeavoured to broaden the message of the Fifth Report and carry it into the daily lives of the British people.

Copec's object was to seek the will and purpose of ~~X~~ God in every aspect of life including the political, social, and industrial. Its basic assumption was that "the Christian faith, rightly interpreted and consistently followed, gives the vision and the power essential for solving social problems, not merely for the regeneration of the individual".³ This foundation was

¹ William Temple, Christian Faith and Life (London, 1931), p.132.

² F.A. Iremonger, William Temple Archbishop of Canterbury. His Life and Letters (London, 1948), p. 333.

³ Declaration from Temple's headed notepaper, as cited Alan Suggate, William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today (Edinburgh, 1987), p. 32.

founded in three points of Temple's philosophy. Firstly, it stressed the deplorable consequences of the neglect of Christian social ethics. Secondly, it affirmed that in Christ's teaching there were certain fundamental principles which, if accepted, would not just lead man to condemn much of the organization of modern society, but would show him the way to regeneration. Thirdly, it emphasized the idea that Christianity can transform the individual without which no change of policy or method can succeed.¹

In preparation for the Copec, Temple expressed hope that the Conference would approach its work from neither a conservative nor an idealist point of view. He also emphasized his belief that most Christians accepted the theories of the sacredness of personality, brotherhood of man, duty of service and sacrifice, but that Copec set out to translate them into policies of action.

Temple, Gore, Tawney, and Charles Raven² all played leading parts in the three years of preparation for Copec. The group appointed twelve commissions to study a wide variety of social questions. The commissions which presented reports at the April 1924 conference in Birmingham were not all unanimous, but there was general agreement on the report on 'Industry and Property'.

This, the longest and most extensive report, also "reflected most fully the social consciousness which the

¹ Oliver, p. 66.

² Charles Raven; Rector of Bletchingly (1920-24), Canon of Liverpool (1924-32) and later a Cambridge academic.

preceding decades had seen growing in the Churches".¹ It seemed to be a direct descendant of the National Mission's Fifth Report in that it followed directly the conviction that the existing economic order was "not merely defective, but vicious and radically unchristian".² Consequently, of all the commissions, it was this commission on 'Industry and Property' which advocated the greatest changes in existing arrangements. Although the commission insisted that industry "should be a co-operative effort adequately to supply the needs of all",³ it made it clear that it did not believe that this constituted the advocacy of "one particular type of organization universally applied".⁴ The resolutions which were passed, however, give a clear indication that the commission knew exactly what kind of system they had in mind to solve the problems of industry and property. Besides calling for payment to workers which would sufficiently "maintain the worker and his family"⁵ and for a fairer distribution of wealth and poverty, the commission resolved to press the Government to study the causes of unemployment. In doing so, it would "aim at recommending the changes...in our financial, economic and industrial system which are desirable and practicable".⁶ The Commission on Industry and Property stated further

¹ Norman, p. 298.

² Oliver, p. 70.

³ Conference on Politics, Economics and Citizenship, The Proceedings of C.O.P.E.C., 12 vols. (London, 1924), vol. 9: Industry and Property, p. 194.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Will Reason, ed., The Proceedings of C.O.P.E.C. (London, 1924), p. 290.

that industry "should be so organised that all those engaged in it shall have an increasingly effective voice in determining the conditions of their work and lives".¹

The other reports of Copec illustrated the extent of Copec's aims to transform society. No area of social concern was left untouched by Copec's committees, and the changes they proposed showed the way in which they believed the social gospel could be a part of the transformation. Most of the reports placed emphasis on what they considered to be the prerequisites for a healthy Christian society. For instance, the second report on 'Education' called for an end to class distinctions in education, and was particularly concerned with the growth of a socio-economic gap between those who receive only a primary education and those who move on to secondary education. The report moved on to call for the expenditure of great amounts of funds throughout the field of education. The Commission on Education insisted that this expenditure should "be accepted as an indispensable condition for the social, moral and spiritual progress of the nation".²

The Commission on 'The Home' used the "same combination of realism with idealism"³ in its report. It displayed a vast amount of research on the dire conditions within working-class communities, and called on Christians to work "politically and otherwise" to secure better conditions for those affected by the evils

¹ C.O.P.E.C., Industry and Property, p. 194.

² C.O.P.E.C., vol. 2: Education, p. 187.

³ Oliver, p. 68.

of industry. It called for public provisions for medical facilities and also proposed the building of houses to meet the housing shortage, thereby abolishing slums and providing "adequate means" for families to have "subsistence and the reasonable comforts of life".¹

The fifth report on 'Leisure' was, in a sense, remarkable not for its contents, but for the fact that there would be a commission appointed to study the subject. This reflected the extent to which Copec intended to take the social gospel, for the recognition of a need to work out a Christian ideal of leisure was a novel concept. Both the reports on 'The Relation of the Sexes' and 'Leisure' called for what they considered to be "healthy" recreation facilities within working-class communities. The resolutions passed by the Conference on 'Leisure' included the provision of holidays without the loss of income, better housing conditions, and more open spaces and playing fields. The commission showed middle-class paternalistic attitudes reminiscent of the Victorian Church when it called for community organization of music, drama, folk-dancing and other arts in an attempt to combat activities such as drinking and gambling which were traditionally associated with the working-classes. Further, the commission asked for greater emphasis to be placed on education about the evils of alcohol. To coincide with the mitigation of evils encountered by the working-classes, the report on 'The Treatment of Crime' called for deeper study to be

¹ Reason, p. 280.

made into the cause of crime and the treatment of offenders.

The report on 'Politics and Citizenship' is more conservative than the Fifth Report of the National Mission in that it limited the logically acceptable level of Christian concern in politics to the ultimate ends of political activity, not by the means in which achievements are reached.¹ This was an important point in that it set restrictions upon the social gospel, and foreshadowed the limitations within which many Churchmen would work during the General Strike of 1926.

Temple, as chairman of Copec, read the final message in which he emphasized the need to solve the unemployment and housing problems, to improve education, and to seek international peace. These, he said, were all issues to which Christians must devote their energies. Yet despite the enthusiasm which surrounded the actual proceedings, Copec had little immediate effect. At the time, its quest for an authentically Christian sociology was weakened by controversy amongst those groups who had undertaken the task. There were also greater and deeper reasons for its limited effects, which rose from the unforeseen circumstances in the years immediately following Copec. These events included the continuing labour disputes which culminated in the General Strike of 1926.

If Copec's importance were to be measured by the number of programmes or policies it directly influenced,

¹ C.O.P.E.C., vol. 10: Politics and Citizenship, p. 45.

it would probably be best forgotten. Its indirect influence was vast however. Copec was the continuation and expansion of the Fifth Report. It raised the awareness of many in the Church to the social gospel and the possible answers it could provide for social ills which plagued the post-war years. Two admirable long-term results of the Conference were the development of the Welfare State and the establishment of the World Council of Churches. Temple, as the predominant figure behind the movement, stands as a gauge by which to measure Henson's philosophies and answers to the post-war social question.

CHAPTER III

Henson's Social Thought

In order to understand Henson's responses to the post-war social question, we must first study the relevant aspects of his ideas about the nature of man and man's relationship with Christianity. These fundamental ideas are central to all of Henson's post-war writings, but his most formal and accessible statement of them was made in his 1936 Gifford lectures. These ideas were the foundation for Henson's criticisms of the principal Anglican manifestations of the social gospel.

Henson believed that human nature is not static, but developing - an integral part of the developing universe.¹ At the dawn of history, man is confronted by a threefold challenge: "to make his count with his own nature, with the society of which he finds himself a member, and with the physical universe which frames his life."² In responding to these challenges, man "rises to his full stature, and brings into play all the powers of his nature".³ Nevertheless, despite heredity, surrounding environment and education, for Henson man remains an individual: decisions and actions are matters for individual responsibility. This great emphasis upon the individual - so different from Temple's stress upon

¹ Hensley Henson, Christian Morality, Natural, Developing and Final. Gifford Lectures of 1935-1936 (Oxford, 1936), p. 13.

² Ibid., p. 9.

³ Ibid.

social interaction - was central to Henson's social thought.

For Henson, as for all Christians, religion is the dominating feature in man's record in history and this brings with it morality. Both religion and morality are necessary for the development of human nature, and the failure of these in the face of conditions challenging modern society would bring destruction to all that is genuinely human. It follows that Christianity nurtures the prosperity of mankind, and that its demise "would mean nothing less calamitous than the spiritual suicide of humanity".¹ Given Henson's emphasis on man as an individual, we see that for him Christianity was a venue in which each individual expresses his or her religion and morality, and it is through this religion and these morals that man is able to further his development.

However, there must be a balance between man's spirituality and his morality if human nature is to continue its development. Christianity provides the discipline required to keep human nature balanced and therefore keeps man from self-destruction. Henson saw dangers arising from the realms of science and industry, especially in the forms that they had acquired since the Great War.

For it is becoming apparent that there is something in man which must finally determine his capacity to use with intelligence and self-control the mighty instruments of power and pleasure which science places in his hands, and that science, the donor of this wealth of

¹ Henson, Christian Morality, pp. 30-31.

potencies, is quite unable to discipline and direct that vital force.¹

This balance is constantly threatened by modern society - the greed for wealth and power, and the possible corruption which accompanies innovation and industrialization - and it can only be restored by the application of Christian principles to science and industry. Christianity, as proven throughout the history of the western world, provides mankind with a guide which, if used properly, ensures the continuance of humanity. Christian principles must be accepted in three areas: in the sphere of personal behaviour, social behaviour, and within the "world-wide fellowship of the human race".²

Christian morality is the primary force behind Christian discipline. Its growth encourages the development of mankind, but Christian morality "refusing recognition to no scientific truth, and declining the test of no practical problem; yet always holding firmly to the principles of the teaching of Jesus, and pursuing the moral ideal embodied in His life"³ remains unique in the experience of mankind.

Henson argued that because Christian morality is truly compassionate, merciful, and benevolent, it is unable to tolerate any type of system which violates the natural rights of man, treats man "as chattels", or *

¹ Henson, Christian Morality, p. 316.

² Ibid., p. 317.

³ Ibid., pp. 29-30.

deprives him "of the essentially human franchises".¹ Christian morality has the power to transform which, if it is sincerely believed, will create the potential for change in society.

To what extent did Henson see this transformation moving into society and how would this change come about?

...the Christian is definitely committed to the task of drawing the general life under the control of the Moral Law. Religion is concerned primarily with individuals, and the morality which it inspires and sanctions is primarily a principle of individual conduct. The State, the social order, the working of the economic system will reflect at every stage of development the quality of the citizens. Only by subjecting individual action to the Moral Law can that Law be ultimately made supreme over the action of communities.² (w)?

Morality then, like religion, is based within the individual, and it is only through individual conduct that the transformation which ensures the constant harmony of human nature, and ultimately the safety of mankind, can take place. Therefore, Christian morality, in prescribing certain conditions of individual conduct, provides the impetus for social change.

Henson never explicitly defined what he believed the natural rights of man to be, but his ten axioms for Christian citizenship allow for a better understanding of these rights. They illustrate how Henson tied individual morality with social morality. These principles stress * hu' that man is an individual before all else. A developed individual morality serves as a basis for the growth of a

¹ Henson, Christian Morality, p. 293.

² Henson, Bishoprick Papers (London, 1946), p. 172.

social morality, which in turn serves to produce change within society.

- 1) ...Man is not to be regarded merely as an economic force. He is always, and indestructibly, a Person.
- 2) ...Whosoever pictures a man as essentially dependent on his circumstances, or as incapable of the highest manhood in the worst situations, offends the mind of Jesus.
- 3) ...Whosoever represents honest work as degrading or undesirable is in conflict with the example and teaching of Jesus.
- 4) ...Gifts and opportunities must surely be accounted for to God who gave them.
- 5) ...Wealth becomes respectable just so far as it can be stated in terms of social service. It is either an instrument or a chain. It may enable public work, or it may endanger personal liberty.
- 6) ...Bad men may promote sound policies; and no personal goodness in a politician may avert disaster if his policy be unsound. But personal badness of reform lowers the social temperature, and in the long run brings worse mischiefs than those which their reforms corrected.
- 7) Popular approbation is no security for moral rightness....
- 8) ...Liberty works from within outwards; the free man makes the free state, not the free state the free man.
- 9) The value of service is determined by the amount of self-sacrifice it involves....
- 10) ...No external authority, be it Church, State, political party, employers' federation, trade union, public opinion, can have the last word with a Christian citizen. The final court is always within the man himself^①

Individual morality is the guide which each man must use to determine social ethics: the full development of man's individual morality is therefore essential.

Henson's principles stressed the individual - the individual judgement and the individual morality - as the source of social change. This contrasted greatly to the

¹ Hensley Henson, The Kingdom of God (London, 1929), pp. 32-32

social gospel of Temple which emphasized a mutual social morality extending to claims about the social organization.

Henson believed that the ultimate model for social order had never been exemplified in an earthly state, and that social order had so little influence on individual morality that all types of social systems could be considered mutually tolerant with the Christian ~~X~~ character. Accordingly, when questions of politics or economics are discussed, there is no divinely sanctioned model with which we can base our beliefs and discussion; "nor may we clothe our essays with any greater authority than that of our own wisdom".¹

If there is no model for social morality, how then does man make decisions on a higher level? Surely there must be a guide which is more concrete than his own wisdom? In his Gifford Lectures, Henson spoke of national morality in dealing with the issue of the exploitation of African natives. Christianity in Britain was only tolerated so long as it did not interfere with national interests. If it moved beyond that limit, it was considered a threat to national welfare.

As a nation we seem committed to a contingent humanitarianism, a Christian morality with limited liability. Christianity is suffered to affect nationality so far, and only so far, as it does not interfere with what are conceived to be the national interests.²

Henson gave no indication how a Christian should ~~X~~

¹Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 109.

²Henson, Christian Morality, p. 234.

determine whether or not he is interfering with national~~x~~ interests. He did point out, however, that modern man has acquired greater influence on governmental decisions because the despotic forms of government which were tolerated in the times of Christ have changed into what we now consider to be 'democracy', and have changed the way in which Christians are called to fulfil their duty. Previously, man was limited to weapons of the spirit since the responsibility for political action was far out of his reach. Now, however, man has more direct access to government and can use his voting rights to effect change. Henson referred to man's obligation to "embody the demands of the Kingdom in a programme, and carry it into effect by the normal processes of secular politics" as his "sacred task".¹ The power that Christians hold in modern society must be exercised responsibly with the interests of the "Spiritual Kingdom" being given primary importance.

Henson believed that it is the responsibility of clergy to nurture of the development of the Kingdom. Their duty is to lead mankind closer to a harmony between Christian creed and social conduct which in turn fosters growth of the Kingdom of God on earth.

What in theory is held with even passionate conviction may, and commonly does, go along with a habit of life which seems to conflict with it. The difficult task of the preacher is to waken man to a consciousness of this contradiction between creed and conduct, and to move them to some serious effort to effect

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, pp. 114-115.

tolerable harmony between the two.¹

Henson warned however that the Church cannot hasten the natural development of the Kingdom on earth by recommending social or political programmes and by attempting to intervene in secular politics as the advocates of the social gospel believed. The only way the clergy could 'hasten the Kingdom' was to persuade men to be better Christians - but not by political action. *

Here Henson was pointing his finger towards the Christian Socialists. He claimed that it was not surprising that the Christian Socialists were as prominent as the Anglo-Catholics. After all, their "ideal of social organization lies in the past" and they "aspire to recover, not only the belief and worship of the Middle Ages, but also the social ideals and economic procedures".² Henson repeatedly linked the Christian Socialists with Medievalism. He felt that their rejection of the division of labour, machinery, and distribution of profits led them to idealize pre-reformation methods which he insisted could not uphold industry as it had developed into the twentieth century. Further, Henson believed that the Christian Socialists wanted to restore the beliefs, methods of worship, and social ideals of the sixteenth century.

The clergy is placed upon a higher plane than the laity in order to help them judge when life conflicts

¹ Henson, Christian Morality, p. 44.

² Hensley Henson, "Religion and Economics," Edinburgh Review 244 (October 1926): 214.

with morality. Therefore, the clergy may guide man towards that harmony or balance which is essential in human nature. In turn, man makes three demands of religion: he asks it to provide him with an explanation of the reason for his existence on earth; to give him an adequate account of his obligation on earth; and to provide him with the strength to fulfil his duties.⁽¹⁾ It is in helping man to answer these demands that the clergy guide the laity towards this harmony. A religion which fails to satisfy those demands is doomed to failure because it will be unable to secure the audience of thoughtful and honest people.² The Christian ministry must, therefore, be aimed towards the individual rather than society in general, or else it will fail. Christ's victory was in the individual sphere, and it is continuously renewed in the Christian experience.

The primary duty and "supreme privilege" of the clergy is to "preach this Divine Gospel of moral restoration, of renewed self-respect, of eternal hope".³ In doing so, Henson believed that both the clergy and their parishioners are able to witness Christ's power. If the clergy perform this task honestly, they are able to establish the claim that religion is the answer to man's needs. It is also the responsibility of the clergy to provide the proper principles of morality as well as the "true sanctions of Duty". Henson wrote that the clergy should help their parishioners understand the

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 121.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., pp. 128-129.

nature and extent of Christian claims, "but the less, the better". The clergy are qualified to frame Christian claims but are not charged with carrying them out.✕

Henson believed that no part of the clergy's work had become more difficult than to relate the message of Christ's moral claim. In the novel circumstances of the modern world, Henson saw the moral tradition becoming worn and limited. It would take time to revise and restate moral claims which had been effected by the conditions of modern life.

A clergyman is free to take part in secular politics and there is "nothing to hinder him, if he is so disposed, from making his position subordinate to his party interest".¹ He must, however, keep in mind that his parish helps to form his opinions on various political issues and often, due to the social disintegration, those opinions will be narrowly formed.

The classes and interests, which together make up the community, are unhappily sundered from one another in an ever-deepening isolation. Parishes are described as residential, or suburban, or industrial, or agricultural. It follows inevitably that the parish clergyman is ill placed for forming an independent judgement, or acquiring an impartial habit. He is normally associated with the representatives of a single class or interest: he commonly hears but a single version of current and disputed issues; he tends naturally to adopt the point of view which his neighbours are generally taking, and to identify himself with their aspirations.²

Henson stated that, as Bishop of Durham, he had no

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 129.

² Ibid., p. 130.

official concern with questions raised by political parties. "Commerce and politics", he wrote, "are as completely outside Christian control as Science and the harvest".¹ The most likely effect of preaching politics, he believed, is that it would confirm the congregations in the prejudices and wrong from which religion attempts to liberate them. "There is nothing distinctly Christian about forms of polity, economic systems and social programmes."² It is man's Christian duty though, to support the political party and policies which are most favourable to furthering the triumph of Christian× principles. If the clergy cover their own political opinions with an imposing character and preach them, "they 'take the Lord's name in vain', and abuse a public trust".³ It is different, however, when the clergy judge the principles and methods which make up the policies and programmes. Here, they have a duty as ordained ministers of Christianity to speak of what they see as the truth. Clergymen must stand aside from party politics because the influence, which they are required to exercise, demands that they not be partisan in party politics, but at the same time they are obligated to speak out when the ideals and procedures used to justify political or social actions do not coincide with Christian principles. If there is partisanship offered from the clergyman, he risks the alienation of his parishioners. There will be times when partisan passions will be running high and

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 39 (2 September 1925), p. 219.

² Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 177.

³ Ibid., p. 177.

this makes the clergyman's task one of great difficulty. He must not allow himself to be overcome by a tendency to subordinate morals to politics. This requires courage, and at times, may make him very unpopular. "Nevertheless, he can only keep silence at the heavy cost of losing respect, and destroying his legitimate influence. In the long run men weary of the partisan parson, and grow scornful of the time-server."¹

Here once again, Henson differed from the preachers of the social gospel who claimed that no area was outside the realms of the Church's influence. Whereas they believed that the clergy had the duty to speak against social policies and programmes effected by the political and economic system, Henson felt that the clergy's duty to speak out was limited to criticizing the assumptions on which programmes and policies are founded.

Henson believed that all political parties include Christians who are trying fervently to carry on Christ's terrestrial example. They differ because men are naturally disposed to be swayed by forces which are far beyond their control and which they do not even know exist. Individual temperament weighs heavily on one's political beliefs, and man has little control over this. Nevertheless, "we may not question that an honest Christian would not knowingly do violence to his conscience or to his reason when he decides on his political course."²

¹ Henson, Bishoprick Papers, pp. 177-178.

² Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 107.

The problem is that although Christ set an example for individual conduct, he gave no advice for the way men were to form their economic or political course. Men, therefore, must use their own best judgement.

...with respect to all these terrestrial concerns which form the staple of economic and political policies, Christ has left His Church without any such guidance as would entitle or qualify it to speak authoritatively, and that, in pursuing their individual way with the aid of such lights as are accessible to all men of good will, Christians have been fulfilling their duty.¹

Men must be careful when they attempt to create a balance between secular practice and Christian belief, for this endeavour

...may degenerate into a half-conscious attempt to create a casuistry which shall legitimate procedures which are intrinsically immoral. The zealous effort to propitiate men's prejudices by accepting their policies, systems, customs and methods may work out in a total forfeiture of moral influence.²

Here, once again we see Henson criticising the advocates of the social gospel.

If men blindly accept the policies of the State, it becomes too easy for them to fall into immorality, and into a destruction of the balance in human nature. It is therefore imperative for the Church to help guide men on secular issues such as those of an economic and political nature. This puts the Church in a difficult position because of the close nature of the relationship between

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 108.

² Ibid., p. 151.

Church and State in Great Britain. Men, however, must be careful not to accept national will as the final authority in the moral sphere.

Another aspect in which the Church is called to guide men is that of Christian duty. The old sanctions of what had been previously considered virtuous conduct seemed to have lost their validity in modern society; the boundaries of what constituted right and wrong had become weakened and blurred. Religion, Henson wrote, must respond to this problem. If it fails to do so, men will have no use for religion and will therefore turn away from it. Henson felt that men did not want a detailed casuistry which would give them a well defined answer to his questions of duty. This, he claimed, had been attempted and been found to be erroneous in the case of the Roman Catholic Church with its divinely commissioned hierarchy. Religion simply provides the principles with which men can privately and responsibly, using all available information, decide on the sanctions of duty.¹

Henson claimed that men have a charitable obligation to duty. This benevolent responsibility, he insisted, is also not well defined, nor does it have boundaries with which men are able to measure their charity, or lack of charity, towards others. Also, it cannot be enforced by secular rules because only the individual conscience can determine what obligation requires and where it ends.

You cannot stake out the limits of charitable obligation in the case of a Christian: he

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, pp. 123-124.

cannot say when he has paid his fixed quota (be it 1/10 or any larger fraction of his income), my task is done: the claim of charity is satisfied. Christ insists on another point of view from which to consider the claim of duty. He takes the summary of the Second Table from the Old Testament, and makes it the formula of his own demand: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' When a neighbour is looked at in that spirit, then duty towards him is determined, not by some fixed rule imposed from without, but by the measure of his need, and our power to assist it.¹

It is through charity that man is able to extend the Kingdom of God, and to build a harmony between the Church and the secular world. Henson pointed to Jesus' life as the ultimate example of this harmony. He paid his taxes and conformed himself to Judaism, the religion of his nation, but Jesus also made a point of amalgamating Christian principle with Jewish law. Christian liberty allows men to live in a corrupted world without giving into temptation, and in turn becoming morally depraved.

Christianity was born into an enslaved world, that is, a world disordered and corrupted, hostile therefore in many of its circumstances to the higher life for men, and for them always a scene of temptation and moral risk. Christian liberty has to be exercised under formidable difficulties, which in many respects must needs limit and restrain it.²

Christians, though, are subject to the same secular processes as non-Christians and must therefore operate through areas of secular knowledge such as politics and economics. Just because a man is a Christian, explained Henson, does not excuse him from suffering simply because

¹ Henson, Christian Liberty and Other Sermons 1916-1917 (London, 1918), p. 60.

² Ibid., p. 29.

of his faith. He is provided with neither special secular privileges, nor esoteric resources to escape the sufferings of the secular world. This has been proven throughout history and continues to be the case in modern society.

Where a whole population is reduced to starvation by a failure of the crops by reason of some physical catastrophe...Christian farmers must share the general ruin. In a battle, the shells and machine-guns make no distinction between saints and sinners. Similarly, when the tides of economic activity alter their course, as when in the sixteenth century the discovery of America substituted the Atlantic for the Mediterranean as the principal trade route in Europe; or as when the invention of some labour-saving machine throws multitudes of workmen into idleness and indigence; or as when the emergence of successful competitors destroys the industry on which a great population depends, there is not the smallest reason for thinking that Christianity can affect the situation.¹

Henson was clearly troubled by the proposals of dominant circles of thought within the Church to solve the problems of the working-classes - especially those directly related to labour and industry. He was especially critical of the assumptions that underlay these proposals. He agreed with the advocates of the social gospel that in the past, statesmen and economists had treated men as no more than instruments of production. However, he thought they were in no danger of committing the same error in the opposite extremes.² If industrialization were to be slowed down in order to give men better treatment, would not social progress also

¹ Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 331.

² Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 120.

be slowed? Would this not threaten the ultimate material and spiritual growth of mankind, his religion, his morality, and his duty? Certainly if man's development were retarded, mankind would suffer the destruction of harmony which Henson greatly feared.

At this point, Henson's theories on industrialism must be examined. Henson saw industrialism as being developed within Christendom; therefore, it has been consistently intertwined with organized Christianity throughout history. As Christianity spreads, so will industrialism. "The merchant and the missionary march hand in hand", declared Henson.¹ Because of this, Henson believed there to be a "proper connection" between Christianity and industrialism. It is necessary for Christian civilization to identify itself closely with industrialism in order "that the enormous mischiefs of industrialism may fairly be carried to the credit, that is, the discredit, of all Christian religion".² Henson was quick to point out, however, that Christianity has no essential association with any specific type of economic organization.

Henson stated in his Gifford Lectures that Christianity "cannot but affect for good" whatever becomes associated with it. It has a tendency to "strengthen in human society whatever morally sound elements it may encounter therein".³ Any economic system which is influenced by Christianity is therefore brought

¹ Henson, Christian Morality, p. 271.

² Ibid., p. 271.

³ Ibid., p. 272.

"by insensible degrees within the lines of Christian morality".¹

No enthusiasm can really alter the stern conditions under which man must live and work in such a world as this. Faith does not 'remove mountains' in the economic sphere. Its victories are in the sphere of the spirit. By multiplying good Christians society will be Christianized, and in no other way. For the task of making men Christians the Church is divinely commissioned and equipped; but there is no reason for thinking that it has any special illumination which would enable it to solve economic problems...²

Industry, wrote Henson in contrast to the advocates of the social gospel, is good in itself. Henson used St. Paul's 'If any will not work, neither let them eat' (v.2 Thessalonians iii.10.) to show that it cannot be disputed that wages and profits are to be regarded as morally legitimate. "The interchange of commodities in the mutual interest of those who exchange them, which is the essential content of commerce, is an inevitable inference from the social character of man."³

The problem with industrialism is that it has developed far beyond its simpler stages into a more complex system whereby the old connection between Christian morality and commercial success is no longer so obvious. Henson viewed industry after the war as being "cosmopolitan in range" while being "mechanical of method" - meaning perhaps that it had the potential to help in the development of mankind, but society abused

¹ Henson, Christian Morality, p. 272.

² Henson, "Religion and Economics": 226.

³ Henson, Christian Morality, pp. 275-276.

its methods so much that it had begun to hinder man's growth. Neither of these claims, he insisted, could be compatible with the strict personal claims of morality. The modern, western world is the creation of industrialism, and Henson found it difficult to see how it could continue under any other economic system. Western civilization could not be imagined without the modern comforts which only industrialism could provide. Social advance has been the result of industrialism.

Civilized society, as it now exists in Christendom, is marked by grave scandals, but it is beyond all precedent possessed of order, leisure, and the means of rational enjoyment...Consider its positive achievement in maintaining the vast populations of Christendom in a state, so far as the great majority are concerned, of comparative comfort, and you can hardly avoid the conclusion that industrialism is the most beneficent economic order known to human experience.¹

It would be a mistake to conclude that Henson accepted all aspects of the industrial system as it had developed after the Great War. The problem with industry, as Henson saw it, was the standardization of labour. Even if industrialism can be morally defended, Henson asked, would it remain so if the unavoidable consequences of its methods proved to be physically, mentally and morally harmful? This was the claim used by many supporters of the social gospel. Henson saw the other side of the argument - the fact that standardization helped to raise the living standards of the poor - and wondered if it was morally acceptable to

¹ Henson, Christian Morality, pp. 285-286.

pay such a high price for improved welfare.

The greatly increased rapidity of output makes possible such a lessening of the costs of production that standardized commodities can be brought within the purchasing power of multitudes of poor people who would otherwise be unable to enjoy them. Thus an apparent public advantage can be claimed. But - and this is the point now before us - advantage is gained at the price of the permanent debasement of the workers. Is it morally legitimate to pay that price?¹

What did Henson see as being the 'permanent debasement' of the worker? Subdivision of work and standardization robbed man of his individuality. Automation dismissed the ideal of giving free play to individual personality because it tended to be 'fool-proof'.

Industry itself...is ceasing...to develop [men's] faculties. It is, in fact, rapidly losing whatever educational value it may once have possessed. Precisely in proportion as production becomes mechanized, it loses for the mass of workers its human interest, and is stripped of its cultural values. Skill, in the old sense of the word, is little required. The protracted apprenticeships which once played so large a part in the social shame, and were an element of such great value in the education of the people, are everywhere tending to disappear, and the distinction between the skilled and the unskilled workman is wearing thin.²

Standardization degrades the individual workman, and no measure of economic advance can compensate for this loss of dignity. This loss of self-worth, together with a shortage of clergy who understand the problems of the industrial working-classes, has created areas and

¹ Henson, Christian Morality, p. 282.

² Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 350.

neighbourhoods in which generations grow up without an understanding of Christian faith and morals. These generations, wrote Henson, are devoid "of the attachments and habits which have in the past been buttresses of personal morality".¹

It is not only the workman who suffers in industrial society. The employer is also injured by having too much control over other men's lives, and by the wealth he may gain, or be persuaded to gain, as he makes decisions in industrial society. This injury not only causes upheaval amongst individual men, but the hurt brought on by the influence of wealth burrows itself deeply within the community. Wealth leads men to want to influence government, education and religion. Thus, wrote Henson

...the very springs of political life may be corrupted, and the balance of education, and even religion, may be dangerously disturbed....The mere existence of so much wealth vested in private individuals fire the imaginations of the public, sets before the young a false measure of success, and silently inducts the multitude to the sordid worship of Mammon. Vulgar profusion paraded before the masses moves both cupidity and resentment. Even the great benefactions which seem to redeem private wealth, by proving its serviceableness to the general good, are not unshadowed by formidable mischiefs...²

Henson and Temple disagreed strongly about industrialism. Temple saw only one side to industrialism: that it posed grave dangers to society. Henson believed that industrialism had two sides. It threatened the individual, but on the other hand, it

¹ Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 4.

² Henson, Christian Morality, pp. 284-285.

played an integral part in the continuing development of man.

Both Henson and Temple saw the threat to post-war society by revolutionary forces. It was within the organization of industry that both men saw this revolution arising. Unlike Temple, however, Henson wrote that it was amongst the intelligentsia that the seeds of revolution were being sowed. Henson claimed that intellectual and economic forces were co-operating with political powers in the attack on individual liberties, "of which the ultimate citadel is Christ's religion". Industrialism is being broken down, and with it the social system which it produced is being destroyed.

Christianity has been so closely bound into the fabric of industrial society that its fortunes cannot be easily disentangled, nor its essential independence vindicated without effort. The intellectual movement of the modern age has acted as a corrosive acid on the moral and spiritual tradition of Christendom with such effect, that the masses of the people are everywhere falling easy victims to the sophistries of pseudo-science and the glittering baits of revolution.¹

These 'sophistries of pseudo-science' and 'glittering baits of revolution' include all of the negative elements of modern industrial life which Henson saw as "monotonous" and "brutalizing". They were: the destruction of traditional family structure due to the influence of the congested slums; the injuries to mind and body such as drinking, gambling and lack of churchgoing due to the unavoidable conditions of urban

¹ Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 51.

life; the resentment mirrored in "savage crime"; severe dependence creating a broken spirit; and the arrogance, sensuality and overwhelming greed created by a "plutocratic society".

How then, did Henson see the Church carrying out its ministry in industrial conditions? The Christian Church, he claimed, is not responsible for political and economic leadership. Jesus never commissioned his disciples to enter authoritatively into the world's affairs. Hence, Christians are not responsible for any of the social or economic ills which befall society, and it cannot be claimed that if Christians alone did their duty, these ills would disappear. If Christians were liberated from the limitations and blemishes of human nature, if they were able to make sense of all the necessities of their mission amongst the complexities of modern society, and if they faithfully answered those callings, there would be great benefits to the world. However, because none of these conditions can ever be satisfied, it cannot be assumed that man is being wholly corrupted by modern society. This was the deepest cleavage between Henson and Temple. Temple saw it as part of the duty of both Churchman and layman to address political and economic issues. Henson believed that Churchmen were not qualified to stand as authorities in the political and economic arenas and it was therefore wrong to become involved in the controversies of those areas. The only areas Churchmen were legitimately entitled to address were the moral assumptions and methods used in justifying

programmes and policies in the political and economic spheres.

Henson did not list specific examples of the duties of the clergy in industrial communities, but he did define the kinds of activities the clergy should not encourage: "Not by breaking contracts, by methods of violence, by national strikes, and the Class War, but by patience, honesty, goodwill, industry and willing self-sacrifice must we be led out of our present difficulties".¹ Henson made it clear that although clergymen might find themselves caught between the virtues of labour and capitalism, they must remain steadfast in their obligations to their religion, morality and duty. In the end, after searching intelligently and responsibly, each clergyman must follow the law of God.

Our discipleship is to be proved in the actual contacts of life, and Christ's claims must be met when they are made. The question to be answered is always one of personal duty. Which authority is to prevail with the Christian trade unionist - the order of his trade union, or the commandment of God?²

What is the commandment which Henson spoke about? It is one, he explained, that many reformers forget in their endeavours to mitigate social evils. But it is the "core of our ministry" and it proves that only through the long process of individual redemption can the Church leave its mark on social improvement. This commandment "is

¹ Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 180.

² Henson, Christian Morality, p. 179.

entrusted in us - the truth which Christ proclaimed when he told the Pharisees, 'The Kingdom of God is within you'.¹

What did Henson mean by this? In answering this question, it is necessary to consider that Henson believed individual Christians to be swayed by two motives: to pacify their consciences by trying to harmonize their actions with their religion; and to win over secular society so that it may be Christianized. In doing so, they are able to bring about an agreement between the Church and the world.

The desire to demonstrate consistency, and the desire to 'extend the Kingdom', have induced a harmony between the Church and the World, which has ever afflicted the scrupulous and amused the sceptical.²

It is these desires which create the harmony. Christianity, being made up of individuals, creates a balance through its motives. If these motives are carried out in modern society, western will be shielded from destruction. It is in this theory that Henson brought together his views on man, human nature, morality, duty, and obligation and explained how these theories are to be applied to Church policy towards the social questions of the post-war period.

Henson believed that industrialism had contributed to secularization of post-war society. Together, these added to what he considered to be the wrong types of

¹ Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 180.

² Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 150.

social grievance and protest which included trade unions and socialism. Thus, it is the Church's obligation to counteract the spread of secularism - to restore the Christian belief and morality. Henson did not believe that social ills could be cured through the social gospel and Church efforts to transform government policy. Rather, social problems could only be mitigated by Christianizing and moralizing individual workmen and employers.

Henson insisted that it was divine guidance which the Church claimed in making its decisions during the post-war period. How then, in the face of divine guidance, did Henson use his own views to justify his criticism of the policies and movements, which were strongly influenced by the social gospel, during this time? This question will be explored at length in further chapters.

CHAPTER IV

Henson and the Church Movements 1916-1924

Henson, as was seen in the previous chapter, pointed out that the leading elements in the Church claimed Divine inspiration in forming its policies towards social issues during the post-war period. How then, in the face of this claim of Divine guidance, did Henson justify his criticism of so much of the prevailing Church attitudes towards social issues after the Great War? How did Henson apply his concepts on man, human nature, morality, and duty to the issues he faced as Bishop of Durham? Specifically, how did Henson view the Church as it emerged from the war and how did he justify his criticisms of the Enabling Act, the National Mission and Copec?

1. The Post-War Church

The Great War and its aftermath provided the impetus for the social revolution which Henson expected to develop during those years. This revolution would be the result of the lack of balance in human nature which in turn, threatened the destruction of humanity. For war inevitably weakens all the "cementing factors" of society, and, in the specific case of the Great War, the "fabric of established economic and social order had been so shaken"¹ that society was unable to reconstruct

¹ Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 315.

itself sufficiently to satisfy the needs of its population. The resulting unemployment led to "idleness and privation". This left an opening for a situation to be "created in which destructive theories (and notably Communism, the most coherent and thoroughgoing of them all) could commend a ready welcome".¹ Both the written and unwritten laws of tradition and habit were to be thrown aside in the disruption.² This included the laws of Christian tradition within British society.

Not very reasonably, but none the less very naturally, the guilt of the appalling calamity was ascribed to the conditions under which civilized mankind had been living before the War, and the first thought which occur[r]ed to men, as they returned to the long-suspended activities of civic life, was to effect an extensive 'reconstruction' of their discredited arrangements, political, social, economic, and also ecclesiastical.³

Henson believed the war left many troubled and rejecting the institutions which had previously been fundamental in British life - including the Church of England. "Thousands of English Christians", Henson wrote, "found themselves, as they supposed, confronted suddenly by the demonstration of the Church's failure, and they turned angrily on the familiar and now discredited Christianity in which they had been reared, and clamoured for a new and more satisfying version of Christ's Religion...".⁴ Many people were seeking a religion which could be brought closer to their lives; something which

¹ Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 316.

² Hensley Henson, Retrospect, 1: 306.

³ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 16.

⁴ Ibid., p. 75.

would better help them understand the problems facing modern society. During the war, those who labelled themselves as churchgoers rose, but certainly this was due to the fact that in their grief, so many had turned to religion for comfort. After the war, the clergy found the church pews to be empty.¹

Henson believed that discontent with the existing Church during the post-war period expressed itself in two different ways. Firstly, it began to change the practical organization of the Church. The embodiment of this change was the passage of the Enabling Act, which would later be seen to represent "something of this immediate post-war mood of emancipation and enlightenment".² Secondly, there was an effort made to provide an alternative to the Church's previous social teachings. This, Henson claimed, found its expression in Copec.³

2. The Enabling Act

In Henson's opinion Parliament, by passing the Enabling Act, surrendered its control of ecclesiastical legislation and approved, with little discussion, a new constitution for the National Church. For him, this was the final revelation of the Church's deteriorating influence in British social and political life which had begun long before the Great War.

Henson altogether disagreed with the Bill and tried

¹ Wilkinson, pp. 291-293.

² Hastings, p. 18.

³ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, pp. 16-17.

to organize opposition to it in the House of Lords. He claimed that the time was not right for such a move. The country did not demand the Enabling Act, there had not been enough discussion by Parliament before its passage, nor was there enough understanding of its consequences by Churchmen. Henson wrote ten letters to The Times between March and December 1918 in an attempt to conquer the "indifference in the laity, the ignorance of the clergy, the timidity, unconcern, or complaisance of the bishops",¹ but his efforts failed and the Bill was easily passed.

In saying that the Act was not demanded by the nation, nor understood by the Church, nor debated enough before its passage, Henson blamed a group who he considered responsible for much of the unnecessary post-war policy on social issues: the prominent Anglo-Catholics within the Church. For it was "the ultramontane and the sectary who would agree in so understanding it [the Enabling Act] as wholly to disallow the distinctive features of the 'Establishment' as we have known it in England since the Reformation".²

The group who pushed the Act through Parliament were "small but vehement", and had ignored popular opinion. It is here that Henson laid a foundation for much of criticism of Church policy after the war. The duty of reformers is "not merely [to] satisfy themselves" in those changes which they make; rather those changes are

¹ Henson, Retrospect, 1: 303.

² Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 31.

to be concordant with popular demand which will aid in making it likely that they will be "approved, accepted, and assimilated".¹

It is the disease of sectarianism which Henson feared would bring the Church to its knees as a result of the Enabling Act.

It will indeed be lamentable if, precisely at the time when the Christian conscience is everywhere wearying of sectarianism and seeking some adequate expression of Christian fellowship, the Church of England, which in history, theory, and temper, has expressed the larger view of religion, should itself incline a truly sectarian exclusiveness. That there is a real danger of this cannot, I think, be disputed, nor that the danger is gravely increased by the merely congregationalist tendency to which the Enabling Act has brought so powerful a stimulus.²

Henson's doubts about the Enabling Act stemmed from the fact that he saw it as inconsistent with both the name and claim of the National Church. Henson was as "the complete Protestant",³ but ironically he feared that the Act forced the Church to become just another denomination of Christianity. Those who sought the unity of British Christianity would be forced to follow either the strict hierarchy of Roman papacy or the vast theological interpretations of the American Federation of Protestant Churches. Both of these alternatives, Henson found "naked and repulsive".

The present condition of membership in the Church of England is simply identical with the

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 39.

² Ibid., p. 43.

³ Hastings, p. 52.



condition of membership in the Church of Christ. In future that will not suffice, but must be supplemented by a declaration, which implies that the Church of England is no longer 'all who profess and call themselves Christians' within the country, but only a section of them.¹

For Henson, the passage of the Enabling Act revealed what many had suspected in the years preceding the war - the extent of the Church's decline in both social and political importance. In obtaining the Bill, there had been more interest in securing a fuller expression of the spiritual independence of the Church than a fuller understanding of the national recognition of religion. Henson argued that the spiritual independence of the Church needed to be considered equally with the spiritual recognition of religion. If this was not done, spiritual independence would easily gain a definition "which could never be harmonized with the idea and constitution of the National Church".² The national recognition of the Church alone was, to Henson, an unrealistic goal. The Church would not be able to reach it effectively when its concerns were those of such a small percentage of the national population.

More deeply, however, it is clear that Henson objected to the Enabling Act largely because he saw it as precursor to disestablishment. Henson believed that "the adoption of any clerically controlled machinery to make an at least partial measure of ecclesiastical

¹ "Church and State - a Bill Passed and an Ideal Destroyed," The Times, 15 December 1919, p. 10.

² Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 32.

self-government was effectively equivalent to disestablishment".¹ Because of the increasing influence of the Anglo-Catholics - especially amongst the Church hierarchy - he did not trust the Church with increased self-government. Henson argued that Establishment had to be maintained in order to ensure the rights of the laity. By reducing the connections between Church and Nation, disestablishment would reduce the influence of religion in national life, and create conditions for further advance of secularism, materialism, atheism, socialism, and class war. In moving towards disestablishment, the Church was accepting the idea that it was no longer the body for which every Englishman had some responsibility.

Rather than accepting the oncoming tides of disestablishment, Henson fought them, arguing that there should be no dividing line between Church and State. Hence, the nation could still have a voice in what continued to be, in theory, the National Church. Eventually, Henson had to acquiesce in the Enabling Act and its resultant consequences, and although his loyalty to the Church remained steadfast, he continued, even after changing his position on disestablishment in the late 1920s, his criticism of the Act.

As a 'go as you please Church' it can dispense with principles, ignore standards and despise consistancy [sic]. But if it should happen that the public patience should fail under strain, and the public conscience revolt against moral paradox implicit in such a state of affairs, there would be a quick ending of a Church which in any coherent or tolerable sense had ceased

¹ Hastings, p. 52.

to justify its name and claim.¹

Henson believed that the Enabling Act would lead to a decreased Church influence in national life. More importantly, however, he thought that it would increase the influence of the Anglo-Catholic advocates of the social gospel within the Church. The Enabling Act would ensure that these Churchmen would no longer have the strong counter-weight of conservative laymen and would therefore, as the dominant body of social thought within the Church, be able to transform their principles into movements and programmes with little opposition. Henson was correct; as the advocates of the social gospel gained influence, movements such as the National Mission and Copec further expanded the social gospel and aided in the creation of Church social policy.

3. The National Mission

Henson believed that Copec was the expression of the Church's effort to provide an alternative to its previous social teachings. Before studying Henson's views towards Copec, however, it is important to look first at his criticisms of the National Mission, and its Fifth Report which served as Copec's immediate predecessor and the foreshadow of dominant Church thought on social issues after the Great War.

When Davidson opened the National Mission in October 1916, Henson immediately criticized the enigmatic

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 36 (14 January 1924) p. 122.

character of the Mission. Henson found the content of Davidson's opening speech "vague and even perplexing". This was a criticism which Henson repeated again and again in reference to the Mission. The high expectations of the Mission, wrote Henson, were doomed to failure.¹

Henson agreed with others in the Church that the religious needs of the nation required examination and that further efforts must be made to meet those needs. But he was sceptical about the fundamental idea behind the Mission - that the war was the punishment of God for national sins, and that the destruction which it carried would end only when there was adequate national repentance. Henson saw this view as "sufficiently simple".²

Henson disagreed with the methods on which the National Mission, as a reflection of the Church, depended to meet spiritual needs. Although he seemed to make a genuine effort to understand the National Mission, Henson feared that it was being heavily influenced by the increasingly Anglo-Catholic High Church circles. He attended three Mission addresses and wrote that he "listened with a genuine desire to understand" its purposes, but he consistently referred to the Mission's methodology as 'shibboleths' - indicating that he believed it to be both Anglo-Catholic and reactionary in nature. Stress was placed on "the old familiar exhausted

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 20 (12 October 1916), p. 314.

² Ibid. (6 July 1916), p. 502: conversation between Henson and William Seres, a vicar in Thanet.

shibboleths of the High Church Faction - daily service, Holy Communion as a substitute for Mattins, 'definite Church teaching', the failure of 'undenominational' Christianity!"¹

Thus, the methods of the Mission would be outdated. "The pre-suppositions on which they depend and which alone can give them a raison d'être", Henson wrote, "have largely vanished even from religious minds".² These presuppositions must have something to do with Henson's idea that the mission was conventional, its methods worn out, and therefore, useless.

This much-trumpeted 'National Mission' appears to become more utterly conventional everyday. Those who are running about the country exhorting little companies of puzzled women have no vision of any larger teaching than that which has passed on their lips for years past, and been admittedly powerless. A dervish like fervour cannot be maintained, and is not illuminating or morally helpful.³

On 23 November 1916, Henson wrote a letter to The Times which had been provoked by the pronouncement made by Archbishops Davidson and Lang outlining the Mission.⁴ In writing the letter, Henson attempted to "direct attention to the sly conspiracy for 'rushing' the Church while everybody is obsessed with the war".⁵ Here Henson displayed hints that perhaps it was not just the methods and procedures of the Mission with which he disagreed.

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 20 (11 April 1916), p. 678.

² Ibid. (26 May 1916), p. 604.

³ Ibid. (6 October 1916), p. 328.

⁴ Hensley Henson, "Changes in the Church of England. A Warning and a Protest," The Times, 25 November 1916, p. 11.

⁵ Henson Journals, vol. 20 (25 November 1916), p. 214.

Rather, he seemed to become almost obsessive about the Mission being heavily influenced by the Anglo-Catholics.

The Church, Henson believed, was being run by Gore and his "disciples". He accused the Archbishops of having become "mere echoes" of Gore and noted in reference to the Report on Church and State that "whatever may have been the intentions of the members of that Committee originally started, they soon sank into the position of mere registrars of Gore's dogmata".¹

Henson saw the clergy suffering the most due to the power exerted by the Anglo-Catholics over the Mission.

Certainly this so-called 'National Mission' places the clergy, who disapprove and even dislike that religious method in a very disagreeable position. We are being flooded with prayers for public, domestic and private use...It is difficult to use these sincerely and effectively without immersing oneself in hypocrisy, or being coerced into conduct which runs counter to one's deliberate judgement. The issuing of prayers for use in the churches is a subtle method of compelling the reluctant clergy to 'come into line' with episcopal directions!²

Henson's accusation that certain circles of thought and individuals were using a "subtle method of compelling" clergymen into the National Mission hints that Henson believed the Church used the Mission to suffocate individualism. The Mission, after all, as a movement reflecting the influence of Gore, Temple and other advocates, stressed corporate sin and repentance, while Henson placed emphasis on individual repentance.

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 20 (31 December 1916), p. 194.

² Ibid. (26 May 1916), p. 604.

The burden of Jesus' gospel, believed Henson, is twofold. Firstly, the Kingdom could^{be} nurtured on earth. Secondly, the only way it will do this is to multiply its disciples. Men within whom the Kingdom is already established are responsible for furthering the Kingdom within society. They are to foster the Kingdom's growth by permeating society with their influence. This must be done on an individual, not a social, level. Society must be reformed through men; not men through society.

Christians are charged with the duty of setting up Christ's Kingdom on earth....And the method by which they are to fulfil their commission is by subjecting themselves to that Kingdom, and showing in themselves, and in the sphere of their personal influence, what it means....It is indeed a very slow, gradual, unexciting method. Accordingly, it is ever regarded by enthusiasts with dislike and even disgust. But the more direct methods which enthusiasm favours have never succeeded. Failure always shadows the use of force in the warfare of the Kingdom.¹

Henson believed the Christian method of setting up the Kingdom on earth to be a slow process, initiated in the hearts of men as individuals. This "keeps the system and its exponents in harmony".² Once again, Henson emphasized on harmony which was essential in the continuance of Christendom.

Henson stood out amongst Churchmen as the prominent critic of the National Mission. Though he placed Durham Cathedral at the hands of the missionaries, Henson avoided any direct involvement with them. He also made

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 113.

² Ibid., p. 114.

it clear to the minor canons of Durham Cathedral that he had no objection to their involvement with the Mission, so long as their obligations to the Cathedral were not being neglected.

Henson believed that if any sort of religious revival were to take place, it would emerge from outside the Church. The Church of England was too divided to undertake the responsibility of the National Mission. This, and the use of outdated methods, worked against any possible success of the Mission.

It seemed to me that the Church of England was too inwardly divided to make effective corporate appeal to the Nation; that the nature and the extent of the indispensable re-statement of the Christian Message were still too little realized by English Churchmen; and that, if a 'National Mission' were actually undertaken, its temper and method would almost inevitably be determined by the professed and professional missionaries, who were likely to be either able or willing to alter their accustomed procedure.¹

Henson's most ardent criticism of the National Mission was directed towards the Fifth Report which he attacked as being "eloquent, interesting, full of irrelevant learning, and in substance and effect a socialist tract".² A few years after it was published, Henson wrote that the most influential spirits of the Report obviously came from Lansbury, Tawney, "and their episcopal shadows, Gore, Talbot, Kempthorne and Woods".³ In his criticisms of the Fifth Report, Henson outlined

¹ Henson, Retrospect, 1: 179.

² Hensley Henson, "The Church and Socialism," Edinburgh Review 231 (January 1920): 6.

³ Henson Journals, vol. 25 (7 October 1919), p. 205.

his disagreements with the social gospel and foreshadowed his reactions to other social movements in the Church during the post-war years. In doing so, Henson presented a comprehensive guide to the way he believed the Church should mitigate social ills.

Henson found the Report's conclusions to be deficient of foundation. He pointed out that the words and phrases used lacked substance and that its demands were economically unsound. The Report placed emphasis on 'the sacredness of human life', 'the rightfulness of the claims of liberty of development, and 'the equality of opportunity', wrote Henson, but in order for these to be obtained on earth, if at all, there must first "be a long process of individual regeneration. No adjustments and reconstructions of society could of themselves secure them".¹

One of the chief reasons for the Report's lack of substance was that the committee ignored "science and experience", and began its study on moral premises. This was a fundamental flaw, wrote Henson. Moral premises cannot secure social reform. "First, the economic basis of society must be made secure, the social fabric can be reared with confidence that it will be stable."²

Henson had a difficult time accepting the Committee's interpretation of a Christian society. Christian ideals place emphasis on general guidance and principles whose "right application" is "slowly

¹Henson, "The Church and Socialism," : 11.

²Ibid.: 8.

discovered" through experience. Being discontented with these ideals, the Committee examined the history of social relationships, and showed "a marked sympathy with the patristic and medieval phases of social development, in which the complexity and vastness of modern industry were unknown, and the religious direction of economic activity was comparatively simple".¹ As a result, Henson believed the Report's judgement of the industrial revolution was both "hostile" and "unfair", and led the Report to take on a revolutionary tone.

In ignoring economic principles and condemning the industrial system, the Committee called for reforms which were economically unsound because there would be no funds to support them if the industrial system were to be completely replaced.

'The living wage, with adequate leisure and security of employment,' and all the long list of desirable things which 'Christian' citizens are told to insist upon, are only possible if industry be sufficiently plentiful and remunerative to sustain the cost, that is, if men will work to such effect, and under such conditions, that the product of their labours can provide all these terrestrial boons.²

Henson also found difficulty accepting the Report because it was an "endorsement of the Socialist~~X~~ indictment of industrialism" which he claimed was "founded on the wrong principle".³ In revolutionizing society, socialism uses coercion, which Henson claimed, degrades the human character and aids in moral injury. C

¹ Henson, "The Church and Socialism," : 12.

² Ibid.: 8-9.

³ Ibid.: 13-14.

What economic hardship can compare in moral injury with the silent ubiquitous terrorism which lies behind the successful organisation of a 'lightning strike'? Which inflicts the deeper wound on the self-respect of the individual - a reduction of wage, or a compulsion to break faith with an employer? Which injures the quality of citizenship the most - an extension of hours, or 'direct action' against the State? Which conflicts most sharply with 'the royal law' of the Gospel - unemployment or sabotage?...Socialism falls foul of human nature itself.¹

The Report lacked the moderating language normally expected in a semi-official Church document. Henson therefore accused it of containing the "same exaggeration of existing ills: the same over-estimate of possible reforms: the same contempt for political economy: the same insistence upon a dramatic new departure: the same emphatic denunciation of the Church's 'failure'"² as the publications of the Church Socialist League.

The Report was unrepresentative of Church thought, argued Henson. It was "deeply regrettable" that the Report, "on the gravest of practical subjects," should have been published and distributed without first being "considered" by the bishops and the convocations and its economic doctrines should have also been examined by economic experts.³ In doing so, the Report alienated large parts of the laity which, to Henson, seemed inexcusable for a National Church.

Henson's criticisms of the National Mission and the Fifth Report were based upon his fundamental beliefs that

¹ Henson, "The Church and Socialism," : 25

² Ibid.: 15.

³ Ibid.: 25.

man, as an individual, must be transformed before he could effect change within society. By encouraging socialism, and socialist thought in general; and alienating the laity, the National Mission, as reflected in the Fifth Report, were placing society before the sanctity of the individual. They were also encouraging the disturbance of individual development which was essential for the eventual growth of the Kingdom. On these grounds, Henson concluded the Mission to be a failure.

4. Copec

Henson's fundamental criticism of Copec stemmed from his belief that it had two mutually incompatible objectives. The first was to better the conditions under which people, specifically the working-classes, lived by redistributing the wealth industrialism had brought. Secondly, Henson believed that Copec set out to destroy that "wealth-creating system" and replace it with something deficient in those components which had stimulated and nurtured the wealth necessary for curing social ills.

To secure the first is to prohibit the last. The critics of 'Industrialism' are so obsessed by its darker features that they do not perceive its substantial merits; and, in their eagerness to get rid of the first, they do not stop to consider whether they can still secure the last.¹

Henson rejected the assumption of Copec that the

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 98.

vast majority of the British working population were oppressed. He described his mining neighbours as a "cheerful set of men who know perfectly well that it is sheer nonsense"¹ to see themselves as downtrodden figures. He also believed, despite admitting that industrialism contained many faults, that it was wrong for Christians blindly to accept the idea that industrialism must be replaced by another system. The subversion of the industrial system, Henson wrote, could bring with it more evil than industrialism had brought in the first place. "Is it not the plainest prudence in these high concerns, which affect the actual sustenance of millions of people, to avoid 'heroic' courses, and to hesitate long before abandoning the beaten road of experience?"²

In using the word industrialism here, Henson clearly intended the word to stand for an economic system synonymous with both private enterprise and capitalism. Henson believed there was danger in placing too much criticism on private enterprise's production of the "unsatisfactory" distribution of wealth - the "fruit" of industry. Such criticism threatened the stability of industry by allowing labour, the chief rival of capital, to gain unwarranted strength. Rather than wiping out capital in the interests of labour, insisted Henson, there was a need for man to find a compromise between the two. If this could not be found, there would arise the

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 103.

² Ibid., pp. 100-101.

danger of total societal disorder.

'Labour' and 'Capital' have succeeded 'Protestantism' and 'Catholicism' as the grand rivals whose struggle for supremacy threatens the downfall of civilization...The religious conflict ended in a disruption of Christendom, some nations becoming permanently Protestant, and some remaining finally Catholic. There can be no such settlement of the economic conflict, for 'Labour' and 'Capital' are not capable of geographical distribution. They are bound together inextricably over the whole area of economic life. Accordingly they must discover some tolerable terms of co-existence and co-operation, or society itself will break up into ruinous anarchy.¹

Although Copec's achievements were not particularly remarkable, Henson devoted part of his 1924 visitation charge, Quo Tendimus?, to attacking it. Rather than finding fault with Copec alone, he criticized the prevailing social doctrine of the post-war Church. Copec, Henson asserted, was not representative of British Christianity, rather it was the product of a small group of "enthusiastic Socialists and total abstainers" whose "ardour gives them a range of influence out of all proportion to their numbers..."² Once again, Henson compared the group's principles to those found within Medievalism. The industrial methods of the Middle Ages were far too outdated to sustain the pressures of the modern world and man cannot return to the past in order to solve the problems of modern society.³ Henson feared that the methods of this small group would prove

¹ Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 174.

² Henson, "Religion and Economics," 214-215.

³ Hensley Henson, "Medievalism No Solution," The Review of the Churches 1 no. 2 (April 1924): 162.

unsuccessful because in the long run, religion would be restricted.

'Copec' was no more than a throwback to an outgrown method of Christianising society. The civilized world will never again accept the control of the Catholic Church, however organized; nor will its multiplying problems find solution in unauthorized casuistries....The problems of modern industry are so largely determined by impersonal - that is, by non-moral factors, that their solution can never be gained by the direct action of organized religion.¹

Henson, because of his "grave misgivings" about Copec, did not see any reason for inviting the Durham Diocesan Conference to choose delegates for it and thereby forge official links with the Conference. Henson had prejudged the Conference and its proceedings. There is no clear indication why he should have acted in such a way. However, evidence suggests that his reasons could have been rooted in his animosity towards the Anglo-Catholic movement. He later pointed the blame at Davidson and the Anglo-Catholic element in the Church, which as we saw earlier, Henson closely linked with the advocates of the social gospel.

The truth is that everybody from the Archbishop of Canterbury downwards rushed into acclaiming 'Copec' before they had any real knowledge of what they understood by it, and now they 'have burned their boots', and, of course, resent any demonstration of their folly. The powerful socialistic current runs with the Anglo-Catholic movement to repudiate a pronouncement which condemns both.²

¹ Henson, "Religion and Economics," : 216.

² Henson Journals, vol. 38 (1 January 1925), p. 145.

In his criticism of Copec, Henson expressed a difficulty of freeing from the controversy over the "competing policies of social and economic reform"¹ that which may be labelled as 'Christian' and should be upheld by Christian citizens, as individuals; and by the Church, as a corporate entity. This, once again, goes back to a controversy which always seemed to trouble Henson when social policy was in question: corporate versus individual. On these questions, Henson always gave the same answer: the individual comes before the corporate entity.

Given his fundamental beliefs, it is not surprising that Henson claimed Copec's "cardinal fallacy" to be the priority it gave to transformation of society over that of the individual. For Henson, the distinctive feature of Christ's method is that it places emphasis on individual transformation. It is an essential part of Christianity that world redemption must therefore be effected through the redemption of individuals. In explaining this, Henson challenged the basic assumption of prevailing Christian social doctrine and expressed his disagreement with the predominant attitudes on inter-war social policy within the Church. He asked why it was "inconsistent with Christianity to think that, on the whole and in the long run, people are best left alone to organize their recreations for themselves within the large limits prescribed by the law of public opinion, and

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 106.

general interest?"¹

Henson's strongest accusation against Copec was that the Conference was never able to decide what it was supposed to be doing, and by what authority it was supposed to be acting. Henson found fault with the Conference's neglect of precise study, facts and argued reasoning. The subjects on which Copec passed resolutions were ones which called not for rhetoric, but "for exact information, for measured language, for calm and balance statement....Excited public meetings are not favourable to serious discussion".² This criticism links directly to Henson's insistence that science and economics are essential in formulating knowledge and policy on secular issues. How

Henson also found fault with the Conference's interpretation of the New Testament. He felt it was misleading to believe that the lessons of the New Testament may be applied blindly, with little foundation, to the problems of modern society. To use the gospel alone, wrote Henson, is not enough because the questions which are being asked concern politics and economics which are areas beyond the basic truths addressed in the gospel. By challenging the Conference's basic assumption that the Gospel provided the solutions to all problems encountered in earthly life, Henson questioned the idea that the Kingdom of God could actually be established on earth. The principle of divine guidance; man following

¹ Henson, *Quo Tendimus?*, pp. 104-105.

² *Ibid.*, p. 88.

his own individual conscience which has been formed with Christian principles, must be used together with the New Testament when issues such as economics and politics are addressed. Through historicity, we know that what has come to exist, because of Divine guidance, is right.

Within its own sphere it [the New Testament] is supreme, but there are other spheres in which the attempt to assert its supremacy can only lead to disaster. The whole process of human life since man moving out of aboriginal bestiality, became moral agents, is inspired, and therefore the witness of Divine Guidance is to be perceived over the whole field of human endeavour.¹

The principles emphasized by Copec were based on the idea of co-operative discipleship leading to the spread of Christianity and ultimately the strengthening of the Church. Henson argued against this point by insisting that discipleship can only be fostered through individuals rather than through a group as suggested by the ideals of co-operative discipleship.

Henson believed that the novelty of Copec was not the substance of its message, but in the methods of its messengers and the expanse of its claims. Copec's message had already been transmitted by the Fifth Report, but the transmission of the message into all realms of life had not been attempted or experienced previously. The balance of power after the war had "shifted from the 'classes' to the 'masses'". Meanwhile, Henson wrote, the Church resisted any sort of break from its past policies in order that it "inaugurate a new version of

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 88.

Christianity less artificial, less shadowed, and less practically futile than the old".¹ It was in such a society that programmes such as those encouraged by Copec could not survive because the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth assumes all men to be Christian as one of its foundations. Until the Christianization of all men is accomplished, "there will be disastrous reactions, far-reaching scandals, a 'last state' which is 'worse than the first'".²

The goals Copec set for itself were impossible to fulfil. Because Copec withdrew from the conventional spheres of raising individual Christian awareness and entered into the realms of politics and economics - meaning that it was trying to impose its programmes and resolutions on a national level - it would not succeed. Christian politics and economics should not be forced on a nation of people who have no interest in applying Christian ethics to the society in which they live.

It [Copec] enters the arena of current politics, formulates for Christian citizens an elaborate programme of civic action covering a whole field of national life, and proposes this programme for acceptance as the policy of the nation, the majority of whose citizens are in no effective sense Christian, that is, lack the essential condition in applying Christian ethics in the life of society.³

Here, once again, Henson used the argument of society becoming increasingly secular. His use of the same argument once more proves an interesting point in

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 78.

² Ibid., p. 114.

³ Ibid., p. 87.

studying him during the inter-war years. He clearly realized that the Church's power, as a national church, was waning. Yet he publicly remained loyal to the principle of establishment.

The Conference, in taking its name, had enveloped itself in ambiguity. He stated that to label as Christian the "politics, economics and citizenship of a society of convinced and consistent Christians is one thing", but to do the same "in such a mingled society as that of modern England may be quite another".¹

This "mingled society" which Henson saw was one easily susceptible to the anarchy which would be inevitable if harmony could not be found between capital and labour. In Copec's ignorance of historical and practical experience, it formulated social policies which catered to the 'class-consciousness' which leads to further destruction of moral law.

The parallel between 'Christianity' as represented by 'Copec' and 'Labour' as represented by its extremists is suggestively close in at least one important particular. Both insist on a distinctive and isolated handling of history and politics. They will not accept the general stream of human tradition, and take their place within it; but must vindicate a separate point of view, a recognizable distinct influence and objective. The result is bad enough in the case of 'Labour', for the particularist temper known as 'class-consciousness' obliterates the frontiers of right and wrong, and leads...to the most shocking violations of moral law.²

Henson concluded that the Conference's

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 149.

² Henson Journals, vol. 37 (9 August 1924), p. 142.

interpretation of the New Testament was, at times, both "arbitrary" and "doubtful". Copec should have been more critical in its use and handling of the New Testament, for its interpretation lent itself too easily to the conclusions which the Conference made. Henson therefore believed that Copec's conclusions were, to a layman, convincing. To Henson, however, they remained unconvincing.

The resolutions of Copec came under Henson's stern criticism. Gore had said that social reconstruction and industrial problems could only be dealt with effectively if handled on an international basis. Henson pointed out that if this had been remembered at Birmingham, Copec and its resolutions would have taken on a much different form.¹ Clearly Henson felt that the resolutions were too narrow in scope and lacked any real substance. He therefore questioned the resolutions' call for further inquiry.

After committing itself to a series of Resolutions to the most drastic changes in the existing industrial system, the conference asks for a searching enquiry in order to find out the changes which are desirable and practicable! Is it unworthy of a Christian citizen to think that if such an enquiry be needed at all, it can only be needed to assist us to reach conclusions, not...to justify conclusions already reached.²

Henson read five of Copec's twelve reports during August 1924. After reading the first report, 'The Nature of God and His Purpose for the World' which was meant by

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 102.

² Ibid.

the committee to give a theological foundation for the more practical suggestions of the later reports, Henson ironically declared it to be "an excellent example of a priori reasoning", and accused it of proceeding "with courageous indifference to the actual facts which yet it has to deal with".¹ The language of the report was bathed in a romantic interpretation of the Gospels as demonstrated by Raven as he declared, "Only as we keep strong our family life in Him can we bring His beauty, His order, His righteousness, His love into our home here on earth".² Henson believed that such language and approach set a weak basis for the actual issues which Copec set out to handle. In his criticism of the first report, Henson laid a foundation for his criticism of other reports he read.

He next read the fifth report, 'The Social Function of the Church', which dealt with the political role of Christianity. The report recommended the establishment of an interdenominational Christian council to carry on Copec's work in the area of social research. Although this was never achieved, it was this report which had the strongest influence on the subsequent development of Christian social thought. It took Henson two attempts to read the report. His subsequent criticism echoed that of the first report in that he called it "curiously immature and doctrinaire" and then went on to accuse the committee of ignoring "history, and the facts which confront

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 37 (4 August 1924), p. 139.

² Reason, The Proceedings of C.O.P.E.C., p. 27.

them".¹

Henson also read the reports on 'Education', on which he did not comment; 'Christianity and War', which he described as "a pacifist production"²; and 'Politics and Citizenship'. It is Henson's reaction to 'Politics and Citizenship' which proves most interesting and gives the best indication of how he felt politics should be dealt with in terms of Christianity. Henson labelled the report as being "distinctly saner than the other reports".³ It is a more conservative report than the Fifth Report of the National Mission which Henson so vehemently criticized in that it limited the scope of Christian concern in politics to the ultimate ends of political activity, not the means by which they may be achieved. This attitude confirmed Henson's belief that the Christian Church had no reason to be delving into the issues which Copec highlighted.

Henson asked rhetorically if it was necessary, in light of his criticisms of the resolutions, that he support them. If he did not, would he be sinning? Henson saw it as his obligation to dissent from what seemed, from an outsider's view, to be the opinion of the majority of High Churchmen. By doing so, he believed that he might keep Copec from being sanctioned by the Church.

Am I really required as a Christian to endorse them none the less? And, if I will not

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 37 (5 August 1924), p. 139.

² Ibid. (13 August 1924), p. 147.

³ Ibid. (11 August 1924), p. 145.

renounce my own judgement, am I to be censured as sinning against the Divine guidance? and ought I presently, when the 'Copec' policy has triumphed, to be subjected to 'corporate discipline' as 'sinning against the brethren'? These questions serve to bring out the true nature of the claim advanced for 'Copec' and, I trust, indicate sufficiently why it was my plain duty to sanction nothing which could tend to clothe the proceedings at Birmingham with an official character.¹

Henson's most practical complaint of Copec was its ignorance of the expense of the expansive programmes which it advocated. He accused the Conference of having "lightly handled" the question of finance and doubted that many of the resolutions would have been passed had those voting been held responsible for carrying out the recommended programmes. Henson argued that, in light of the heavy tax burden which many carried in Britain in 1924, there was ample justification in disagreeing with Copec's resolutions. The tax burden was so heavy that it endangered economic recovery, and the nation would therefore be better off keeping costly reforms to a minimum until the money for them could be found elsewhere.²

In studying this last criticism, one must wonder if Henson was justified in his claims. In examining the resolutions, it becomes obvious that although many of the resolutions passed did not directly call for the expenditure of vast sums, most advocated changes in the existing system which would, on a long term basis, spend huge amounts of money in both the private and public

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, pp. 105-106.

² Ibid., p. 98.

sectors.

As stated in previous chapters, the various commissions called for changes to the existing political, economic and social system. These changes would not be financially feasible, nor would such extensive changes to society be practicable. This was exactly the kind of change Henson was against. It was such resolutions which forced Henson to lash out at Copec as being unrealistic in its expectations of social change. History seemed to prove that Copec could not create the perfect lasting society.

This changing planet which moves ever towards a destruction which, however remote, is beyond all question certain, is not fitted to provide the scene of a perfect society. If 'Copec' could prevail at a stroke, and its whole programme be forthwith adopted: if, moreover, together with the reconstruction of society on its principles the whole population could be inspired by its spirit, what guarantee of stability could this Kingdom of God on earth possess?...The earth carries the ashes of civilizations which have flourished and fallen on its surface. Western civilization, however richly charged with ethical purpose, carries within itself no secret immunity from the common fate.¹

Henson was certainly warranted in his criticism of the lack of financial awareness shown by Copec's commissions. The reports of the various commissions were soaked in naive idealism. With the exception of 'International Relations', 'Christianity and War' and 'Politics and Citizenship', all of the reports recommended resolutions which called for changes and

¹ Henson, "Religion and Economics," : 220.

improvements in society which would involve, directly or indirectly, the expenditure of funds. None of the reports gave any indication of how the costs of these reforms would be made.

Overall, Henson saw Copec and its resolutions as lacking substance and practicability. Copec was, wrote Henson, "altogether irresponsible; and, therefore, free to indulge the luxury of programme-framing without reference to those obstinate facts which a responsible statesman...must needs consider".¹ Because of this lack of responsibility, Copec was able to emanate a "sense of benevolence". However, it did not in any way provide suggestions for raising the level of conduct within British society. "As it entailed no self-sacrifice, so it will bring no moral improvement."²

Henson's criticisms of Copec and the developed social gospel were based on two principles. Firstly, because it lacked the instruments of secular coercion, the Church could not hope to impose programmes upon an increasingly secular society. The Church would only be able to advance its ideas successfully if society were re-Christianized through individuals. Secondly, attempts by the Church to advance social and political programmes were likely to alienate large parts of the British population. This was due to the fact that non-Christians would reject the Church's claims and Christians would see that these programmes were founded on Gospel teaching

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 95.

² Ibid., p. 95.

alone and therefore ignorant of experience and economics.

The issues raised by the Enabling Act, the National Mission and Copec were ones which gave Henson ample opportunity to express criticism towards the social gospel and the programmes proposed by its advocates during the post-war years. In examining further Henson's views on Labour as a social and political force and the power of the unions after the Great War, we are better able to understand how Henson dealt with the one issue which crossed all class barriers and proved to be the greatest test of Church attitudes during the inter-war period: The General Strike of 1926.

CHAPTER V

Henson and the Unions, Unemployment and the General Strike of 1926

1. The Rise of Labour and the Unions

As established earlier, Henson was concerned to reconcile the importance of the individual and the value of private property with the industrial system which, he believed, aided in the moral weakening of mankind. Clearly, he did not see the rise in the power of Labour after the war as the expedient for this reconciliation. Instead, Henson saw Labour and Capital as the great rivals of the post-war era. He also believed socialism, coupled with trade unions, to be the formula for class war. This class war would express itself in a social revolution "in which the religious factor is secondary and parasitic".¹ The 'revolution' which Henson had feared after the war seemed to become more of a reality as labour and trade unions gained power, as the Labour Party strengthened, and as trade disputes seemed to become a matter of course in the mid-1920s.

It is significant that Henson linked trade unions with the rise of bolshevism in Russia. Trade unions, he declared, "appear determined to 'join up' with the Russian Communists".² For the communism which had arisen in Russia was a religion which rivalled modern

¹ Henson, "The Church and Socialism," : 4.

² Henson Journals, vol.39 (23 April 1925), p. 9.

Christianity.

Bolshevist Russia, which seems ordained to play a drunken helot's role in modern civilization, seeks to find in its secularized schools the principal weapon against the tradition of Christian Faith and Morals.¹

Henson saw the communism in Russia, as well as that growing in Western Europe, as a religion, and Labour was its Church. The communists and socialists, because their doctrines "appear to disallow the postulates of religion" and to conflict with Christian morality, recognise Christianity as their "most formidable opponent".²

'Labour' is really less a party than a Church. It dogmatizes, denounces, and excommunicates more naturally than it reasons, co-operates, and consents to compromise. Socialism and Communism are creeds rather than programmes; and they inspire their advocates with a propagandist zeal comparable with that which is bred in the Churches.³

Man is naturally religious, and his morals are rooted in religion. Communism would therefore repudiate this theory in that it intends "to abolish religion, altogether, to destroy the Christian tradition in all expressions, and to reconstruct morality on the foundation of Marxian atheism".⁴

According to Henson, communism is neither a political nor an economic theory, but a faith which substitutes the basic principles of Christian morality

¹ Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 312.

² Hensley Henson, "Crossing the Rubicon?," The Nineteenth Century and After 107 (1930): 458.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Henson, Christian Morality, pp. 309-310.

with methods of violence. In explaining this, Henson compared the fanatics involved in the rise of communism in the twentieth century to those involved with the papacy in the sixteenth century. This is yet another stab, although indirect, at the Anglo-Catholic and Christian Socialist movements - since, many supporters of these campaigns also tended to support the cause of the Labour movement, which Henson associated with communism. According to Henson, communism held two main factors which attracted Churchmen: the violence of its method contrasted sharply with the existing social order which "commends it to acceptance of the numerous and increasing multitude which regards industrial society with suspicion, dislike and even abhorrence",¹ and its merely theoretical character which "relieves it from all those practical objections which any serious attempt to express theory in practice could not fail to provide".²

According to Henson, it was communism's advocacy of the use of violence - the emphasis on class war - that it finds its greatest break with modern Christianity. He greatly feared the possibility of class war becoming a reality in post-war British society. Henson, in his criticism of labour, tended to use broad generalizations and therefore anyone who sympathized with its aims or principles came under his attack.

Another of Henson's criticisms of the labour movement was that he believed it to be inconsistent with

¹ Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 328.
² Ibid.

the highest individual achievement. Humanity, wrote Henson, thrives on the rich and varied heritage of individuality which serves as part of its foundation. This heritage cannot, therefore, be "pinched within the simple uniformities of the hive or the ant-hill"¹ which Henson believed communism to be doing as it immersed "its advocates both in a deadly economic heresy, and in a gross moral paradox".² The clergy - who had previously been "the inevitable champions of individual rights and responsibilities"³ had in their servility become victims of the ideals of what Henson privately referred to as "class-ethick" or "class consciousness": "Indeed in many places they are the mere parasites of the Labour Party."⁴

In his criticism of communist rule in Russia, Henson coupled the system with despotism, which he believed to be both intellectually and morally deadening. In contrast he presented democracy as the nurturer of the highest individual achievement.

The method of Democracy is intellectually and morally stimulating...The long-drawn-out processes of freedom have civic value so that when at last reforms have been effected, the people have been rendered competent to understand and utilize them. The dictator imposes his will on ignorant, or reluctant, or resolutely recalcitrant subjects. They are unfamiliar with his plans, unsympathetic with his aspirations, too ignorant or prejudiced to appreciate his designs and too indifferent to use them. They remain as backward, hidebound by precedent, and suspicious of change as before...⁵

① The Bishoprick, I:7 and 11.

② Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 174.

③ Henson Journals, vol. 40 (6 June 1926), p. 279.

④ Ibid.

⑤ Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 329.

In the above statement, one cannot help but feel that Henson meant this 'Dictator' to be an allegory for the organized labour and trade unions. The atmosphere of the nation, with industrial conflict and high unemployment, was one which encouraged the spread of such ideology. "We note how favourable a soil is being created for the sophistries of 'Communism'," Henson wrote. "We mark how the sowers of that evil seed are busily at work".¹

In what way was the soil being sown? It was found within class struggle which has manifested itself within the Labour movement and its supporters; including a sector of High Churchmen. The spread of doctrines of class war was the primary symptom of a possible uprising. Henson believed that in dealing with the problems of unemployment, class war could possibly be averted.

We see that the wicked doctrine of the 'Class War' gathers a certain plausibility from the miserable circumstances in which so many of the people are living....We cannot rightly acquiesce in a continuance of the existing situation. The 'dole' is at best but a temporary expedient. As soon as it becomes a normal condition it ceases to have any justification. The Nation must deal with unemployment, not (as the fanatics of 'Communism' desire) allow it to drag down the people to the criminal violence of revolution.²

2. Unemployment

How did Henson propose to handle unemployment? First, he said that there must be an acceptance of the

¹ Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 179.

² Ibid.

existing industrial condition. Man must accept that unemployment is not a phenomenon only to be associated with the post-war era. It is a permanent factor in British society which cannot be solved simply by placing people on the dole. The dole, wrote Henson, allows man to become idle and encourage his sons to follow in his footsteps. Henson harshly criticized governments and societies which allowed men to internalize their own indolence, and therefore pass it from one generation to the next. Henson, as both Dean and Bishop, often came into personal contact with the unemployed as he walked through Durham or around the grounds at Bishop Auckland. He often made note of those he came into contact with, and of his observations of their situation. It was after one such meeting that he expressed his attitudes towards unemployment and dependence on the dole.

We looked at a football match which was in progress. One fine young man of 24, the Police Inspector's son, told me that he had been on the dole for 2 years! What kind of citizen will grow from compulsory idleness in early manhood? Idleness used to be associated with extreme hardship, and therefore it was abhorrent: but we have now endowed it, and by consequence made it even attractive!¹

The above statement was written by Henson in 1925, but it was merely the start of the development of Henson's attitudes towards unemployment. At this time, Henson was concerned that ensuring the workman higher wages and greater leisure time would undermine competition between British and foreign businesses.

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 38 (4 April, 1925), p. 276.

Henson, in his 1924 visitation charge, questioned if it was necessary to open a formal inquiry into the causes of unemployment as Copec had recommended. "Is there really any profound mystery about British unemployment?" he asked sarcastically. He then answered his own question by saying that the cause was obviously associated with the destruction of wealth during the Great War and the "consequent diminution" of purchasing power in Great Britain and abroad.¹

Henson was adamant in his defence of the principle of competition within industry. Industrialism, he insisted, was a necessity because it produced the wealth which "mitigates unemployment[,] enabling the State to subsidize the Unemployed on a most liberal scale".² Henson gave no indication of how he thought unemployment insurance was subsidized by industry, but he did say that it is unclear that "the subversion of the existing industrial order would secure permanence of employment to the population".³ In making such a statement, Henson gave a clear sign to others in the Church that he disagreed with those who believed that the structure of industry had to be changed in order to secure justice from within it. Henson, like Temple, believed that Labour and Capital had to work together in order to provide the best service to the community. Henson, however, had a tendency to accept the existing hierarchy in industry - the owners at the top and workers at the

¹ Henson, Quo Tendimus?, p. 103.

² Ibid., p. 100.

³ Ibid.

bottom of the ladder. Where many, like Temple, thought there should be a sharing of profits in a more direct way, Henson saw industry's responsibility in a more indirect way whereby industry would subsidize the government's provision of subsidies to the unemployed.

When Henson gave his Gifford Lectures in the mid-1930s, his theories on unemployment had developed into somewhat of a manifesto. He argued that the main reason for unemployment was the replacement of human labour by machinery. This process was not, however, caused by the lack of concern for others or unfaithfulness to Christian principles. It was, as described in an earlier chapter, the necessary result of the development of mankind. Moral issues, Henson believed, cannot be raised by secular despair.

How can such unemployment be reasonably, as it is very generally, described as the consequence of Christian selfishness and disloyalty to acknowledged principles? When we seriously consider what is the bearing of Christian morality on economic questions, we must be careful to set those questions in true perspective. No moral issue is necessarily raised by economic confusion or human suffering. These may result from any one of a thousand personal causes.¹

By the late 1930s and into the 1940s, Henson was able to outline five consequences of the current policy on unemployment. Firstly, it was the cause for the deterioration of workingmen because it fostered continuing idleness and its "inevitable effect" - the "loss of that social consequence which is inseparable

¹ Henson, Christian Morality, p. 291.

from regular work, and which forms the buttress and almost the condition of self-respect".¹ Secondly, Henson said that current policy forced the "withdrawal of the normal incentives to exertion".² The previously held concept of work and the incentives of its rewards was wiped away. Henson saw effort and sacrifice being replaced by what he called "universal dependence". Thirdly, Henson criticized what he called the "discrediting of thrift by the abolition of all distinction between the thrifty and the thriftless".³ Here he examined the unfortunate social mores of those who married while on the dole and bought household goods on instalment payments. This kind of behaviour tended to "strike in with the Socialist and Communist denunciations of thrift, and to create an atmosphere of irresponsibility infinitely unwholesome to individual character".⁴ The fourth consequence is one which Henson saw earlier, the creation of generations of idle youth and young men, a group he referred to as the "British Lazzaroni". They were, he wrote, "the finest human material in the world, and we seem to acquiesce in their debasement".⁵ Fifthly, Henson pointed to the growth of a generation whose morality was completely divorced from the obligation of social service. The growing proportion of citizens both receiving the dole and voting in Parliamentary elections was shameful - shameful most

¹ Henson, Bishoprick Papers, p. 241.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 242.

⁵ Ibid., p. 243.

likely because their votes are liable to continue the current policies with which Henson obviously did not agree.

It was such public declarations which led George Lansbury, the leader of the parliamentary Labour Party to declare in 1932 that the miners hated Henson. Surely it did not a surprise to Henson that he was deeply unpopular with the miners; yet he was never really able to understand how they could misunderstand him. Privately, he spoke of the "bitterness of their condition" and admitted that his "heart bled for them".¹ Moreover, in public Henson denounced the indifference caused by people and policies which continued the idleness and the privation of spirit, mind, and physical being among the unemployed.

By the 1930s, Henson developed a theory based upon a community-oriented effort to conquer unemployment and its consequences. Perhaps this was because he was finally willing to admit that unemployment was a permanent factor within society which could no longer be blamed on the economic effects of the Great War. Henson now declared that it was the responsibility of both the Church and the State to foster the growth of a policy which would assist in the mitigation of the consequences of unemployment. This policy would be started by transferring the unemployed into other areas of work.

...there must be a concerted effort on an

¹ Henson Journals, vol.38 (12 March 1925), p. 247.

adequate scale to transfer the superfluous workers to other fields of employment. Such an effort would certainly be very costly...but it would violate no economic principle, and it would conflict with no moral law. On such a path the Church could not but assist the State by a faithful performance of its distinctive duty. In raising the level of justice, self-denial, and benevolence in the community, the Church would be creating precisely those dispositions which would most favour such a policy of intelligent patriotism.¹

As Henson admitted, both the financial and non-financial costs of such a scheme would be high, but he accepted that such a plan to conquer unemployment had become necessary to the "process of industrial reconstruction".

3. The General Strike of 1926

The greatest factor in the development of Henson's views on industrialism and its consequences was the General Strike of 1926. This incident proved to be the toughest trial of Henson's views towards the Church's involvement in secular disputes - particularly those having an industrial nature - and also forced him to elaborate his views towards his own role as the Bishop of Durham. It further tested Henson's consistency in the area of Christian duty and morality.

By early 1926, Henson became frustrated with the lack of discussion within Church circles about what he considered to be the inevitability of a general strike. The Church, in Henson's opinion, had become too concerned with its internal affairs. He also noted that there was a

¹ Henson, Bishoprick Papers, pp. 179-180.

tremendous lack of interest amongst the public about Church matters. This is yet another indication that Henson was fully aware of the widening gap between the Church and Nation during the post-war period.

It is quite evident that everybody is just seeking some party advantage out of the crisis. And meanwhile we of the Church discuss P.B.[Prayer Book] revision!...Contrast the nation's genuine concern for the Coal settlement, with its total unconcern for every religious question!¹

This idea of both sides of labour disputes seeking party advantage is one which runs throughout Henson's attitudes towards the motives of both parties and was probably the result of Henson's feeling of isolation between Labour and Capital. For as Chadwick has pointed out, Henson was a Bishop who tried to stand aside from politics in a county which was dominated by Labour. He became isolated because Labour did not recognize his position of independence, while the Capitalists, whom Labour thought he had befriended, did not respect it. "Labour thought the impartiality a pretence and hypocrisy; Capital thought him 'an untrustworthy and timorous ally'."² As Bishop of Durham, Henson found it difficult to speak out on the General Strike because of his separation from both sides of the issue. It was difficult, Henson wrote, to remain an objective member of the Church whilst trying to carry out one's duties amidst such chaos.

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 40 (24 April 1926), p. 258.

² Chadwick, Hensley Henson and the Durham Miners, p. 23.

It is perhaps, inevitable that I should say something about the Strike, and what can I say which will be honest, useful and safe? How can I express my abhorance [sic] of the whole conception of the 'general strike' without giving the impression that the Bishop of Durham is...the paid apologist of the Capitalists? The task of the 'preacher of righteousness' would certainly be made vastly more easy if one were, like the Baptist, a dweller in the wilderness, clothed in leather and camel's hair and feeding on locusts and wild honey!¹

In early 1926, Henson wrote that the schemes of the Mineowner's Association and the Miners' Federation made reconciliation between the two impossible. The problem stemmed from the fact that each group's policies were based on different principles and were aimed at different objectives. During such disputes, the rest of the country was expected to subsidize industry with sums so vast that any financial recovery which had been started would be arrested, and possibly reversed. The stubbornness of both sides foreshadowed an upheaval of society, and Henson found it hard not to believe that "the real directors of the miners' policy are consciously aiming at violent revolution".²

The one [the mineowners] is individualistic, and aims at perpetuating the present system. The other [the union leaders] is communistic, and aims at destroying the present system, and replacing it by another. We must add that while the one keeps close to the facts of the existing situation: the other ignores them, and indulges in the theoretical reconstruction which leaves the immediate problem unsolved. Nothing could be more uncompromising than the temper of both sides....The unyielding, and

¹ Henson Journals, vol.40 (9 May 1926), p. 288.

² Ibid. (16 January 1926), p. 77.

impracticable temper is the worst of all the omens of disaster which are now apparent in the national outlook.¹

Like Temple, Henson believed that the price of a strike was too high. The violence and upheaval caused by such action was unjustifiable. "Like a petty scratch on a healthy body", he wrote during the 1924 dock strike, "a silly trade quarrel may precipitate blood-poisoning and result in death".² There is no doubt that Henson really did fear some sort of revolution if the Miners' Federation achieved their goals. More importantly, however, was Henson's fear of the loss of the individuality attached to capitalism if the current industrial system is overthrown. The loss of individuality is where he differs from Temple who did not consider this factor at all in his argument.

It is Henson's private writings about his encounters with individual miners which best illustrate his attitudes towards such a large-scale industrial action as a general strike. Although he sympathized with the plight of the striking miners, he was unable to condone their actions. He placed the blame for the suffering caused by the strike on trade union leaders who he saw as shepherds leading a blind flock into something of which they had little or no understanding of the consequences.

There is some sinister influence at work among the miners which defeats every effort to effect a settlement. It is, of course, just possible that the mining-leaders are 'bluffing', and

¹ Henson Journals, vol.40 (16 January 1926), p. 77.

² Ibid., vol. 36 (18 February 1924), p. 170.

intend to surrender at the last moment, but I hardly think this is probable. Another great economic conflict at this moment will throw back the recovery of our trade for an indefinite period, and might well ruin us wholly. There is neither patriotism, nor intelligence, nor 'horse sense' among these workmen.¹

Privately, Henson noted that the miners tended to be very energetic in their arguments, but seemed to have little confidence in their own words. Publicly, he accused labour leaders of guiding the miners into a situation of which they knew very little about its complications. Henson saw this guidance as damaging to the deepest root of moral law. Here Henson blamed the Church for its silence in the issue.

They were coerced into violating their own self-respect as cruelly as the unhappy lapsi of the imperial persecutions. Such violences call for the most emphatic condemnation from all right-thinking citizens, and most of all from the authorities of the Christian Churches. Yet those authorities are silent, or even offer excuses of casuistry which is as false to Christian principles as it is perilous to civic security.²

Henson had outlined his argument during a previous labour dispute, writing that the sacredness of contracts - the basis of moral law - was endangered in the case of a general strike.

The Railwaymen's union, by pledging itself not to 'handle coals' in the event of a strike of the miners violates the contract under which Railway servants are employed. If, therefore, their conduct be allowed, a mortal blow would seem to have been struck at the sanctity of

1 Henson Journals, vol.40 (29 April 1926), p. 265.

2 Henson "Religion and Economics," : 227.

*contracts i.e. on the basal assumption of
*civilized society and the moral law itself, as
Christendom has always understood it, is
outraged.¹

Another issue which Henson saw as one of a moral nature violated by trade union leaders was their preaching of class morality. He believed that trade union leaders had created a new 'class morality' by substituting Christian principles with those geared towards the working classes. Loyalty to one's religion or country became secondary to one's allegiance to a social grouping based upon socio-economic factors. The Strike, Henson believed, operated through trade union intimidation of many workers. "The working class Englishman is at present a bound-slave to his Trade Union," wrote Henson.²

'Class-consciousness' means the subordination of all other obligations to the single claim of Class. The 'first and chief' commandment is no longer to love God, but to love one's own class...Love of country is a natural sentiment in a sense which cannot be said of love of class. We rightly hold that even the claims of home must be sacrificed to those of the country; but will anyone contend that God's claim on the individual may rightly be subordinated to patriotic duty?³

Henson firmly believed that if the workers were "given liberty to express their genuine opinions", the trade union leaders would be left on their own. "Cannot some way be found for getting access to the mind of the miners through some more trustworthy and less prejudiced

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 39 (4 September 1925), p. 168.

² Ibid., vol. 41 (24 June 1926), p. 11.

³ Ibid. (4 August 1926), p. 168.

channel?" Henson asked during the coal dispute which continued on after the General Strike.¹

Throughout the Strike, Henson wrote about his fears of the power held by the trade unions, which he saw leading to dire consequences for the nation. After the General Strike had finally been settled, Henson continued to express his distrust of the power of the unions. In debates over the Trade Unions Bill in 1927 he denounced their power as "a ubiquitous, cruel and continuing tyranny, degrading to the character of their members and very perilous to the State".²

Henson also found it difficult to sit back and watch his fellow Churchmen involve themselves in the strike. Publicly, Henson stayed away from becoming involved on either side of the dispute. Part of the reason for this was that Henson was convalescing from an illness at the time, but he also found the welfare of the Nation to be much more important than that of either of the parties. If the industrial system of the nation collapsed, all else would follow.

Henson found it most difficult to accept other Churchmen's involvement with either side of the dispute. He was particularly critical of their work with the strikers because this, he believed, identified them as being servile to trade union leaders. In one instance, he strongly criticized Winnington-Ingram for offering Fulham Palace as a neutral negotiating ground.

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 40 (17 June 1926), p. 358.

² Hansard, (Lords) 1927, Vol. 68, Col. 135.

Probably the feather-headed prelate never gave a moment's thought to the significance of his action. In adopting the pose of 'neutrality' in a conflict between the King's Government and the Trade Unions, the Bishop surrenders the Christian doctrine of the Divine Right of the Civil Power within its own sphere and assumes that the Trade Unions are entitled to confront the State on equal terms i.e. to take the character of a belligerent in war.¹

The practice of interfering in labour disputes had spread from the bishops down to the clergy and Henson saw its consequences as particularly distressing. Winnington-Ingram could not claim the excuse which some "Labour toadying incumbents" used in parishes where the mass of people were trade unionists and thereby had the excuse of fearing their own safety if they did not support the unions. If a clergyman stood strongly for morality and religion, argued Henson, he would command respect from his parishioners. Instead, it is far too easy for clergymen to become "either the creatures of the mine managers, or the tools and toadies of 'Labour'".²

Of course the position of the parson in these mining districts is extremely difficult at such a crisis as the present. It is easy to go into one camp or the other: very hard to maintain any measure of independence. And unfortunately few clergy are big enough to take a line of their own: and many of them are hopelessly bewildered by their ignorance, the vigour of their prejudices, and the strength of their sympathies.³

Henson's belief that the trade unions had a tyrannous rather than liberating effect on society

¹ Henson Journals, vol.40 (6 May 1926), p. 208.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. (31 May 1926) p. 317.

further separated him from many of his fellow Church leaders. Although several prominent Churchmen disapproved of the strike, they were quick to note that the financial burdens of industry often fell upon the workers who could not afford to bear it. They believed it to be unfair to ask the workers for a definite sacrifice when such an inadequately guaranteed prospect of reorganization was offered in return. All seemed to agree that the violence caused by strike action was the worst possible consequence of such disputes. Davidson, speaking in the House of Lords on 5 May 1926, expressed disapproval of such action, but also called on the government to take action to prevent the growth of bitterness and hatred and the fear amongst the lower classes that their standard of living would become more depressed.¹

Davidson's speech encouraged further discussion and on 7 May he met with a group of Churchmen and nonconformists to consider a conciliatory appeal. The group then issued a statement entitled, "The Crisis - Appeal from the Churches" which spoke of the continuing growth in suffering as the dispute was prolonged. It further appealed for a resumption of negotiations "in the spirit of fellowship and co-operation for the common good".² The possible concordat suggested by the group involved three points which needed to be carried out both "simultaneously and concurrently". Firstly, there would

¹Hansard, (Lords) 1926, Vol. 64, Cols. 49-51.

²Oliver, p. 84.

have to be a cancellation of the strike on the part of the T.U.C.. Secondly, the government would be required to renew its offer of financial assistance for a short and definite time period. Thirdly, the mineowners would be expected to withdraw the new wage scales which had been recently issued. Such an appeal received the support of the Labour Party Leader, Ramsay MacDonald. The Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, did not agree with the use of the words 'simultaneously and concurrently', and believed that the cancellation of the strike had to precede any other action. With this exception, Baldwin accepted the terms of the appeal.

The one surprise hitch which was added to the Archbishop's appeal was that Cardinal Bourne, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, on 9 May declared there to be no moral justification to the General Strike. This caused outrage and left the Church looking foolish and overshadowed by Bourne's statement which was "more acceptable to the Government and their supporters amongst the upper and middle classes".¹

Henson, not surprisingly, disagreed with Davidson's appeal because he foresaw it resulting in practical problems and thought it absurd that Bourne was seen as the "mouthpiece of national sentiment and civic duty, a role which belongs pre-eminantly to the National Church and therein conspicuously [sic] to the Primate".² Davidson's actions were condemned by Henson who thought

¹ Stuart Mews, "The Churches," in The General Strike, ed. Margaret Morris (London, 1976), p. 331.

² Henson Journals, vol. 40 (9 June 1926), p. 339.

it "regrettable that a great impetus had been given by the appeal to the tendency to substitute for religious teaching a declamatory, sentimental socialism as far removed from sound economics as from Christian morality".¹ Henson further criticized ~~the~~ Davidson by pointing out that Bourne had seized the opportunity to present himself to the British public as a "good citizen in vivid contrast with the fumbling and untimely peace-making of the Primate".²

As the strike progressed, Henson seemed to fall back on many of his fundamental beliefs and arguments, particularly with regard to the Churches involvement in secular affairs. This was highlighted in his criticism of the subsequent Standing Conference on the Coal Dispute which included Gore, Temple, Woods, six other bishops and eleven nonconformists. By attempting to mediate between the miners and owners in June and July, the Standing Conference aimed to steer both parties back towards the terms of Davidson's appeal and mitigate the increased bitterness which resulted in the deadlock. Although the owners would not budge in their position, the miners reached agreement on several important points. Most importantly, they declared that they were prepared to abandon their slogan, 'Not a penny off the pay, not a minute on the day'.

Henson's criticism of the Churches "meddling" in

¹ G.K.A. Bell, Randall Davidson: Archbishop of Canterbury (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 1316.

² Henson Journals, vol. 40 (14 June 1926), p. 348.

secular affairs, particularly those of an economic nature was the basis of an article published in The Times on 13 August. Here Henson attributed the involvement of Churchmen in such affairs to an antiquated conception of 'the masses', a misunderstanding of the influence of morality on economic matters, and a medieval conception of episcopal responsibility. Henson accused Churchmen of ignoring the fact that those suffering injustices were now able to protect themselves with political action.¹

Henson developed his argument of the bishops' intervention as the strike dragged on, and outlined six points on which he based his disagreement. Firstly, he believed the bishops to be "dominated" by an outdated conception of relations between employers and workers. "Industry is a law-regulated co-operation in which the limits of individual action are narrowly limited".² Secondly, he accused the bishops of ignoring the conditions under which the mining industry worked. Foreign markets were vital to the industry and were being lost because of the excessive cost of production due to higher wages demanded for fewer hours worked. Secular authorities had proven this point. Thirdly, the conception of the Church held by the bishops was "obsolete". Hence, their view of their episcopal responsibilities was distorted. Henson's fourth point addressed Westcott's nineteenth century intervention

¹ "Churchmen and the Mines - Episcopal Fallacies - Mistaken Grounds for Intervention," The Times, 13 August 1926, p. 11.

² Henson Journals, vol.41 (10 August 1926), p. 92.

which many had used to justify the bishop's actions. Henson claimed that the use of Westcott was "inapplicable". "Then the conflict was local: it was really a dispute within the industry: the men were suffering the hardships without public help: they were confessedly beaten and invited the Bishop's intervention."¹ Fifthly, Henson accused the bishops of being "mischievous". Their actions were prolonging the crisis by encouraging the miners to "think of themselves as the victims, not of economic laws, but of social oppression...".² In using sentiment rather than sound ⁶ economic principles the bishops were weakening the power of the Prime Minister who was "sincerely striving to bring peace to the industry".³ Henson's sixth and last point against the bishops addressed their misuse of their titles. He believed that they ought to have signed their proposals with their own names instead of their official designations.

Henson's moral stance on labour disputes remained consistent, and as a Christian leader he saw it as his duty to speak out from that moral standpoint. *Interfering with other men's liberty, unless doing so ^W under the law; withdrawing labour solely to achieve political ends; and breaking a contract without having the other party do the same, all ran contrary to the laws of morality. Therefore it was wrong to negotiate with sinners. This is how Henson justified his condemnation

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 41 (10 August 1926), p. 93.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

of the actions of his fellow Churchmen.

In retrospect, Henson believed there to be two outstanding features of the General Strike. Firstly, he noted the astonishing response of the trade unionists to the call of their leaders. It became obvious that due to their consciences, many of the men resisted striking, but in the end gave into the union leaders. The use of 'class consciousness' and 'class-ethick' by labour leaders had therefore been a success. "The education in 'class-consciousness' has been so successful that neither self-respect nor religion count for anything against class."¹ The second outstanding feature of the Strike was the "unscrupulous violence" used by the "dominant" union leaders and the "remarkable helplessness" of the more moderate leaders. This created a pressure felt by the moderates who despite "their disbelief in the moral legitimacy [legitimacy] of the general strike, and their doubt of its practical utility...found themselves compelled to join in 'calling' it".²

To many Henson looked like an ultra-Tory, but in truth he was a radical Tory who believed that capitalism brought with it monstrous ills. His worry was for the future of the mines and those whose families had worked in them for generations. His compassion led him to believe that unless the miners lost the strike, the mines would close and communities would die. The moral price paid for the General Strike, and the miners' strike which

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 40 (25 May 1926), p. 303.

² Ibid.

dragged on for seven months after it was settled, was far greater than the economic price and this was the basis of Henson's disagreement with the unions', as well as some of his fellow Churchmen's, actions.

Domestic liberty is curtailed, and may be altogether destroyed. Personal morality is lowered, and sometimes shipwrecked irretrievably. Social relations are confuse and embittered. Life proceeds on a lower level after a strike. The moralist is as dismayed by the effect on character and society as the economist by the prodigal waste of wealth.¹

In the end, Henson could not condone the actions of the mineowners, the miners, nor his fellow Churchmen. He therefore remained an outsider even in the institution to which he had devoted his life. In outlining his disagreement with his fellow Churchmen's actions, Henson broadly summarized his criticism of the social gospel as it had developed into the 1920s.

I am afraid that the 'speeding up' up of ecclesiastical, and notably of episcopal activity, which has followed that unhappy Enabling Act, has brought our busier and more fashionable Bishops into such a habit of hearing their own voices in the endless meetings they attend, that they hear no other, and are quite remarkably incompetent to understand the courses of the world, and quite immovably attached to their own shibboleths.²

With the growth in influence of the Anglo-Catholics after the Great War, the social gospel was easily pushed forward in the Church. Through his criticisms of the programmes and proposals of the social gospel advocates,

¹ Henson, "Religion and Economics," : 210.

² Henson Journals, vol. 41 (13 August 1926), pp. 100-101.

Henson developed his own theories of how the Church should help in answering the social issues which plagued the nation. In doing so, Henson remained loyal to his own basic principles of individualism, morality and duty. Most importantly, although he sometimes showed fear of his obligation to both Church and Nation, he remained the honest warrior who did not give in to popular dogma. Instead, he fought consistently, even in isolation, for what he believed to be right.

I think the longer I live, the more resigned I grow to being able to explain the deep enigmas of life, and the more certain I am that whatever improvement is possible in the world, must grow not from enthusiastic crusades, but from the steady courage and sacrifice of individuals who 'stick it' in the trenches of common duty.¹

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 38 (22 November 1924), p. 92.

CONCLUSION

By the mid-1920s, Henson had become disillusioned with his role as a bishop within the Church of England. He did not agree with many of the policies approved by other members of the Church hierarchy, nor did he see a role for himself in the post-war Church. The Church, wrote Henson, "seems to be slipping away from me, and I from the Church".¹

It was within his episcopal administration that Henson was most unhappy. He had lost touch with what he believed to be the genuine duty of the Christian clergyman: the religious ministry to individuals. X

As I look back over the years, I can see that I was happiest when I was closest to the people, that is, during the 7 years 1888-1895, when I was Vicar of Barking. Every step forward has meant a step away from the spiritual work with individuals which is the true work of the Christian minister: and now, as a Bishop, I am almost completely secularized. For business is not less business, and a Bishop is submerged by ecclesiastical business.²

Henson now admitted that the world had changed considerably during his active life within the Church of England. Shortly after the Great War he had seemed reticent of accepting the social, political, and economic changes which had occurred due to the war. He feared for the principles of Christendom, particularly individualism X which was central in his own beliefs. Its survival

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 36 (2 February 1924), p. 148.

² Ibid., vol. 39 (7 June 1925), p. 73.

seemed to be threatened by the idea popularized by the Labour Party and the trade unionists, which Henson understood to include that of class war. He went so far as to refer to this challenge as a revolution, and to associate its manifestations with that which had occurred in Russia.

Between the middle and late 1920s, however, Henson began to accept the transformations which Church thinking had been obliged to undergo due to external forces such as economic depression, and internal forces such the Enabling Act. Local industries had collapsed and diocesan finance had become more complicated. Added to this, the Enabling Act had introduced a new system of ecclesiastical organisation. This, wrote Henson, "has added gratuitously to the many difficulties of the time".¹

Henson's acceptance of change was most likely to be directly connected with his work in the Durham Bishopric. In studying Henson's journals, it is obvious that he found his administrative tasks troublesome. It is also hard to forget that when upon returning to Durham in 1921, Henson declared his fears of having to deal with the industrial problems of the region, as well as finding suitable candidates for ordination after his predecessor, Handley Moule, had, in Henson's opinion, been lax in his standards. Henson was notoriously tough on ordination candidates, and he was not surprisingly suspicious of young men who came to him with deep-seated Anglo-Catholic

¹Henson Journals, vol. 39 (27 July 1925), p. 151.

and Christian Socialist beliefs. This, Henson was aware, furthered his isolation within his own diocese.

The change from Bishop Moule's oleaginous phraseology to my brutal frankness must be very trying to the clergy. My refusal to accept so many men for Ordination whom he would have welcomed must give mental offence to some. The Anglo-Catholics and Socialists can hardly love me, and I must be very hard to understand even for those who would like to love me if they could.¹

It was in his conversations with the local people that Henson felt most comfortable. These exchanges also provided a window from which he could view the Church's failings and question his own role as a Bishop.

After lunch I walked in the Park, and falling in with some of the youths who were playing football.[,] I watched them play long enough to get neuralgia of the jaws! What ails the Church that it can do nothing with these lads? They are frank and civil, though rough. I cannot but think that a healthy-minded young clergyman might do much with them. But, as it is, they are as sheep without a shepherd.²

Henson regarded himself as a failure in his episcopal administration. His work, he admitted, lacked both "faith" and "fervour". If he had been given the choice, however, of separating the spiritual duty from the ecclesiastical business, he thought that he "might perhaps gain a measure of contentment by confining myself wholly to the first, and ignoring the last".³

Perhaps the most difficult part of Henson's work in Durham was the legacy which his predecessors had left

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 37 (15 June 1924), p. 42.

² Ibid., vol. 38 (11 April 1925), p. 288.

³ Ibid., vol. 36 (2 February 1924), p. 148.

behind. Scholars and thinkers such as Joseph Butler (1750-52) and J.B. Lightfoot (1879-89), and the diplomatic skills shown by B.F. Westcott (1890-1901) left Henson with a heavy burden. He had often admitted privately that he would have loved to devote his life to academic study, but others who had recognized his preaching skills pushed him towards the Church instead. The Church had become far too complicated to afford its bishops the opportunities to be great scholars alongside their diocesan and episcopal duties. In becoming a member of the episcopate, Henson was placed in a particularly exposed position where local controversies arose. Durham provided such an atmosphere. His reluctance to involve himself in industrial disputes - as Westcott had done when he aided in the settlement of the great coal strike of 1892 - placed a heavy burden upon him. For if the revolution which he so adamantly believed would happen did in fact begin, the Durham coalfields might well be the place of its birth. Henson, upon considering the idea of going back to Durham, expressed his fears of the local turmoil.

There is, of course, the distinction of sitting in that famous Chair, and coming into that great Succession: and in quiet times this would mean much. But with Revolution knocking at the gate, it signifies little indeed. The coalfield with its turbulent population will be one of the danger centres when the Revolution does come; and I am not a man to yield, or to be ignored. It is difficult to imagine a more unenviable position than that which will be held by the Bishop of Durham when the economic crisis [for] which we have been preparing

actually breaks out.¹

As Henson reflected on his time in the Church, it must have been difficult for him to ignore that as a parish priest in Barking his relationship with the local gasworkers' union was such that he was able to communicate to them: even though he condemned their strikes, he remained on the side of the workers. In Durham, however, perhaps because of the increased politicization of the trade union leaders, he failed to communicate this to the working men. "The contrast between the heart and compassion of Henson, and the public repute...for hardness and heartlessness is a sign how the world had travelled since the eighteen-nineties."² No person who condemned strikes in the 1920s would have been believed to be on the side of the working men. The Bishop of Durham was no exception.

Henson felt isolated not only on the local level, but on the national level as well. After seven years of holding an episcopal office, Henson became obsessive about his position as an outcast amongst his fellow bishops. He referred to a "malignant necessity" which, as part of his character, forced him to stand out in opposition to his contemporaries who had been "supported by zeal and enthusiasm" in their participation in Copec and the Anglo-Catholic movement. Is it then no wonder "that men should eye me with a certain repugnance, and mutter under their breath that I am an 'an accuser of the

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 28 (1 June 1920), p. 9.

² Chadwick, Hensley Henson and the Durham Miners, p. 29.

brethren'?" he asked. "Under older conditions, I think my way would have been easier; but now my discord with my environment is emphasized at every turn."¹

In the past, Henson's position certainly would have been easier. For in 1887 the episcopal bench, he believed, had been full of outstanding 'individuals'. Now, High Churchmen and Christian Socialists tainted the Church's policies and programmes and formed a corporate block within the Church.

The bench now consists almost altogether of excellent and estimable nonentities, who are mildly Socialistic, mostly 'Catholick' of some shade or other, and conscientiously 'corporate' in their expressions of opinion! Individually, with very few exceptions they count for nothing. They are the mere dittoes [sic] of one another and their voices are echoes of some 'policy'!²

Henson observed on the thirty-seventh anniversary of his ordination that he felt "already in exile from the life in my time".³ As shown throughout this thesis, Henson disagreed with many of the proposed programmes for answering the social and pastoral problems which plagued the post-war Church. His opposition might indeed have been much easier had he been born a generation earlier. For Henson, because of his upbringing, could never truly understand or accept the patrician liberalism which enveloped the thought and programmes addressing the social issues after the war. His deeply-rooted belief that it was his Christian duty to speak out against these

¹ Henson =Journals, vol. 38, (8 November 1924), p. 74.

² Ibid., vol. 40 (30 May 1926), p. 310.

³ Ibid., vol. 37 (15 June 1924), p. 76.

tendencies left him stigmatized as an ogre who would not accept the change which had been brought by the Great War.

Meanwhile, I reflect on the widening breach between myself and my episcopal brethren on almost all the issues of the hour - The Enabling Act, 'Copec', 'Spiritual healing', Anglo-Catholics, Liquor Restriction, etc. Indeed, there is hardly a single question on which I am in cordial agreement with the policy which commends itself to Lambeth and Bishopthorpe. What can be the outcome of such a state of things?¹

Two qualities characterized Henson's views on social issues. The first was his middle-class sense of gentility which led him to criticize the main assumptions of the social radicals. The second was his firmly liberal and Protestant theology, which brought with it his attacks on much of the Biblical scholarship for the aridity of its language and its lack of sensitivity towards the faith of more simple believers.

As Norman has noted, Henson's scepticism led some critics to treat him as a conservative - which is a complete misrepresentation of the man, and haunts Henson's character even today. Edwards has acidly pointed out that "for all his astuteness, Henson was seldom constructive or even realistic in his contributions to the debate about the immediate issues".² Henson, argued Norman, was "in effect an old-fashioned Gladstonian Liberal. He believed in economic individualism, the competitive system, tempered by some restraints in the

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 47 (18 October 1924), p. 47.

² Edwards, Leaders of the Church of England, p. 283.

interests of social justice, but as few of these as possible".¹ Believing that social and economic inequality was ineradicable, the fashionable social ideals espoused by the dominant Church factions were prime targets of his criticism. Henson therefore found himself far out of sympathy with the ideals and methods of most of his fellow clergymen, and found it hard to believe that he could have any influence over them.

During the mid-1920s, Henson began to change. In the midst of a particularly strong bout of self-doubt in 1924 he resolved that "in the years that remain" he would "seek for the harmonies rather than the discords, and to magnify such agreements with my brethren as I can reach".² Such a concord was particularly apparent in Henson's views on unemployment. Here he recognized that unemployment had become a permanent problem which would not easily be solved by market forces, so some special effort would be needed on the community level. Pouring government funds into the pockets of the unemployed would just further the development of the 'British Lazzaroni'. Instead, idleness and privation must be replaced by the transference of men into other fields of work. It has been left to those studying Henson to decide if he was true to his word during the remaining years of his bishopric. In observing Henson's reactions to the issues which caused the Church continually to re-examine its relation with the State, and its role within British

¹ Norman, pp. 326-327.

² Henson Journals, vol. 38 (8 November 1924), p. 74.

society, one is able to see that Henson did make efforts to reach concordances in those years, although he did not always take the direct path in doing so.

As Henson became older, his role within the Church seemed to haunt him. Privately, Henson wrote that perhaps he had followed the wrong path in life. His background continued to loom over him and he regretted that he had never been given the opportunities with which many of his contemporaries in the Church had received. Henson blamed his mistakes on these misfortunes. One such misfortune was that his "strange career never included the knowledge, intimate and continued, of a great man: and I feel that many of its worst mistakes have grown from that fact".¹

Henson privately became a pitiable character. Despite his knowledge that he was an admired spokesman for the laity, one of the most gifted preachers in England, and one of the only members of the episcopal bench who, when Gore and Temple insisted that the Church was the Body of Christ, stood up and demanded that the eternal Christ might not always agree with the decisions of his temporal body, he had lost confidence in his work. The General Strike seems to have greatly influenced this as it highlighted the distance between Auckland and the Durham diocese. In turn, it emphasized how the National Church had moved further away from the needs of the laity which it was supposed to be serving. Henson's outward criticism turned inwards. He started to pour the doubts,

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 38 (20 November 1924), p. 90.

built up from his unhappy childhood and his days as an unattached Oxford student until his controversial stance on the Church's handling of social issues, into his journals. After the General Strike, Henson questioned the value of his own work in the Church.

No book has ever been written which can possibly live: no sermon has been preached which will ever be recalled: no society or institution has been founded or assisted by me: the petty controversies in which I have played a part belong to the froth and foam of current ecclesiastical life. Only perhaps, as being the occasion of an agitation against a Crown nomination to a bishopric will my name survive, and then only in the trivial story of the Fall of the Establishment. I doubt if there will be any memoir or biography desired in any quarter....No public school, or college, or learned society would be glad to add my name to its record of distinguished men, for none has included me among its members. No son will transmit my name: There is no relation to whom I could leave my Journal with any reasonable confidence that it would be either valued or appreciated. Could there possibly be a career more insignificant, futile, and even evanescent?¹

Such a statement is that of a worn and tired old man who, looking back over his shoulder in his final days, realizes that he did not live a life which reflected the hopes and dreams of his youth. This is not a statement expected of the warrior bishop who remained in Durham thirteen more years and would live another twenty-one.

Although Henson was convalescing at the time this was written, its powerful message cannot be ignored. He was a man who felt defeated by the Church and its people to which he had devoted his life. The laity for whom he

¹ Henson Journals, vol. 40 (23 May 1926), pp. 297-298.

struggled, on the whole, were ignorant of his work. Neither the working men for whose families and communities he cared so much, nor their employers whose rights he defended, could accept him. His peers on the episcopal bench found him too conservative, too unrealistic and too controversial. Henson's response to the post-war social issues had left him a prematurely aged man and the General Strike of 1926 provided what perhaps seemed like a final blow.

This was not the end however. Henson would continue to be outspoken in matters of Church and State, as reflected when he supported disestablishment in the debates of 1927-28 over the revised Prayer Book, and warned against the appeasement of European dictators. His criticism of the Roman Catholic Church became more venomous with the onset of the Second World War, and he fought continuously against the racial hatred reflected by the apathy of many in Britain towards Hitler's anti-Semitic policies.

The social gospel continued to gain strength, especially when William Temple became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1942. Certainly this was a contributing factor to the atmosphere of the 1940s which accepted more State intervention in economic and social matters - the Welfare State. Henson remained a critic, and in doing so, helped to maintain a tradition which dissented from the social gospel.

Few could probably convince Henson that he had served the Church of England admirably in those post-war

years. If he had been any other man, he could easily have given into the pressure and quietly accepted the rise of the Christian Socialists and their policies and programmes which dominated social thought within the Church. Henson had too many firm convictions and too strong a controversialist's temperament to give in, however, and his strength was founded in a deeply rooted sense of duty which required him to speak out when he saw moral inconsistencies. It is in his willingness to speak out that Henson served the Church of England honourably as it tried to cope with the social issues in those post-war years.

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