

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

**The National Politics and Politicians of
Primitive Methodism: 1886-1922.**

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of PhD

in the University of Hull

By

**Melvin Johnson M.A. (Oxon), P.G.C.E., Diploma in Special Education (Visual
Handicap).**

November 2016

Contents

Abbreviations	4
Abstract	5
Acknowledgments	7
Introduction	8
Chapter One: The Politics of Primitive Methodism up to 1885.	29
1.1 Introduction	29
1.2 The increasing acceptance of political action	29
1.3 The main issues and political allegiances	33
1.4 A representative campaign of the 1870s and 1880s	41
Chapter Two: ‘As a people we are not blindly loyal’: 1886-1898	44
2.1 Introduction	44
2.2 The political allegiances and agendas of Primitive Methodism	46
2.2.1 The institutional response	46
2.2.2 The wider debate: the Connexional publications	48
2.2.3 The background, political allegiances and proclivities of Primitive Methodist MPs	54
2.3 Political issues	58
2.3.1 Labour and Capital	58
2.3.2 Temperance, gambling and smoking	66
2.3.3 Disestablishment and ecclesiastical matters	69
2.3.4 Education	71
2.3.5 Military matters	74
2.3.6 Ireland and other imperial matters	77
2.3.7 Land and landowners	81
2.3.8 Women’s suffrage and related issues	85
2.3.9 Other suffrage and constitutional issues	87
2.4 Heresy?	89
Chapter Three: ‘The social lot of the people must be improved’: 1899-1913	91
3.1 Introduction	91
3.2 The political allegiances and agendas of Primitive Methodism	93
3.2.1 The institutional response	93
3.2.2 The wider debate: the Connexional publications	97
3.2.3 The background, political allegiances and proclivities of Primitive Methodist MPs	103
3.3. Political Issues	110
3.3.1 Labour and Capital	110
3.3.2 Temperance, gambling and smoking	119
3.3.3 Disestablishment and ecclesiastical matters	123
3.3.4 Education	125
3.3.5 Military matters	132
3.3.6 Ireland	140
3.3.7 Free Trade and Protection	141
3.3.8. Old age pensions and related matters	143

3.3.9 Women's suffrage and related issues	148
3.4 'God Save the People'.	153
Chapter Four: 'All political colours are among us': 1914-1922	156
4.1 Introduction	156
4.2 The political allegiances and agendas of Primitive Methodism	157
4.2.1 The institutional response	157
4.2.2. The wider debate: the Connexional publications	159
4.2.3 The background, political allegiances and proclivities of Primitive Methodist MPs	166
4.3 Political issues	168
4.3.1 Labour and Capital	168
4.3.2 Temperance, gambling and smoking	176
4.3.3 Disestablishment and ecclesiastical matters	181
4.3.4 Education	183
4.3.5 Military Matters	185
4.3.6. Ireland and other imperial matters	193
4.3.7 Women's suffrage and related matters	198
4.4 A brief overview of the Church's political engagement during its final decade	202
Conclusion	207
Appendix: 'PM made me an MP': the social, occupational, and denominational background of the MPs.	211
Bibliography	229

Abbreviations

Bristol Mercury – BM
Christian Messenger – CM
Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough – DGM
Derby Daily Telegraph – DDT
Dictionary of Labour Biography – DLB
Durham Miners' Association – DMA
Holborn Review – HR
Independent Labour Party – ILP
The Journals of the House of Common – JHC¹
Labour Representation Committee – LRC
Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser – MCLGA
Manchester Guardian – MG
Methodist Times – MT
Miners' Federation of Great Britain – MFGB
Morpeth Herald – MH
National Agricultural Labourers' Union – NALU
Northampton Mercury – NM
Northern Echo – NE
Nottingham Evening Post – NEP
Oxford Dictionary of National Biography- ODNB
Primitive Methodist Consolidated Conference Minutes – PMCM
Primitive Methodist Leader – PML (Includes references to the paper after it changed its name to *Methodist Leader*.)
Primitive Methodist Magazine – PMM
Primitive Methodist Quarterly and Christian Ambassador – PMQ
Primitive Methodist World – PMW
Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society – PWHS
Sheffield Daily Telegraph – SDT
Shields Daily Gazette – SDG
Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette – SDESG
The Hull Daily Mail – HDM
The Hull Packet and East Riding Times – HP
The Primitive Methodist – PM
Trades Union Congress - TUC
Western Daily Press – WDP
Western Morning News – WMN
Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer – YPLI

¹ Most volumes cover one year although, occasionally, there is a small overlap of a few months. Consequently, the Volume, rather than year, is given e.g. V143. The online index details the period that each volume covers: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmjournal.htm>

Abstract

The National Politics and Politicians of Primitive Methodism: 1886-1922

This thesis, which assists our understanding of the interaction between religious belief and political activity, presents a study of the politics of the Primitive Methodist Church and the MPs associated with it between 1886 and 1922. This was the zenith of the Church's political activism. It traces Primitive Methodism's evolution from an apolitical body, preaching individual salvation and with a particular mission to the working classes, to one that also promoted social salvation through progressive politics. The Church's emphasis on individual moral improvement during its early decades receded and it increasingly advocated collectivist solutions to social ills, eventually espousing a balanced and synergetic combination of the two principles. This increasing engagement with progressive national politics manifested itself in the election of December 1885. In the wake of the franchise extension of 1884, 12 working-class MPs were elected, five of whom were closely associated with the Church. Although two working men, including Thomas Burt, the son of a Primitive Methodist local preacher, had preceded them in 1874, this influx of plebeian MPs was an event unprecedented in parliamentary history. The proportion drawn from a minor religious denomination was also notable. All told, my research has identified 44 MPs associated with Primitive Methodism between its foundation in the first decade of the nineteenth century and 1932, when the Church merged with other Methodist denominations. Although it frequently asserted that it was not wedded to any one political party, the reality was different. Initially, the Church and its MPs were firmly Liberal. However, the Liberal allegiance gradually diminished and an increasing number of Primitives supported other political parties, particularly the emergent Labour Party.

Historians have often focused on the importance of Primitive Methodists in the foundation and leadership of a number of early trade unions, particularly those for coal miners and agricultural labourers. The historian Eric Hobsbawm deduced from this that the Church experienced a 'partial transformation ... into a labour sect': mutating from a purely religious organization into one that provided the Labour Movement with leaders.² However, he lamented the lack of detailed inquiry into the religious background of the early generation of working-class MPs. This thesis remedies that deficiency in relation to the Primitive MPs, within the context of the Church's own parliamentary agenda.

The core of this study begins in 1886 with the election of the group of Primitive MPs and ends in 1922 as the Church's leadership began to realise that political activism was no

² Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels, Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movements in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: Norton Library, 1959), 126-149.

longer a harmonising force for its members. It explores the Church's official parliamentary aims and priorities as expressed at its Annual Conferences and District Meetings, the spectrum of members' views articulated in Church publications, and the activities of its MPs in and out of Parliament. These are considered in the context of Primitive Methodism's social and occupational composition, its geographical distribution, and theological foundations. Although necessary to understanding the Church's political trajectory, lack of space has restricted discussion of the Church's political activism from 1923 to 1932 to a brief overview.

Acknowledgements

I am greatly indebted to Dr. Douglas A. Reid and Dr. Jenny Macleod, my supervisors, for their acceptance of and support for a student whose long absence from historical research could have deterred the faint hearted. Although any errors of fact and interpretation are purely my own, I am grateful to the following for their suggestions, provision of hard to source publications and opportunities to share and develop my thinking: Dr. Peter Catterall, Professor David Bebbington, Professor Martin Ceadel, Professor Ross M. Martin, Dr. Clive D. Field OBE, Dr. Jill Barber, Dr. Ingrid Hanson, Dr. David Ceri Jones, Rev. Dr. Peter Howson, Jack Steel, Peter and Jim Simmons, Ned Newitt and Lord Clark of Windermere. The professionalism of staff at John Rylands Library (Manchester), Hull History Centre, The Bodleian Library (Oxford), The People's History Museum (Manchester), Hull Central Library, Englesea Brook Primitive Methodist Museum, and the online *Hansard* has made my life as a researcher as stress free as possible. In particular, Dr. Graham Johnson and Lorraine Coughlan of John Rylands Library went beyond all expectations, helping me to unravel the changing names, locations and cataloguing of Primitive Methodist publications. However, Professor Sir Brian Harrison deserves my greatest gratitude for almost half a century of kindness and critical friendship to this old 'History Boy'.

Introduction

The Primitive Methodist Connexion³ emerged as an offshoot of the mainstream Wesleyan Methodist Connexion between 1807 and 1812. Its founders wished to return to the simplicity and purity that they believed John Wesley, Methodism's founder, had practised – including a firm commitment to evangelising all classes. In contrast to the more respectable Wesleyans, Primitives asserted the primacy of a lay ministry and espoused a fervent, emotional, form of worship. During the period of this thesis, Hugh Bourne and William Clowes were considered the Church's creators and their use of Camp Meetings and conversational preaching – open-air evangelism – the prime reason for their expulsion from the Wesleyan Church.⁴

Fear of invasion and republican sentiment at home during the French Wars opened Wesleyan Methodism, a body estranged from the national Church, to the suspicion of overt or, at minimum, inadvertent subversion of the established order. In order to counter the threat of government intervention to restrict their operation, the Wesleyan leadership imposed strict discipline on local congregations and forbade open-air revivalism. This was partly a response to Lord Sidmouth's abortive Bill of 1811 against itinerant preachers: such 'Ranter' preachers – a contemporary epithet for the Primitives – were considered political, as well as religious, dissenters.⁵ During Primitive Methodism's infancy, some critics even considered Nonconformity itself a threat to the existing social order. For example, in 1837 Edward Osler's pamphlet for the Bath Conservative Association, argued that Nonconformity was implicitly republican because it predicated itself on 'every member having an equal voice'. Since religious dissenters held that government should be by consent, a subversive principle that struck at the very foundations of civil and ecclesiastical society, they 'canonize[d] rebellion'.⁶ Primitive Methodism's open air revivalism, lay

³ Like the Wesleyans, Primitives adopted a Connexional polity. Essentially, Conference was the 'highest court' of the Church, with Annual District Synods, Quarterly District Meetings, Circuit Meetings and chapels operating at regional and local levels. The General Committee managed Church business between Conferences: H.B. Kendall, *Handbook of Primitive Methodist Church Principles and Polity* (London: Holborn Publishing House, 1923), 61-2.

⁴ B.A. Barber, *A Methodist Pageant: A Souvenir of the Primitive Methodist Church* (London: Holborn Publishing, 1932), 1-42 and R.F. Wearmouth, 'The Evolution of Primitive Methodism', *PWHS*, 27.6, 1950, 135-7 for standard accounts. For more recent and nuanced versions see: J.D. Brittain, 'Hugh Bourne and the Magic Methodists', *Methodist History*, 46.3 (2008), 132-140 and T.R. Woolley, *A New Appearance on the Face of Things: Retelling the Primitive Methodist Creation Narrative*. PhD thesis, Cliff College, 2013. Available online:

<https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:201825&datastreamId=FULL-TEXT.PDF> [Accessed: 22.04.16]. See 193-210 for a summary.

Although Woolley still considers Bourne, Clowes and the Camp Meetings central to Primitive Methodism's creation, he gives greater emphasis to other factors and players – such as Lorenzo Dow and Daniel Shubotham – while Brittain considers the importance of James Crawfoot.

⁵ D. Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society: 1750-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1984), 92-104.

⁶ E. Osler, *Church and King* (Smith, Elder and Co., 1837), Preface 1-4 and main text 2-20.

ministry and blindness to social distinctions epitomised the secular and religious authorities' greatest fears. Consequently, from the first Primitive Methodist Camp Meetings on Mow Cop (Cheshire) in 1807, they employed legal means and threatened or actual violence to hamper the Connexion's work. They encouraged 'Church and King' mobs to obstruct itinerants by physical and verbal assault or the din of 'rough music'. Landlords evicted cottagers who housed 'ranting' preachers. Magistrates arrested and imprisoned them on a variety of pretences: preaching without a licence, obstructing highways, vagrancy, and sedition.⁷

However, within a few generations, Primitive Methodism graduated from being a sect, a minor offshoot of Wesleyanism, into an established denomination in its own right. The Connexion recognised this process after 1902 when it increasingly described itself as the 'Primitive Methodist Church'. James Obelkevich proposed that, by the final decades of the nineteenth century, 'the secular virtues of thrift, industry, self-discipline, and respectability' replaced the initial hallmarks of evangelism, piety, and fervent worship. He characterised this process as the conversion of 'Ranters' into 'Prims', wordplay on contemporary epithets for members of the Primitive Methodist Connexion.⁸ Primitives gradually evolved into a church assimilated into society: accepting of Biblical criticism, the theory of evolution, popular entertainment, and the novel.⁹ In 1932, despite some continuing areas of disagreement – of which the political commitment of the Primitives was one – they re-united with the Wesleyans and a number of other Methodist denominations, partly due to their fears of a declining membership,¹⁰

The Primitives were relatively few in number, but their influence reached far beyond its official membership. Although their membership never exceeded 250,000, about half that of the Wesleyans, the Church influenced many others who attended chapel yet never entered full communion. In the middle of the nineteenth century such 'hearers' were normally three times

⁷ J. Walford, *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of the Venerable Hugh Bourne by a Member of the Bourne Family* (Cambridge: CUP facsimile of 1854 edition), 143-7; T. Russell, *The Writings of Thomas Russell: Primitive Methodist Preacher 1806-1889* (Tentmaker Publications, 2005 - originally published 1869), 21, 27, 38, 51, 199; W. Clowes, *The Journals of William Clowes* (London: Hallam and Holliday, 1844), 63, 216, 237-8; J. Ritson, *The Romance of Primitive Methodism* (London: Primitive Methodist Publishing House, 1910), 108-9; M. Watts, *Dissenters II, The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity 1791-1859*. Oxford: OUP: 1995, 107-8.

⁸ J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825-1875* (Oxford: OUP, 1976), 254-5. Also: H.B. Kendall, *History of the Primitive Methodist Church* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1919), 134; R. Hoggart, *A Local Habitation*, (Oxford: OUP, 1988), 109. The word Connexion did not disappear from use entirely and is used throughout the thesis.

⁹ R. Currie, *Methodism Divided: A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), 132-6; V. Cunningham, *Everywhere Spoken Against: Dissent in the Victorian Novel* (Oxford: OUP, 1975), 60; A. Wilkinson, *Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches 1900-1945* (London: SCM Press, 1986), 77-82.

¹⁰ J. Kent, *The Age of Disunity* (London: Epworth Press, 1966), 1-43; Currie, *Methodism*, 248-89; J. C. Bowmer, 'Methodist Union', *PWHS*, 43.5, 1982, 104-5.

more numerous than formal members, although this ratio later declined.¹¹ Significantly, at least 80 Primitive Methodists were employed as full-time trade union officials and, as this research has established, between 1874 and 1932, 44 MPs were members or closely associated with the Church.¹² Edward Thompson ascribed Primitive Methodists' noteworthy presence in at least some sections of the Labour Movement to its function as a Church of 'the poor'.¹³ However, although it always embraced a higher proportion of working-class members than the Wesleyans or Old Dissent, congregations were more socially diverse than Thompson envisaged, even in its early years. Though there were regional differences and Primitive Methodism's leaders could derive from a higher social class, the Church was largely composed of working-class congregations. Even though the social profile of Primitive congregations rose over time, Wesleyan opposition to Methodist Union during the 1920s was motivated in part by the prejudice that Primitive Methodists were of a lower social class than themselves.¹⁴ As the Wesleyan Sir Newbald Kay admitted, 'sheer snobbery' was a tacit but potent factor in this resistance.¹⁵ Michael Watts has stressed that, although the working-class membership of the Church was never total and declined over time, 'most adherents of former Primitive Methodist chapels in most counties remained overwhelmingly working class until

¹¹ R. Moore, *Pit-men, Preachers and Politics: The Effects of Methodism in a Durham Mining Community* (Cambridge: CUP, 1974), 69; Barber, *Pageant*, 310; *PMM*, 1845, 172-3; S. Bruce, *Politics and Religion in the United Kingdom* (London: Routledge, 2011), 99-100.

¹² R.F. Wearmouth *Methodism and the Trade Unions* (London: Epworth Press, 1959). See Appendix: 'PM made me an MP' for more information, including the names of former Primitives who became MPs after 1932. Where 'Appendix' appears in a footnote, detailed references can be found there.

¹³ E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991 reprint of the 1968 edition), 41.

¹⁴ Currie, *Methodism*, 100-1; A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change 1740-1914* (London: Longman, 1976), 62 ff.; Watts, *Dissenters II*, 304-327, 718ff.; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 239-241; K.D.M. Snell, *Church and Chapel in the North Midlands: Religious Observance in the Nineteenth Century* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991), 141, 191; D. Garratt, *Primitive Methodism in Shropshire*, 136. PhD thesis (University of Leicester, 2002). Available online: <https://ira.le.ac.uk/handle/2381/4728> [Accessed 14/04/15]; S. Hatcher, *The Origin and Expansion of Primitive Methodism in the Hull Circuit 1819-51*, 390-405. PhD thesis (University of Manchester, 1993); R.W. Ambler, *Churches, Chapels and the Parish Communities of Lincolnshire 1660-1900* (Lincoln: Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 2000), 158-9; M.A. Collier and R.M. Sherwood, *Prim Aldershot* (Stoke on Trent: Tentmaker Publications, 2010), 163-4; J. A. Jaffe, *The Struggle for Market Power: Industrial Relations in the British Coal Industry 1800-1840* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), 133-4; D. Colin Dews, *Ranters, Revivalists, Radicals, Reformers and Revolutionaries: A Celebration of Methodist Local Preaching* (Leeds: Leeds Methodist District, 1996), 39-40; Patterson, *Northern Primitive Methodism*, 155-57, 187-188; A.S. Peake, *The Life of Sir William Hartley* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926); *PMM*, 1861, 157; M. Riso, *The Narrative of the Good Death: The Evangelical Death Bed in Victorian England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 88-89. C. D. Field, 'The Social Structure of British Methodism: Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 28, 2, (1977), 199-225; 'The social composition of English Methodism to 1830: A Membership Analysis', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 76, 1, (1994), 153-78; 'Demography and the Decline of British Methodism I and II', *PWHS*, 58.4, 175-189 and 58.5, 200-216; 'A Sociological Profile of English Methodism, 1900-1932', *Oral History*, 4, 1, 1976, 73-95. Alexander J Calder, *The Primitive Methodist Connexion: Tackling the Myth*, PhD Thesis, (Open University), 2012. Available online: <http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.594250> . [Accessed: 04/03/2016].

¹⁵ Quoted in Currie, *Methodism*, 207. Also: Field, 'Sociological Profile', 85.

well into the second half of the twentieth century'.¹⁶ The *Stamford Mercury* of 12 April 1850, offered an appropriate picture of a mainly working-class body, differentiated from most other Nonconformists because they 'carry religion down to the very substratum of society ... which is hardly reached by any of the other religious bodies'.¹⁷ That is also how the Church perceived itself, 'doing its chief work among the poor and less-instructed class,' although never entirely composed of this stratum.¹⁸

Primitive Methodism offered the attraction of being cheaper than the Wesleyan Church, often flourishing where Wesleyanism was already established.¹⁹ The new Connexion was both a low-cost religion and an opportunity for the expression of equal rights within its lay ministry and polity – a feature recognised soon after its foundation.²⁰ It was a religion 'created on a shoestring'.²¹ The Church mainly relied on unpaid local preachers. Furthermore, initially unpaid and fewer in number than their Wesleyan colleagues, Primitive Methodist itinerant preachers – its early ministers – were less of a burden to their congregations. Moreover, although originally cottage-based, even when the Primitives built chapels, they commonly cost less than those erected by other Nonconformists, accruing less debt to the congregation. Along with relative neglect by both Anglican and Wesleyan clergymen, financial consideration is one of the reasons submitted for Primitive Methodism's success in village communities and among the less affluent sections of the population.²²

Its mission to the working classes, and the social and occupational composition of its membership, helped shape Primitive Methodism's most distinctive characteristics. For example, from its earliest days, the Church promoted temperance and opposed gambling. Primitives were among the founders of the Temperance Movement.²³ Although Primitives were not the only Church to advocate temperance, the first denominations 'to embrace the temperance movement and endorse total abstinence' were those with the highest proportion

¹⁶ Watts, *Dissenters III*, 107-8.

¹⁷ Quoted in R. C. Russell, *Three Lincolnshire Labourers' Movements: Protest and Incendiarism, Friendly Societies, Farmworkers' Trade Unions* (Barton: WEA, 1994), 104. The same was true of the Bible Christians (J.M. Lloyd, *Women and the Shaping of British Methodism: Persistent Preachers, 1807 – 1907* (Manchester, Manchester University Press: 2009), 65 and the Salvation Army (Norman H. Murdoch, *The Origins of the Salvation Army* (Knoxville: University of Texas, 1996), 121.

¹⁸ Kendall, *Origins and History of the Primitive Methodists* Volume 1 (London: Robert Bryant, 1906), 434. Also: S.S. Henshaw, *The Romance of our Sunday Schools* (London: W.A. Hammond, 1910), 11.

¹⁹ K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems: The Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), 134-44, 191; Kendall, *History*, 22.

²⁰ *Monthly Magazine or British Register*, May 1820, 297-9.

²¹ W.R. Ward, 'Church and Society in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century' in R. Davies et al (eds.), *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, (London: Epworth Press, 1988), Volume 2, 45.

²² J.S. Werner, *The Primitive Methodist Connexion: Its Background and Early History* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984, 10-14; Watts, *Dissenters II*, 223-4.

²³ K. Lysons, *A Little Primitive: Primitive Methodism from Macro and Micro Perspectives* (Buxton: Church in the Marketplace, 2001), 174-82. Also: R. Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books: 1960), 73-74.

of low paid workers: the Primitive and Independent Methodists and the Bible Christians.²⁴ Furthermore, the Temperance and Labour Movements, both of which promoted self-improvement for the working classes, enjoyed early and long-lasting links.²⁵

The Church's contribution to the Labour Movement has received considerable attention. It was most notable in trade unions for coal miners in the Midland and Northern counties, and agricultural labourers in the Midlands, East Anglia and Northern Lincolnshire, although it was never universal.²⁶ Yet, Primitive Methodist involvement in some trade unions is remarkable. Out of 33 English and Welsh miners' trade union leaders born between 1820 and 1879 whose denominational membership is known, over one third were Primitive Methodists.²⁷ Almost three quarters of the 44 MPs linked to the Church were trade union activists. By contrast, out of 102 nineteenth century Congregationalist MPs, only Keir Hardie was unequivocally a Church member and trade unionist. Likewise, out of 22 Baptist MPs who served during the nineteenth century, only one was a trade unionist and, in the twentieth century, out of 50 Baptist MPs, seven were trade unionists. Furthermore, although a minority of Primitive Methodist MPs were middle-class, the plebeian background of most is striking. This contrasts with the overwhelmingly middle class backgrounds of their contemporary MPs associated with the Unitarian, Baptist, Quaker, and Congregational Churches. There were Wesleyan Methodist MPs with a similar social background to the Primitives, such as Ben Pickard, who was educated at a Primitive Methodist day-school, but more, such as Henry

²⁴ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 217-8. Also: B. Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872*, 2nd Edition (Keele: Keele University Press, 1994), 168.

²⁵ Harrison, *Drink*, 24-29.

²⁶ Wearmouth, *Trade Unions*; R. Colls, *The Pitmen of the Northern Coalfield: Work, Culture, Protest, 1790-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 189-202, 296, 300 and *The Collier's Rant: Song and Culture in the Industrial Village* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 98-102; R. Fynes, *The Miners of Northumberland and Durham* (original edition 1873; S.R. Publishers, 1971), 141, 282-3; E. Wilkinson, *The Town that was Murdered* (London: Victor Gollancz Left Book Club, 1939), 30, 44-5; M.R. Morris, 'Primitive Methodists and the Miners' Union', *PWHS*, 37, 1969, 58; K. Milden, 'Culture of Conversion: Religion and Politics in The Cornish Mining Communities', (Cornish History Network Conference 2001); P. Horn, 'Methodism and Agricultural Trade Unionism in Oxfordshire, the 1870s', *PWHS*, 37.3, 1969, 67-71; M. K. Ashby, *Joseph Ashby of Tysoe: 1859-1919* (London; Merlin Press, 1974), 60, 79-80, 118. Obelkevich, *Religion*, 245-6. R.W. Ambler, *Ranters, Revivalists and Reformers: Primitive Methodism and Rural Society, South Lincolnshire 1817-1875* (Hull: Hull University Press, 1989), 78 and 81-85 and *Social Change and Religious Experience: aspects of rural society in south Lincolnshire with specific reference to Primitive Methodism, 1815-1875*, 378-86. PhD thesis (University of Hull, October 1984). Available online: <https://hydra.hull.ac.uk/resources/hull:5003> [Accessed: 15/4/15]; N. Scotland, *Methodism and the Revolt of the Field: A Study of the Methodist Contribution to Agricultural Trade Unionism in East Anglia, 1872-96* (Gloucester: Sutton, 1981), 68, 84, 96, 182-266 and 'The demand for a stake in the soil' in E. Biagini (ed.), *Citizenship and Community* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 159-162; A. Mabuchi, *The Revolt of the Field in the South of England*. PhD thesis (Cambridge, 1999); M. Watts, *Dissenters III, The Crisis and Conscience of Nonconformity*. Oxford: OUP, 2015, 271-7; R.E. Davies, *Methodism* (London: Epworth, 1985), 132-3.

²⁷ H. McLeod, 'Religion and the Organization of the Working Class in Great Britain c. 1830-1960', in L.H. van Voss, P. Pasture and J. de Maeyer, (eds), *Between Cross and Class: Comparative Histories of Christian Labour in Europe 1840-2000* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), 290. McLeod based his analysis on *DLB* entries up to and including volume 10.

John Atkinson, were middle-class and Tory. Although Nonconformist MPs were predominantly members of the Liberal Party, other denominations produced many more Conservative or Liberal Unionist MPs than the Primitives did – another feature that suggests their lower social status.²⁸ For example, between 1919 and 1939 20 Wesleyan Methodist MPs were Conservatives or Liberal Unionists, compared to (possibly) one Primitive out of 26.²⁹ As Arthur Richardson, a Lib-Lab MP, informed the *Review of Reviews* in 1906, ‘PM made me an MP’.³⁰ Richardson was not the only MP who ascribed their progressive political activity to his Church’s influence.³¹

Although class was an influential factor in Primitive Methodism’s political development and priorities, so were the occupational composition of its membership and its geographical distribution. Primitive Methodism particularly appealed to miners and fishermen, occupations with high injury and mortality rates. The Church’s ability, in its early days at least, to absorb folk religion and superstition – hallmarks of communities where occupational hazards were high – may explain this attraction. Primitive Methodism also appealed to other distinctive groups in different localities: agricultural labourers in the Midlands, East Anglia, and Lincolnshire, railway workers in Swindon and Didcot, nailers in the Black Country and East Coast fishermen. Although there were exceptions, such as Sunderland and Hull, the Connexion was primarily village-based, including the industrial villages typical of mining communities, and did not appeal as intensely to urban populations. Durham, Northumberland, North Lincolnshire, Norfolk, the Midlands, and a number of counties on the English side of the Welsh border were among areas of high penetration while the Church had a minimal impact in Scotland, Wales, and the West Country.³² Unsurprisingly, the MPs associated with

²⁸ D.W. Bebbington, ‘Unitarian Members of Parliament in the Nineteenth Century’, *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, 2009, 24 (3), 153-175; ‘Baptist MPs in the Nineteenth Century’, *The Baptist Quarterly*, XXIX, 1981, 1, 3-24; ‘Baptist M.P.s of the Twentieth Century’, *Baptist Quarterly*, 31, 6, (1989), 252-287; Baptist Members of Parliament: A Supplementary note, *Baptist Quarterly*, 42 (2), 148-161. *Congregational Members of Parliament in the Nineteenth Century*, Occasional Publication, 1, The United Reformed Church History Society and The Congregational History Society, 2007. <http://www.quakersintheworld.org/quakers-in-action/305> [retrieved 26/11/13]. *The Spectator*, Aug 01, 1891, 2. *DLB*, 1, 268-70 (Full details of *DLB* entries and authors are given in the Bibliography.)

²⁹ J. M. McEwan, *Conservative and Unionist MPs: 1919-1939*, 36-7, 424. PhD thesis, (University of London, 1959). Quoted in N. Crowson, *Facing Fascism: The Conservative Party and The European Dictators 1935 -1940*. (London: Routledge, 1997), 220; Appendix.

³⁰ W.T. Stead, ‘The Labour Party and the Books that Helped to Make It’, *Review of Reviews* (1906), 579.

³¹ In addition to Arthur Richardson, John Verran, Labour Party Prime Minister of Australia claimed: ‘I am an MP because I am a PM’. Source: Arnold D. Hunt, ‘Verran, John (1856–1932)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Available online: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/verran-john-8917>. [Accessed 10/06/15].

³² D.M. Young, ‘Early Primitive Methodism and Folk Religion’, *PWHS* 60.6 (Oct 2016), 302-11; Watts, *Dissenters II*, 75-8; S.F. Friend, *A Sense of Belonging: Religion and Identity in Yorkshire and Humber Fishing Communities, c.1815-1914*, 163, 199. PhD thesis, (University of Hull, 2010). Available online: <https://hydra.hull.ac.uk/resources/hull:2709> [Accessed 14/04/15]; D. Clark, *Between Pulpit and Pew: Folk Religion in a North Yorkshire Fishing Village* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982), 52-3;

the Church were mainly drawn from occupations and regions where Primitive Methodism had a significant presence – particularly the mining communities of the North and the rural villages of the Midlands, East Anglia and Lincolnshire.

As already noted, the vast majority of Primitive MPs were trade union activists, and about 57 per cent had worked in coalmines or agricultural labour. Furthermore, a third were natives of Durham, Northumberland, or Cleveland. After the Reform Act of 1867, unions for miners and rural labourers were foremost in perceiving that further franchise extension and parliamentary representation were necessary to promote their members' interests. Primitive Labour leaders often took a leading role in persuading their unions to sponsor MPs. Such were Thomas Burt and John Wilson – respectively Northumbrian and Durham miners' leaders – and Joseph Arch of the agricultural labourers' union. Consequently, their selection as parliamentary candidates for their unions was unsurprising. Until the Parliament Act of 1911, MPs did not receive a salary. Before then, unless they had party and union support, working-class candidates could not meet the cost of election expenses or support themselves as MPs.³³

The Church's polity also influenced its political development. Chapel democracy and an emphasis on a lay ministry offer a partial explanation for Primitive Methodists' contribution to the Labour Movement and politics. Protestant sects, particularly those emphasizing lay participation such as Primitive Methodism, provide opportunities for all social classes to exercise leadership, administration, and public speaking.³⁴ Furthermore, in some communities, such as Durham pit villages, Primitive Methodist chapels were 'often the only place ... run by the workers themselves and independent of landlord control.'³⁵ Similarly, as noted by one contemporary of the first generation of Primitive MPs, the Primitive Methodists in particular offered 'the only place where the peasantry have enjoyed the free expression of their opinions' in rural communities.³⁶ The organizational and oratorical skills they learnt in chapel positioned them to act as a cadre of leaders in the trade unions and other working-class

E. Hopkins, 'Religious Dissent in Black Country Industrial Villages in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 34, 3, July 1983, 411-424; Snell and Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 135-41, 191, 398; *CM*, 1921, 106.

³³ Parliamentary Archives HL/PO/PU/1/1911/1&2G5c13; J. Wilson, *Memories of a Labour Leader* (Firle: Caliban Books, 1980 – original edition 1910), 238-57, 281-83; A. Watson, *A Great Labour Leader: Being a Life of the Right Hon. Thomas Burt MP* (London: Brown, Langham and Co., 1908), 123-32; J. Arch, *From Ploughtail to Parliament: An Autobiography* (London: Cresset, 1986 – original publication 1898), 354-6.

³⁴ Bruce, *Politics*, 83-85.

³⁵ McLeod, 'Religion', 292.

³⁶ A. Jessopp, *Arkady, For Better For Worse: A Study of Rural Life in England* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1887), 77-8.

organisations, particularly those for miners and agricultural labourers.³⁷ Significantly, at least 77 per cent of the Church's MPs served as local preachers at some time.³⁸

Additionally, some of the Church's religious beliefs and attitudes both encouraged and constrained its political manifestation – inclining it towards reform through gradual and constitutional change. Methodism could inspire political activism, producing individuals who yearned and worked for a better life in both the next world and this.³⁹ However, as David Hempton has proposed, it was marked by 'acceptance of authority on the one hand, and [a] desire to have justice and fair play on the other.'⁴⁰ Followers of Christ, Primitives promoted peace. As Rev. Nicholas Armstrong sermonised in 1832, 'the first thing that God brings is peace'.⁴¹ This inclined them towards arbitration in international relations, as will be discussed later, and determined their approach to domestic politics and society. Disciples of the Prince of Peace, respecting authority and order while desiring social justice, Primitive Labour leaders promoted industrial arbitration and conciliation for both ethical and pragmatic reasons. In addition to their religious scruples, as Robert Colls has explained, they understood that any return to the old culture of political expression by riot 'would be instantly crushed.'⁴² Although his Church may only have approved of his trade union activity decades after the fact, Thomas Hepburn, Primitive Methodist leader of a Durham miners' trade union in the 1830s, exemplified this. His motto of 'Union, perseverance and order' [my emphasis] was a trinity derived from his Methodism. One contemporary described Hepburn's inability 'to feel shame for the sake of Christ', a 'genius of insubordination' in relation to the coalowners and a determination to 'rule the turbulent' miners in order to enforce the behaviours promulgated in his motto.⁴³ Similarly, Joseph Arch, the agricultural labourers' union leader, MP and local preacher, advocated principles that were derived from his Primitive Methodism: 'United to protect, but not combined to injure'⁴⁴ and 'Defence, not Defiance.'⁴⁵ As will be seen, this defensive and conciliatory principle was fundamental to the politics ultimately endorsed by the Church. Arch's trade union activity, applauded in the

³⁷ Colls, *Collier's Rant*, 100-101; H. Beynon and T. Austrin, *Masters and Servants: Class and Patronage in the Making of a Labour Organisation* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1994), 105-6, 364-7; Bruce *Politics*, 90-93.

³⁸ Appendix.

³⁹ D. Hempton, *The Religion of the People: Methodism and Popular Religion c. 1750-1900* (London: Routledge, 1996), 25-26. Also: J. E. Bradley, *Religion, Revolution, and English Radicalism: Nonconformity in Eighteenth Century Politics and Society* (Cambridge CUP, 1990), 423; D. Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2005), 42-43; H.R. Niebuhr, *The Sources of Denominationalisation* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), 56-72.

⁴⁰ Hempton, *1750-1850*, 216.

⁴¹ N. Armstrong, *A Sermon Preached by the Rev Nicholas Armstrong at the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Cambridge. May 23, 1832* (London: W. Harding, 1832), 6.

⁴² Colls, *Northern Coalfield*, 249.

⁴³ *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, Vol 9, 1834, 68-70.

⁴⁴ Arch, *Ploughtail*, 131.

⁴⁵ *The Times*, 23 Jun, 1874, 10

Primitive Methodist Magazine of 1874, would appear to have been more congenial to his own Church than to some other Nonconformist denominations; indeed, the very mention of Arch's name was hissed by some delegates at the Baptist Conference.⁴⁶ An obituary of a Primitive Methodist miner, James Wilson, also illustrated the Church's fervent support for social justice and reform but, preferably, by peaceful, constitutional means. Wilson's Primitive obituarist was fulsome in lauding his leading role during the 1844 Durham miners' strike and, equally, his appointment by his fellow pitmen to visit London and petition MPs for the redress of their grievances.⁴⁷ As Ross McKibbin proposed, this conciliatory and constitutional form of trade unionism entailed a 'class consciousness [that] was defensive rather than aggressive' and, as will be demonstrated below, sometimes promoted sectionalism.⁴⁸

Other religious doctrines disposed Primitives towards progressive politics. Although not unique to Methodism, a belief in what was referred to variously as entire sanctification, Christian perfection, or scriptural holiness, was significant to Wesley and his followers. Essentially, the principle held that the Christian would love God *and his neighbour* with all his heart and, although still subject to temptation, would be freed from sin by faith.⁴⁹ Compared to other Methodist denominations, early Primitive Methodists may have given the belief greater emphasis as an instantaneous, rather than a gradual process.⁵⁰ The doctrine encouraged a quest for self-improvement, although there was a marked change in how Methodists interpreted the belief in the late nineteenth century as it acquired a social as well as an individualistic dimension.⁵¹ In 1889, Hugh Price Hughes, a Wesleyan minister, even proposed that Christian perfection was indistinguishable from ethical Socialism.⁵² Socialism in this context meant little more than 'a rejection of individualism', an acceptance that personal redemption implied the pursuit of social salvation: 'The Sermon on the Mount' (Matthew Chapters 5-7) interpreted as a social and political manifesto.⁵³ David Bebbington

⁴⁶ *PMM*, 1874, 315; Cunningham, *Everywhere*, 92.

⁴⁷ *PMM*, 1876, 487-8.

⁴⁸ R. McKibbin, 'Why Was There No Marxism in Great Britain', *The English Historical Review*, 99, 391, (1984), 305-6.

⁴⁹ Currie, *Methodism*, 26. Also: John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2007 – a reprint of the 1872 Works of John Wesley Vol II).

⁵⁰ Hatcher, 'Origin and Expansion', 245, 251, 290-95. Also: *CM*, 1884, 328-30 for an account of Entire Sanctification proposing that both instantaneous and gradual grace was bestowed at second birth and D.W. Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press: 2005), 188-194 for more on the concept.

⁵¹ T.A. Langford, *Methodist Theology* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 1998) 69-70; W. J. Abraham, 'Christian Perfection' in W. J. Abraham and J. E. Kirby (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), 587-601.

⁵² M. Carter, *T.H. Green and the Development of Ethical Socialism* (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2003), 107.

⁵³ P.T. Phillips, *A Kingdom on Earth: Anglo-American Social Christianity 1880-1940* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 1996), 203. Also: R. Pope, *Seeking God's Kingdom: The*

has proposed that activism, evangelical and social, was one of the hallmarks of evangelicalism as a whole – although he noted that the Salvation Army, which continues to embrace entire sanctification as one of its core doctrines, was and is exceptional in its commitment to both personal and social redemption. Significantly, many of the early recruits to the Salvation Army came from the Primitive Methodist Church.⁵⁴

Certainly, the concept of Christian perfection, sometimes allied to the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, was promoted in Connexional publications throughout the period under consideration.⁵⁵ Rev. J.T. Barkby expressed this in 1909: [Our Church must] seek the perfection of the saints, and the complete realisation of Christ's will in social and national life.⁵⁶ According to Kenneth Lysons, 'in Primitive Methodism especially', salvation could be construed as implying the construction of a New Jerusalem on earth and that 'the principles of socialism [were] in harmony with Christ's teaching'.⁵⁷ This Christian Socialism 'stressed fraternity', rather than class antagonism.⁵⁸ While an Oxford undergraduate in the early 1880s, the influential Connexional theologian A.S. Peake – who trained many ministers during the period of this thesis – became convinced that Socialism and Christianity were harmonious. Predisposed to redressing social evils after reading the Salvationist William Booth's *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, Peake was ultimately won over by Anglican Socialists; he even considered becoming a slum priest in the Established Church.⁵⁹ It is sometimes forgotten that F.D. Maurice, R.H. Tawney and William Temple – early and prominent advocates of Christian Socialism – were Anglicans, although they influenced members of other denominations.⁶⁰

Nonconformist Social Gospel in Wales 1910-1939 (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2015 edition), 156-7.

⁵⁴ Bebbington, *Dominance*, 188-94 and *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A history from the 1830s to the 1908s* (London: Routledge, 1989), 3-17, 164-5, 178, 214. Also: P.A. Rader in Major J.G. Merritt (ed.), *Historical Dictionary of the Salvation Army* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 135-8; D.W. Taylor, *Like a Mighty Army: The Salvation Army, the Church and the Churches* (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 50-3; Watts, *Dissenters III*, 131.

⁵⁵ For example: *PML*, 23 Feb, 122, 31 Aug, 566, 1922.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 07 Jan, 1, 1909. Where relevant, biographical information or relevant references are given in the text, such where an individual named served as Presidents or Secretary of Conference. Biographical information for many Primitive Methodist ministers, such as Barkby, can be found in the 'People' section of the 'My Primitive Methodist Ancestor' website. Most of the webpages are direct transcripts of contemporary Prim publications: <http://www.myprimitivemethodists.org.uk/>.

⁵⁷ Lysons, *Little Primitive*, 155-6. (For an example of a Primitive Methodist Christian Socialist see A. Wilkinson, *Christian Socialism: Scott Holland to Tony Blair* (n London: SCM Press, 1998), 206-7 on Peter Lee.)

⁵⁸ Hoggart, *Local Habitation*, 129-130.

⁵⁹ Wilkinson, *Christian Socialism*, 40-1. More information on Peake, his liberal theology, advocacy of Biblical criticism and influence as a tutor at Hartley College – the Prim's ministerial training college – can be found in J.J.W. Edmondson, *The doctrines of hell and judgment and the need for personal conversion as an index to the development of liberal theology within the theological colleges of the Methodist Church in England from 1907 to 1932*. MA thesis (Durham University, 1990), 32-68. Available online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/6466/> [Accessed: 15/04/15]

⁶⁰ Wilkinson, *Christian Socialism*, xii-xiii, 95-132.

Biblical criticism and an increased emphasis on an immanent God, as opposed to a transcendent divinity have also been cited as factors in the growth of Christian or ethical Socialism.⁶¹ R.J. Campbell, a Congregationalist minister and author of *The New Theology* in 1907, was a prominent advocate of ‘Divine immanence in the universe and mankind’ and hitching ‘the waggon of socialism’ to ‘the star of religious belief’.⁶² Campbell argued that selfishness was the basis of sin and collectivism, not competition, was ‘essentially the gospel of the kingdom of God’.⁶³ Although he was not the only exponent of such ideas, one reporter for a Durham newspaper considered Campbell ‘one of the greatest compelling forces behind Socialism’. The Durham born Primitive Methodist Thomas Richardson MP and a number of his co-religionists in that county were certainly influenced by Campbell.⁶⁴ However, as this thesis will demonstrate, the Church was initially hostile to Socialist principles and they never appealed to all Primitives.

In practice the Church’s institutional sympathy with and involvement in progressive politics and the trade union movement only became unmistakably manifest during the latter decades of the nineteenth century. The first generation of Primitive leaders, such as Hugh Bourne, discouraged political activity. However, editor of the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* until 1843, controller of the sect’s printing press and a source of finance for chapel building, Hugh Bourne had several levers of influence, but his authority was primarily moral. Furthermore, weak central and ministerial control permitted greater local initiative within the Connexion and some adherents and chapels ignored injunctions against political activism.⁶⁵ Indeed, some Primitives so resented any increase in central or ministerial power that they formed their own schismatic Churches.⁶⁶ A number of individual Primitives were political radicals or active Chartists and some chapels hosted Chartist meetings. However the Church itself did not offer official support to the Chartist movement. Involvement in the Anti-Corn Law agitation appears to have been more widespread and acceptable to the Church – even some ministers participated in Anti-Corn Law League meetings. Like slavery, the effect of the Corn Laws could be perceived as both a material and moral iniquity to a Christian

⁶¹ Ibid., 35, 179. Also: Bevir, *British*, 220-234; R. Pope, ‘Nonconformists and the Holy Spirit: A Dogmatic Overview’ in R. Pope (ed.), *T & T Clark Companion to Nonconformity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 226-31 and E. Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago, University of Chicago, 1981), 217-222.

⁶² R.J. Campbell, *The New Theology* (New York: Macmillan, 1907), 4-8. Also: A.P F. Sell, *Christ and Controversy: The Person of Christ in Nonconformist Thought and Ecclesial Experience, 1600-2000*, Kindle version (Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2011), location 3745-55.

⁶³ Campbell, *New Theology*, 206-8, 248-52.

⁶⁴ Quoted in C. Marshall, *Levels of industrial militancy and the political radicalization of the Durham miners 1885-1914*, 283-6. MA thesis (Durham, 1976). Available online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/9370/> [Accessed 15/04/15]. Also: Moore, *Pit-Men*, 174, 176, 228.

⁶⁵ Werner, *Connexion*, 62, 165-70; Colls, *Northern Coalfield*, 178-9; Currie, *Methodism*, 146; Watts, *Dissenters II*, 197-8.

⁶⁶ W. Parkes, ‘The Original Methodists: Primitive Methodist Reformers’, *PWHS*, 35.3, 1965, 58-64; G. E. Milburn, ‘Tensions in Primitive Methodism in the 1870s and the Origins of the Christian Lay Churches in the North-East’, *PWHS*, 40.4, 1976, 93-101 and 135-143; John Dolan, *The Independent Methodists: A History* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2005), 90-98.

conscience.⁶⁷ Possibly for the same reason, some Primitive ministers and members even swam against the general tide of Nonconformism that opposed state interference in areas such as factory reform. For example, a number of chapels supported Richard Oastler's ten-hour campaign in the 1830s – an early commitment to social reform through legislation.⁶⁸ As my thesis will demonstrate, as the balance of power gradually shifted towards the central authority in the later decades of the nineteenth century,⁶⁹ the leadership became increasingly political.⁷⁰

This gradual institutional embrace of political action and trade union activity is manifest in histories of the Church produced by its members. The Acts of the Apostles provided the model for early Primitive Methodist historians, their only references to politics were expressions of loyalty to the Crown. However, by the late nineteenth century, Primitive historians expressed pride in their trade union leaders and political activists – even those Chartists that the Church had shunned or criticised at the time. Although their work sometimes exaggerated and romanticised their members' influence in the Labour and Chartist Movements – some even incorporated the word *Romance* into the titles of their work – Primitive Methodism's influence in certain trade unions and the Church's political manifestation should not be underestimated.⁷¹ In 1919, a former President of Conference,

⁶⁷ S.G. Hatcher, 'The Radicalism of Primitive Methodism' in J. Rieger and J.J. Vincent (eds.), *Methodist and Radical* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2003), 132-4; M. Edwards, *Methodism and England* (London: Epworth, 1943), 46-7; Colls, *Pitmen*, 158-60; C. Shaw, *When I was a Child* (London: Caliban Books, 1980 – originally published in 1903), 141-154, 172-181; Kendall, *Origins*, Vol 1, 336-7; J. Burnett, (ed.), *Useful Toil: Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820s to the 1920s* (London: Routledge, 1997 reprint of 1974 original), 297. Wearmouth, *Twentieth Century*, 243-4; E. Yeo, 'Christianity in Chartist Struggle: 1838-1842', *Past and Present*, 91, 1 (1981), 116-7, 129-137; W.J. Johnson, *In Triumph of Faith: Primitive Methodism and the Labouring People in the North Midlands, 1812-62*, 185-200. PhD thesis (Keele University, 1989). Available online: <http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.276172> [Accessed 15/4/15]. Calder, *Myth*, 91; Watts, *Dissenters, II*, 526. M. Johnson, 'The People's Loaf and the Prims', *The Ranters' Digest*, 12, 2015, 25-32.

⁶⁸ K.T. Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation: 1846-1886* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 96; C. Driver, *Tory Radical: The Life of Richard Oastler* (Oxford: OUP, 1946), 110-1, 216.

⁶⁹ Kendall, *History*, 95

⁷⁰ A. Howkins, *Poor Labouring Men: Popular Radicalism in Norfolk 1870-1923* (London: RKP, 1985), 44-56. Howkins also demonstrates that national and local tendencies within the Church could flow at variance.

⁷¹ J. Petty, *The History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion from its Origins to the Conference of 1860* (London: R. Davies, 1864); *PMQ*, 1893, 121-9; Kendall, *Origins*, Volume 1 and 2, and *History* passim; W.M. Patterson, *Northern Primitive Methodism* (Dalton, 1909), 225, 288-291, 336-7, 346-7 and 353-4; Ritson, *Romance*, 274-287; A.H. Patterson, *From Hayloft to Temple: The Story of Primitive Methodism in Great Yarmouth* (London: Robert Bryant, 1903), 130, 169; *Jubilee Souvenir Easington Lane Primitive Methodist Chapel 1869-1919*, 13; Barber, *Pageant*, 74, 162-166; S.S. Henshaw, *The Romance of our Sunday Schools* (London: W.A. Hammond, 1910). R.F. Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Working Class Movements of England: 1800-1850* (London: Epworth Press, 1937), *Methodism and the Struggle of the Working Classes 1850-1900* (Leicester: Edgar Backus, 1954), *The Social and Political Influence of Methodism in the Twentieth Century* (London: The Epworth Press: 1957), *Trade Unions*, 135-7. J.M. Turner, 'Methodism in England 1900-1932', in Davies et al., (eds.), *Methodist Church*, Vol. 3, 332-3 and 'Robert F. Wearmouth (1882-1963) Methodist Historian', *PWHS*, 43, 1982, 111-116; D. M. Thompson, *Nonconformity in the Nineteenth Century*, (London: RKP, 1972), 13; G. Milburn, *Primitive Methodism* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2002), 57; S. Mayor, *The Churches and the Labour Movement* (London: Independent Press, 1967), 360-1; Hempton, *1750-1850*, 211-13; E.

Rev. H.B. Kendall, celebrated his Church's increased involvement in the nation's life. However, he employed a metaphor that implied Primitive Methodism embodied political dissent when required, although within a constitutional framework: 'Even if we should be called upon to oppose, we shall still be a recognized part of His Majesty's Opposition.'⁷² Indeed, during discussions leading to the Methodist Union of 1932, Wesleyans opposed to the proposed merger drew attention to the contrast between the Wesleyan Church's apolitical policies and Primitive Methodism's institutional political engagement.⁷³

Drawing on some of the Connexional histories that celebrated Primitive Methodist involvement in the Labour Movement, in *Primitive Rebels* Hobsbawm suggested that the Church experienced the 'partial [my emphasis] transformation of a non-aggressive sect into a labour sect under the pressure of its members'.⁷⁴ He noted that most radical and Socialist movements on the continent were secular in their inspiration, yet in Britain there was a close relationship between Labour Movements and religion.⁷⁵ In contrast to the labour sect, Hobsbawm argued that the purely religious working-class sect was little more than 'an opium of the people'. Although such sects were democratic, fostered community solidarity, and made poverty a sign of grace, they ignored the proletariat's fundamental problems. They offered individual, rather than collectivist, answers to social and political problems. The labour sect differed:

because it is primarily *active*. The membership of the group is not only drawn primarily from wage-workers, but the entire sect is closely connected with Labour and trade union movements, whether doctrinally, organizationally or through the activities of its members. More: it is a search for a religious doctrine and organization to mirror not only the fate but the collective aspirations of the new class. In this extreme it is rare ... What is far more common is the partial [my emphasis] transformation of a non-aggressive sect into a labour sect under the pressure of its members. In a mild way this is extremely common: working class Wesleyans and others neglected the Toryism of their connexion to take part in Luddite, Radical and Chartist activities...But there are few examples of such sects in which trade union militancy has become systematic rather than exceptional. The *Primitive Methodists* are the best known.' [my emphasis].⁷⁶

Hobsbawm did not claim that Primitive Methodism was unique, only that its connection to the Labour Movement, or sections of it, was well established. He further developed the proposition by stressing the importance of lay-preaching and chapel democracy in gradually creating what 'was primarily a sect of trade union cadres' and argued that its strongest

Yeo, 'Practices and Problems of Chartist Democracy' in J. Epstein and D. Thompson, (eds.), *The Chartist Experience* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 353-4.

⁷² Kendall, *History*, 172.

⁷³ Davies et al, *Methodist Church*, Volume 4, 638-641; A. J. Bolton, *The Other Side: Opposition to Methodist Union – An Examination of Some Contemporary Documents* (Peterborough: World Methodist Historical Society, 1994), 8.

⁷⁴ Hobsbawm, *Rebels*, 134.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 126-9.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 132-4.

manifestation as a labour sect was in villages, industrial and rural. However, Primitive Methodism's direct connection with the Labour Movement and radical politics was tenuous and not based on any significant difference in doctrine with other Nonconformists. Instead, he suggested that the Church's working-class membership, an emphasis on Old Testament texts – which produced 'stiff-necked' adherents who were not inclined to turn the other cheek – and its organizational structures within rural and industrial villages might explain how it created the cadre of leaders.⁷⁷

Hobsbawm's description of Primitive Methodism partially acting as a labour sect was brief: only part of a 24 page essay in one of his early publications that primarily considered the period before 1880. Later, in *Uncommon People*, he referenced the Church's role in the Labour Movement again. He re-iterated its importance as a provider of Labour leaders, particularly for the Durham miners in the 1840s and Lincolnshire agricultural labourers during the 1870s. He recognized that Primitive Methodism's political effects could be inconsistent, varying from individual to individual and from community to community.⁷⁸ Like the Methodist historian J.M. Turner, my thesis endorses Hobsbawm's 'partial' transformation of Primitive Methodism into a labour sect as 'perceptive'.⁷⁹ However, although arguing that Primitive Methodism's political agenda was intensely influenced by Labour considerations and that the Church inspired a substantial proportion of the first working-class MPs, this thesis has a different focus and perspective to Hobsbawm's. Hobsbawm argued that, as the Church was rooted in a 'community' of faith rather than one of class, its influence within the Labour Movement was limited and it was ultimately rendered 'obsolete' as a vehicle for working-class interests.⁸⁰ By comparison, my thesis argues a similar but not identical point: that the Church's Christian principles and its social composition inspired its political activism and activists, establishing boundaries to the means and ends it endorsed. Whereas one of Hobsbawm's key interests was class and the development of class consciousness, this thesis considers class as only one important factor in stimulating and directing the Church's political activism.⁸¹ It assents to Richard Hoggart's assertion that 'the coffin of class remains empty';⁸² it considers class an important element in

⁷⁷ Ibid., 136-149.

⁷⁸ E. Hobsbawm, *Uncommon People: Resistance, Rebellion and Jazz*. (Kindle version. Orion Books, 1999), 62-3, 66-68, 82.

⁷⁹ J.M. Turner, 'Robert F. Wearmouth (1882-1963) Methodist Historian', *PWHS*, 43.5, 1982, 111-116. Also: Turner, 'The Christian Study of History', *PWHS*, 46.1, 1987, 10.

⁸⁰ Hobsbawm, *Rebels*, 147-9 and E. Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times: A Twentieth Century Life* (London: Abacus, 2002), 250.

⁸¹ For example see Bevir, *Socialism*, 3 or A. Reid's review of Hobsbawm's *Worlds of Labour* in *The Historical Journal*, 30, 1 (1987), 225-238.

⁸² R. Hoggart in the introduction to George Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1989), vii.

agency but agrees with David Cannadine that people ‘maintain several loyalties ... any one of which might at any time be foremost in their minds’, depending on the context.⁸³

Yet, it is worth noting that Hobsbawm was not alone in identifying the close correlation between social class and religious denomination. Two years before the publication of Hobsbawm’s *Primitive Rebels*, the theologian H. R. Niebuhr also acknowledged the interaction and blurring of religious, class and political allegiances. He proposed that Churches could act more as ‘class and political institutions’ than as religious organisations.⁸⁴ Niebuhr suggested that religious and class identities could exist in symbiosis. He contended that the social ‘caste’ system accommodated itself in the denominational diversity of Christianity.⁸⁵ Similarly, Hester Barron recently has argued convincingly that choosing Primitive rather than Wesleyan Methodism in Durham, particularly in the 20th century, could be ‘a mark of class identity’ in addition to exhibiting a commitment to radical politics: religious, class and political motivations coalescing.⁸⁶

One other point of Hobsbawm’s is of relevance to my thesis. Although he noted that some Methodist Labour leaders, a number of whom became MPs, had been born into their denominations, Hobsbawm was struck by the phenomenon of a ‘second birth’ in initiating social and political, as well as religious activism. These conversions, he submitted, sometimes inspired unselfish, disciplined, and worldly activity – analogous to that of Thompson’s Methodist political rebels.⁸⁷ The latter exhibited ‘a profound moral earnestness, a sense of calling, a Methodist capacity for sustained organizational dedication and ... a high degree of personal responsibility’.⁸⁸ Indeed, some of the MPs associated with the Church, such as John Wilson, did undergo a ‘second birth’. However, others, such as Ben Spoor, Jim Simmons, William Lunn and Tom Fenby, were at least third generation Primitives – steeped in the Church’s traditions rather than newly minted Prims.⁸⁹ Although convinced by faith, their inspiration derived from their Primitive Methodist upbringing and its traditions, rather than a single ecstatic experience. This was typical of most Primitives; in a survey of Methodists born between 1879 and 1914, about 80 per cent were at least

⁸³ D. Cannadine, *The Undivided Past: History Beyond our Differences* (New York: Vintage: 2013), 91 and passim.

⁸⁴ Niebuhr, *Sources*, 24.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 3-17.

⁸⁶ H. Barron, *The 1926 Miners’ Lockout: Meanings of Community in the Durham Coalfield*, (Oxford: OUP, 2010), 182-192. Barron’s contention was a rebuttal, using his own data and interview records, of Robert Moore’s assertion in *Pit-men, Preachers and Politics*, that Primitive and Wesleyan Methodism were indistinguishable in their class and occupational composition or theological and political beliefs.

⁸⁷ Hobsbawm, *Rebels*, 140-1.

⁸⁸ Thompson, *The Making*, 433.

⁸⁹ See Appendix.

second-generation members or adherents.⁹⁰ Furthermore, some Labour Leaders claimed by Hobsbawm as Primitives, such as Thomas Burt, were never members of the Church, although profoundly influenced by their Primitive Methodist upbringing.⁹¹

D. Clark's sociological study of folk religion in the North Yorkshire fishing village of Staithes during the 1970s is significant in this context by its stress on tradition. The Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists there retained their own places of worship for more than four decades after Union – the latter still referred to locally as the 'Ranter' chapel. Many villagers continued to consider themselves members of one or the other denomination, even when their religious observance was only occasional and ceremonial: perhaps an annual attendance at a Sunday School Anniversary. Considering whether issues of theology, class or antipathy to ministerial power explained this persistence, Clark concluded that, although all played a part, family tradition was the most potent explanation for their tenacious denominational identification.⁹² My thesis utilises 'tradition' as an important factor in influencing agency. I follow Mark Bevir's view that individuals 'are agents who act innovatively for reasons of their own, but ... they are necessarily influenced by social inheritances [and] historians need a concept such as tradition to capture the social context as it affects the individual subject.' Consequently, this thesis considers the national politics of the Primitive Methodist Church and the activities of those Members of Parliament influenced by the Church's traditions: whether as formal members, hearers, or those (like Thomas Burt) who were nurtured within the denomination.⁹³

Historians without attachment to the Church have produced biographies of individual MPs; others have touched on the national politics and politicians of Primitive Methodism – although that has not been their primary focus.⁹⁴ Conversely, histories produced by members of the Connexion regarding its politics and politicians are useful but sometimes insufficiently critical and tinged with romanticism.⁹⁵ Hobsbawm's work, although insightful, was constrained by its brevity and focus on the Church's role in the Labour Movement. This thesis redresses the deficiencies and imbalances of previous work, avoiding romanticism or identification; it describes why and how the Church engaged in

⁹⁰ Field, 'Sociological Profile', 78.

⁹¹ See Appendix.

⁹² Clark, *Pulpit*, 66-90. Also: Lysons, *Little Primitive*, 132-3, 141; Hoggart, *Literacy*, 87-8.

⁹³ Bevir, *British*, 1-16. For the literature relating to 'tradition' and its limitations see: Mark Bevir and R.A.W. Rhodes 'Defending Interpretation', *European Political Science* (2006), 5, 69-83; S. McAnnula, 'Understanding Tradition in British Politics and Beyond', POLIS Working Paper No. 24, 2007, Leeds University. Available online:

<http://www.polis.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/research/workingpapers/wp24mcanulla.pdf>. [Accessed 3/3/2013]; Shils, *Tradition*, particularly 195-286.

⁹⁴ For example, P. Horn, *Joseph Arch* (Kineton: The Roundwood, 1971) and E.F. Biagini, and A. Reid, (eds.) *Currents of Radicalism: Popular Radicalism, Organized Labour and Party Politics in Britain 1850-1914* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991).

⁹⁵ For example, the works of Wearmouth, Kendall, Barber, Henshaw and Ritson noted previously.

national politics, its principles, agendas and actions. It avoids the ‘dangerous temptations of “identity”’.⁹⁶

The thesis also addresses a number of gaps in the historiography. Despite the dominance of male power in most churches, women have been the most numerous worshippers and crucial in the transmission of religious culture and tradition.⁹⁷ Although it has been suggested that Primitive Methodists ‘had a traditional feeling for the cause of women’s emancipation’, a view this thesis endorses in regard to the suffrage, this assertion has received only limited consideration.⁹⁸ Several historians have detailed women’s notable role as itinerant preachers in early Primitive Methodism – a radical practice by contemporary standards. By contrast, Wesleyanism emphasised its conformity to Church and State by stripping away radical features, prohibiting (or severely limiting) female preaching in 1803. In addition, often cottage-based during its infancy, Primitive Methodism centred its worship in the home, emphasizing the importance of family life and, consequently, promoted the status of women. However, despite their apparently advantageous position, the Church never awarded women full equality with men: for example, women itinerants received half the salary of men. Moreover, the shift to chapel building as the Connexion consolidated its position and status diminished the role of women within the Connexion. Yet, women continued to operate as local preachers, missionaries, and Sunday school teachers, despite their exclusion from itinerancy after 1841 and church governance until the end of the nineteenth century.⁹⁹ From 1871 onwards, there are examples of Connexional chapels hosting women’s suffrage meetings, chaired by local preachers or ministers. Furthermore, Methodist women, including Primitive Methodists, represented a good proportion of Labour Party pioneers and Co-operative Movement activists.¹⁰⁰ My thesis offers further investigation and elucidation on the Church’s attitude to and involvement with women’s suffrage.

By contrast, there has been some consideration of the Church’s perception of itself as robustly committed to international peace. Two influential Connexional leaders and

⁹⁶ Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times*, 415.

⁹⁷ D. Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity*, (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2011, 2nd Edition), 24-25; C.G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2009 Second Edition), 58-87.

⁹⁸ E. F. Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone 1860-1880* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), 307-8.

⁹⁹ E.D. Graham, *Chosen by God: the Female Itinerants of Early Primitive Methodism*. PhD thesis (University of Birmingham, 1986). Available online: <http://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/17346396.pdf> [Accessed 15/04/15]; Hobsbawm, *Rebels*, 135; D.M. Valenze, *Prophetic Sons and Daughters: Female Preaching and Popular Religion in Industrial England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 21-22, 41-3, 55, 79, 110ff, 274ff; Colls, *Northern Coalfield*, 172-3; Lloyd, *Persistent*, 107-112, 262-3, 273.

¹⁰⁰ E. Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland: A Regional Survey* (London: Routledge, 2006), 21, 24, 71-73, 78, 190; P. Greaves, *Labour Women: Women in British Working Class Politics 1918-39* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 55.

historians, Rev. H.B. Kendall and Rev. B. Aquila Barber, considered their Church ‘the most closely allied to the Society of Friends’ in this respect, although their claim rested on the Connexion’s commitment to international arbitration as an alternative to war. They were not claiming an absolute pacifism in the modern sense.¹⁰¹ As Burt complained in 1918, by the early twentieth century, the word ‘pacifism’ conveyed only ‘a narrow, improper sense’. President of the International Arbitration League for 35 years, he regarded himself ‘a peace man’ because of his commitment to arbitration. In the aftermath of the Great War he hoped that ‘something like a League of Nations may be formed to preserve and **enforce** [my emphasis] peace’¹⁰² As Michael Hughes has suggested, the Church was one in which a ‘commitment to peace loomed large’, although it was never ‘a peace church’ in the modern sense.¹⁰³ Martin Ceadel’s appellation of *pacifism*, as opposed to the modern connotations of pacifism, is generally accepted as a more appropriate label for the Connexion’s stance on war. *Pacifism* ‘sees the prevention of war as its main duty and accepts that, however upsetting to the purist’s conscience, the controlled use of armed force may be necessary to achieve this’.¹⁰⁴ Hughes submitted that this ambivalent aspect of Methodism reflected John Wesley’s own prevarications regarding the legitimacy of warfare. Although appalled by the human suffering war entailed, Wesley did not deny the possibility of a Methodist bearing arms when the State required. However, he believed that the inevitable progress of Christianity would, one day, make war impossible between Christian nations.¹⁰⁵ Wesley sometimes expressed greater concern regarding the chronic swearing exhibited in military camps than the ethical or human consequences of militarism.¹⁰⁶ A similar concern, to save soldiers from the evils of drink rather than war’s inhumanity, was apparent in the work of the Aldershot Primitive Methodist chapel.¹⁰⁷ Although this aspect of Methodism has received some scholarly attention already, this thesis will re-examine the Church’s attitude to war but focus on the under-researched subject of how the Church’s MPs acted when faced with the exigencies of war and whether their responses were compatible with the Church’s policies and traditions.

The thesis will also examine the continuities and changes in Primitive Methodist party political allegiances and the factors that influenced these. The Primitive Methodist traditions

¹⁰¹ Kendal, *History*, 163ff.; Barber, *Pageant*, 264-6.

¹⁰² T. Burt, *An Autobiography* (London: Fisher and Unwin, 1924), 312.

¹⁰³ M. Hughes, ‘Dilemmas of the Nonconformist Conscience: Attitudes Towards War and Peace Within Primitive Methodism’, *Wesley and Methodist Studies*, 5 (Toronto: Clements Academic, 2013), 75-96.

¹⁰⁴ M. Ceadel, *Pacifism in Britain: 1914-45* (Oxford: OUP, 1980), 5. *Pacifism* is italicized throughout to distinguish it from pacifism.

¹⁰⁵ M. Hughes, *Conscience and Conflict: Methodism, Peace and War in the Twentieth Century* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2008), 4-6.

¹⁰⁶ Niebuhr, *Sources*, 67.

¹⁰⁷ Collier and Sherwood, *Aldershot*, passim.

of *pacifism*, individual moral improvement and community concern were unequivocally compatible with Liberalism at the beginning of the period under consideration, although allegiance to the Liberal party gradually loosened. Even in its final decades as an independent Church, most Primitive Methodists appear to have remained loyal to the Liberal Party, although a significant proportion shifted their allegiance to Labour and a smaller minority to the Conservatives. In 1922, a survey conducted by the *Methodist Times* concluded that Primitive Methodists in mining areas largely supported the Labour Party, but in other industrial areas either the Labour or Liberal Party and, in the suburbs, either Lloyd George's brand of Liberalism or the Conservative Party.¹⁰⁸ Clive Field has estimated that Labour supporters 'predominated' in only one out of three Primitive Methodist chapels between the wars. However, this was probably a higher proportion than in the other Methodist Churches, 'with the Primitives being more staunchly allied to Labour and less to Conservatism' than the Wesleyans or United Methodists.¹⁰⁹ Peter Catterall has proposed that this transfer from Liberal to Labour and advocacy of Socialism, where it occurred, might have been 'partly a generational process'.¹¹⁰ This shift in political allegiance sometimes provoked an 'increasing tension between the more conservative, conciliatory line of the chapel leadership and the socialism of individual members'. Consequently, the political sometimes replaced the religious allegiance for those attracted to Socialism.¹¹¹ Furthermore, although some Nonconformists joined the Labour Party, and continued to pursue politics as a 'moral crusade', they never achieved the same influence that they had wielded within the Liberal Party.¹¹²

A commitment to social and political activism was characteristic of many denominations, although to different degrees. Nonconformity as a whole became involved in politics from the 1870s onwards. In 1890, following their condemnation of the Irish nationalist leader Parnell's adultery – a chorus of disapproval that was swelled by Primitive voices – their 'moralising on political themes' was labelled 'The Nonconformist Conscience'.¹¹³ Leonard Smith, who did not include Primitive Methodists in his research,

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in P.P. Catterall, *The Free Churches and the Labour Party in England and Wales 1918-1939*, 282. PhD thesis (University of London, 1989). Available online: <https://qmro.qmul.ac.uk/jspui/handle/123456789/1367>. [Accessed 15/4/15], 279. Also: Moore, *Pit-men*, 33-4; J. Owen, *Labour and the Caucus: Working-class radicalism and organised Liberalism, 1868-88*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), 169-170.

¹⁰⁹ Field, 'Sociological Profile', 83 and 91.

¹¹⁰ Catterall, *Free Churches*, 282.

¹¹¹ G. Parsons, 'Social Control to Social Gospel' in G. Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain: Controversies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 56-7. Also: Howkins, *Labouring Men*, 56 and 91-2; Moore, *Pit-men*, 199-2; P. P. Catterall, 'Morality and Politics: The Free Churches and the Labour Party between the Wars', *The Historical Journal*, 36, 3 (1993), 676-7.

¹¹² Catterall, 'Morality', 678-84.

¹¹³ D. Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics 1870-1914* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982), preface; *PMM*, 1891, 63, 126-7; *PMQ*, 1891, 184.

described most Nonconformist leaders' 'concern for social questions' as 'limited' before 1906 and 'thereafter practically non-existent' – a suggestion that Catterall has challenged and was evidently not true of the Primitive Methodists.¹¹⁴ Political prophets preached and worshipped in a range of churches and chapels during the period under consideration. There was considerable inter-denominational communication and exchange of views, even internationally. In British Nonconformity, the establishment of the Free Church Council in 1892 facilitated this.¹¹⁵ Although my thesis offers some comparisons between Primitive politics with those of other Nonconformist denominations, a number of other works consider the politics of Nonconformity in general: the spotlight here is on the 'Prims'.¹¹⁶ However, my thesis argues that the Church's political manifestation was particularly notable among religious bodies. By the early twentieth century, critics and admirers alike considered Primitives 'political people'.¹¹⁷

The thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter One: The Politics of Primitive Methodism up to 1885 offers an outline of the Church's increasing involvement in national politics. In addition to the introduction, the chapter provides background information essential to understanding the context and content of the main body of the thesis.

Chapter Two: 'As a people we are not blindly loyal': 1886-1898, begins in the year that five MPs closely associated with the Church were elected to Parliament, all Liberals. The chapter demonstrates that the Liberal Party and its principles were congenial to the Church and the first generation of its MPs, the majority of whom were trade union activists and carried their 'Defence, not Defiance' principles into Parliament. However, although they promoted the interests of wage-earners, which they considered to be in the national interest, they were at odds with some of their co-religionists concerning some Labour interests – such as the campaign for an eight hour working day. Although the Church was largely committed to Home Rule for Ireland, the subject was one reason or rationale for some desertions to the Liberal Unionists, including – as the period ends – one of its MPs.

Chapter Three: 'The social lot of the people must be improved': 1899-1913. The period begins with the outbreak of the Boer War and as Tory proposals to reform education

¹¹⁴ Leonard Smith, *Religion and the Rise of Labour* (Keele: Keele University Press, 1993), 126-7. Peter Catterall, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 47, 1, Jan 1996, 200-203.

¹¹⁵ Phillips, *Kingdom on Earth*, 182-3, For other denominations' 'prophets', in addition to Phillips' and Bebbington's work listed above, see K. Robbins, *History, Religion and Identity in Modern Britain* (London: Hambledon Press, 1993), 105-118.

¹¹⁶ For example: Bebbington, *Conscience*; Phillips, *Kingdom on Earth* and P. Catterall, P., *Labour and the Free Churches 1918-39: Radicalism, Righteousness and Religion* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016.)

¹¹⁷ *HDM*, 01 May, 1906, 3.

drew the Church into political agitation to an unprecedented extent. Although a Liberal allegiance remained dominant, some Primitives were shifting their allegiance, particularly to the Labour Party. Consequently, the Church's first Labour MPs were elected. Furthermore, in 1909, a number of Primitive trade unionists and MPs were obliged to renounce their former and natural allegiance to the Liberals after the Miners' Federation of Great Britain (MFGB) affiliated to the Labour Party. The MPs were active in a number of campaigns for social and political reform, particularly those for Old Age Pensions and women's suffrage.

Chapter Four, 'All political colours are among us': 1914-1922, covers the period of the First World War and its aftermath. It demonstrates that, although the Liberal Party was still the primary allegiance for many Primitives, there was a marked drift to Labour – and, to a lesser extent, the Tories. Consequently, by the end of this period, the Primitive leadership recognised that this political fissiparousness and the post-war crisis in the Coal industry threatened the Church's internal harmony and its aspirations for industrial peace and reconciliation. The chapter considers the key issues for the Church during the war and the response and conduct of their MPs. Although Primitive publications reported the course of battle, Conference debates and the Connexional press were preoccupied with: the justness of the conflict, the introduction of conscription, the effects of war on their social and political priorities and the shape of the society that they hoped would emerge in the aftermath of victory. Correspondingly, this chapter highlights the same issues. It ends with a brief indication of the Church's political trajectory from 1923 to 1932.

The Conclusion summarises how the Church's religious bedrock, its changing class composition and a desire to evangelise while retaining internal harmony, all influenced its political expression and activism. In terms of its national politics and politicians, Primitive Methodism came closest to Hobsbawm's concept of a labour sect in the period 1886-1922. This was particularly pertinent in northern mining communities, especially in the North-East.

Appendix: 'PM made me an MP'. This appendix lists those MPs the Church claimed as members, or as closely associated with their denomination. It offers brief social and occupational information on each individual and a description of their connection to the Church. Most were active members, usually local preachers. However, a small minority had only a tenuous association, although their recognition by the Church is significant in terms of Primitive political allegiances. One outcome of this research has been the identification of some MPs omitted from previous studies.

Chapter One: The Politics of Primitive Methodism up to 1885.

1.1 Introduction

A brief outline of the Church's increasing institutional engagement with politics in the decades leading up to 1886, and the issues that it espoused, are essential to understanding the core of this thesis. The chapter first summarises the Church's evolution from outright opposition – or ambivalence – towards political engagement to recognising its necessity for their religious and social mission. Then the frequently interwoven issues that engaged the Connexion follow. These reflected its fundamental beliefs and a mainly working-class composition that was often concentrated in rural and industrial villages. The chapter ends by focusing on Primitive involvement in the crusade against the Contagious Diseases Acts – a campaign that exemplified the primary features of Primitive parliamentary political engagement in the decade before 1885. Church publications, particularly the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* and the *Quarterly Review*, are among the primary sources employed to articulate the influential voices of Primitive Methodism. Significantly, by the 1880s 'political subjects' occupied a 'prominent place in [the *Review*'s] columns'.¹

Primitive Methodist MPs referred to in this chapter.²

Joseph Arch: 1885-6 and 1892-1900, Norfolk, Liberal#

Thomas Burt: 1874-1918, Northumberland, Liberal*

George Edwards: 1920-24, Norfolk, Labour#

John Wilson: 1885-6 and 1890-1915, Durham, Liberal*

* indicates a significant involvement with a trade union in the coal industry while # represents involvement in any other union.

1.2 The increasing acceptance of political action

Initially Connexional publications followed Conference's injunction of 1837 that Primitives should abjure 'party politics', although this did not prevent some political comment.³ In 1838 and 1839, the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* published articles that typified this. The author of the first asserted that he had no politics. The second criticised the Jesuits for meddling in politics. However, the first then went on to praise Oliver Cromwell for usurping the tyrant Charles I who had oppressed the people. Despite his condemnation of the Jesuits, the second concluded by encouraging his enfranchised readers to vote for those

¹ *CM*, 1884, 353. Most of the articles in PM publication during this period were anonymous. The names of authors have been given where available and relevant.

² See Appendix for more details of individual MPs referred to in this and subsequent chapters. The list details their dates of service as MPs, the County of their constituency and their Party allegiance.

³ *PMM*, 1837, 275.

paragons of Christian virtue who espoused strict Sabbatarianism and temperance advocacy whilst abjuring gambling, swearing, and prostitutes.⁴ Similarly, a contributor of 1847 urged his readers to avoid party partisanship and waging ‘a direct and violent war against the wicked legislation of this world’. Yet, he continued, Primitives should never tolerate iniquity. In ‘a [Christian] country governed liberally’, they ought to be able to ‘fashion the government in some sort after its own image and likeness’.⁵ Certainly, politics without religion were anathema. The Christian anti-slavery campaigner, William Wilberforce, epitomised the sort of politician and politics that Primitives approved of.⁶ Similarly, an 1849 memoir of a Primitive Methodist councillor, Emerson Muschamps, praised the congruence of his political and religious virtues: ‘He was a liberal in politics, and a dissenter in religion.’⁷ However, such overt endorsement for political action or activists was rare. In the same year, one writer encouraged Primitive preachers to imitate Christ by recognizing the legitimacy of temporal power. Consequently, they should desist from preaching political sermons. Victories over ‘political abuses and international evils’ were best achieved by ‘winning soul after soul to Christ’.⁸

Almost without exception, until at least the late 1850s, the Connexional leadership continued to emphasise the primacy of individual salvation and voluntarism. A *Magazine* article of 1849 captures the dominant mood of the time:

the voluntary system, despised and stigmatised by statesmen, by clergymen, by school inspectors, by authors and by editors as utterly impotent and a failure, has carried us on its heroic shoulders through the social battle with infidelity, vice, and ignorance.⁹

One example from William Clowes’ *Journals* epitomises this sentiment. Clowes described how, in the early days of the Connexion, he converted a slave owner who, consequently, freed all her slaves in the West Indies. He concluded that, if all slave owners had received ‘true Christianity’ the government would not have needed to pay them the compensation included in the Emancipation Act of 1834. Furthermore, the Americans would follow suit and free their slaves in the wake of a Christianity that defeats ‘tyranny and oppression in all their forms, and inspires magnanimity and real greatness’.¹⁰ Spreading the gospel alone would eradicate all social and political evils. Primitive Methodist sermons collected in the 1850s expressed the same principle. Christianity would ‘terminate all tyranny, oppression,

⁴ *PMM*, 1838, 82, 243ff; 1839, 382-4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1847, 393ff.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1848, 36-7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1849, 707.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1849, 75.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1848, 95.

¹⁰ Clowes, *Journals*, 76.

anarchy, murder, slavery, and war.’¹¹ Yet, although neither overtly political nor interventionist, such sentiments were supportive of those oppressed by the social system of the day. The virtues of the poor and the spiritual disadvantages of the ‘ungodly’ rich permeated Primitive Methodist sermons and publications. The wealthy who did not heed their Christian responsibilities would find the Gates of Heaven closed to them.¹² The affluent Christian should treat their possessions as goods in trust and voluntarily use such temporal riches to promote the Church’s mission by building chapels and relieving the poor.¹³

However, the Church gradually accepted that some political activity could be acceptable. In 1865 one contributor to the *Review* expressed conditional support to those Primitives who felt ‘constrained by a sense of duty to enter the region of political agitation’. He offered ‘popular education’ or ‘such infamous laws as those which taxed the poor man’s bread’ as appropriate examples of worthy causes.¹⁴ Both issues were significant in the Church’s political agenda. Furthermore, in this increasing acceptance – ultimately even an embrace – of state intervention for social, economic and moral improvement, the Church was in harmony with wider society. Indeed, as early as 1847, *The Times* had noted a greater acceptance of an increased and ‘dignified’ role for the State, which was gradually exchanging its role as ‘policeman, the gaoler and the executioner’ for those of ‘the father, the schoolmaster and the friend’.¹⁵

The Church’s acceptance, even promotion, of political action became increasingly explicit from the 1870s, sometimes justified by scriptural reference. In 1870, one contributor to the *Review* argued that the Bible’s teachings were ‘highly conducive to the securing of men’s social rights and liberties, and tend to promote in every respect their temporal well-being’.¹⁶ The following year, another Primitive columnist defended the right of all citizens to have a political voice and for his co-religionists to exercise this as Christians and patriots. They insisted that everyone who ‘invests capital or labours [my emphasis] in this country has a stake in her weal ... [and] no man can be a disciple of [Christ] without being political’. This was a clear argument for suffrage extension and political engagement. Furthermore, the primary ‘sores on the body-politic’ that the Primitive Methodist should attempt to cure were ‘drunkenness, licentiousness, social caste, ignorance, poverty, love of greed, bribery, and practical atheism’. However, they maintained that all political engagement must be devoid of

¹¹ W.M. Antliff (ed.), *Primitive Pulpit: Sermons and Sketches by Various Ministers of the Primitive Methodist Connexion* (London: J. Day, 1859), 293, 370.

¹² *PMM*, 1843, 110ff; 1847, 103-6.

¹³ Rev J. Wood, *Sunset at Noonday: Memorials of Mrs J. T. Robson of Hull* (London: G. Lamb, 1871), 176-212.

¹⁴ *PMQ* 1865, 7 and 33-42.

¹⁵ *The Times*, 04 May, 1847, 5 quoted in W. H. Greenleaf, *The Rise of Collectivism* (London: Routledge, 1983), 29.

¹⁶ *PMQ*, 1870, 287.

class sentiment and in the national interest.¹⁷ In 1873 another commentator went even further, arguing that laws promoting morality – such as temperance – could be justified, even if they restricted individual liberty.¹⁸ By the 1870s, as Osler had predicted, the Connexion and its adherents were willing to question and challenge any ecclesiastic and civil authority that it considered imperfect or illegitimate. This tendency was clearly expressed and encouraged by Prof. George Fisher of Yale in a *Magazine* article of 1874:

How is it possible that Protestantism should not foster a habit of mind which is incompatible with a patient endurance of tyranny at the hands of the civil power [or] fail to bring with it, eventually at least, a corresponding respect for the rights of others, and a disposition to secure their rights in forms of government and legislation? How can men who are accustomed to judge for themselves and act independently in Church affairs, manifest a slavish spirit in the political sphere?

Among the political issues that Fisher advocated for action were religious liberty, universal education, international arbitration in place of war and progressive solutions to the ‘Labour question’.¹⁹

A decade later, the Church’s attitudes to politics were unrecognisable from those of its first decades. By 1884 the Church’s annual Conference had embraced the principle that ‘piety and politics’ were no longer ‘incompatible’.²⁰ Consequently, after much debate, the Conference of 1885 withdrew its objections to the use of chapel schoolrooms for political meetings. The leadership appreciated the dangers of associating the Connexion with ‘party politics’ but, as chapels were often the only buildings available for labourers to meet in pursuit of their democratic rights, they relaxed the existing restrictions.²¹ In that year’s *Magazine*, Joseph Ritson celebrated the ‘Practical Christian as Social and Political Reformer’. He urged Primitive Methodists to strive for political and social justice, improved educational opportunities for all and accord between Labour and Capital – while avoiding ‘unrighteous wars’ between classes or nations.²² He encouraged his co-religionists to use the power of the ballot box to promote national, not class interests.²³ Also in 1885, the Connexion expressed its approval of Thomas Burt MP – who had been reared in Primitive Methodism – and a number of its local preachers who were aspiring to follow him into Parliament. At the December election of that year, Burt and four of its present or former

¹⁷ *PMM*, 1871, 410-12.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1873, 172-180.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1874, 397-407.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1884, 505.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1885, 504. Some Districts and chapels did not relax this restriction for some years and some never did: *Wrexham Advertiser*, 11 May, 1895, 3; J. Brown, *The Story of St. Andrew’s Methodist Church, Scholing*, Kindle version, (Southampton: The Scholing Press, 1995), location 106. [Downloaded 16/12/15].

²² *Ibid.*, 462-4, 546-8.

²³ *Ibid.*, 704.

preachers were elected.²⁴ Rev. Henry Woodcock celebrated this result and Primitive Methodists' ability to 'influence powerfully any rural parliamentary election in the land'. Moreover, the electorate had 'sent to Parliament, in some instances, labourers instead of lordlings, and Methodist local preachers instead of squires.' Woodcock then suggested that the manifesto for these parliamentary 'labourers' had been set out in a 'memorable speech' by John Morley:

We want to give those who plough the ground, and who in the sweat of their brow sow the seed, a rather handsomer share in the sheaves when they are reaped. We want that those who weave the garments shall not go cold. We want some means by which, when a man has toiled hard all his life, has been thrifty, prudent, and self-denying – we want, when old age comes, that his last days shall not be a race between his life and savings, and he shall not be oppressed by the dreadful and cruel anxiety that his life may last longer than his savings'.²⁵

The Church now had a small but motivated parliamentary presence.

1.3 The main issues and political allegiances

The Church leadership advocated individual temperance from the 1830s.²⁶ Obituaries of Primitives often referred to an immoral and unrepentant life of drink, gambling, fighting, bull baiting and Sabbath breaking that preceded conversion,²⁷ though abhorrence of drink dwarfed the lesser evil of gambling.²⁸ From the 1860s, the Church followed the Temperance Movement by pursuing its crusade against the drinks trade through a combination of reforming individuals and encouraging legislative change. Combining temperance reform and protecting the sanctity of the Sabbath, Primitives sought regulation of the Sunday trading of liquor; in addition they supported Bills that, if successful, would have established Local Options. A Local Option or Veto permitted a locality to prohibit alcohol if a majority of ratepayers (usually two thirds) supported the measure in a local referendum. Some Primitives even called for total prohibition without the sanction of local democracy.²⁹ The Connexion generally considered strong drink the primary cause of poverty. As the *Magazine* thundered in 1875, 'Banish the drink traffic, and by this means strike off three-fourths of our paupers

²⁴ *Ibid*, 1885, 189. The five elected were Joseph Arch, Thomas Burt, William Crawford, Charles Fenwick and John Wilson.

²⁵ H. Woodcock, *Primitive Methodism and the Yorkshire Wolds* (London: Joseph Toulson, 1889), 264. However, the electorate did not approximate to universal male enfranchisement until 1918, only including 68.1 per cent of adult males by 1915: R. McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class* (Oxford: OUP, 1991), 66-100.

²⁶ *PMM.*, 1834, 241; 1843, 339.

²⁷ Typical of this type of obituary: *PMM*, 1858, 189; 1861, 643; 1862, 388.

²⁸ *PMM*, 1860, 16, 17, 36, 49, 50-1, 75-6, 143, 318, 377, 359, 424-5, 428-99, 430, 432, 492, 546, 734.

²⁹ Harrison, *Drink*, 182ff. *PMM*, 1862, 486; 1864, 256; 1868, 346-7; 1870, 6-7; 1872, 63, 352, 510-11; 1875, 318, 460-1; 1879, 225-6; 1880, 253, 316-7; 1881, 505; 1883, 252, 319, 383. H. Yeomans, *Alcohol and Moral Regulations: Public Attitudes, Spirited Measures and Victorian Hangovers* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2014), 70-1. Unlike Harrison (*Drink*, 201) I have reserved the term 'prohibition' only when the outright banning of drink was to be invoked without a local referendum.

and criminals'.³⁰ Yet, writing in 1884, Rev. James Pickett, while acknowledging the contributing factors of 'Drink, Debauchery and Idleness', cautioned against attributing poverty to sin alone. He argued that the Church should 'take a foremost place in all matters proposing to alter the outer conditions and surroundings, as well as the moral state of the people steeped in poverty and sin'. To attribute all the blame to the poor was 'uncharitable and unwise'.³¹

As with other evangelicals, Sabbatarianism was a Connexional shibboleth. For Primitives, Sunday offered a vital opportunity for worship and refreshment of the spirit. It facilitated religious education for the family at home and chapel. The Connexion believed that its Sunday schools did more to civilise and improve the masses than any Act of Parliament.³² In Primitive Methodism's view, shops should close on Sunday to prevent all trading and newspapers ought to remain unpublished. A Christian government, particularly one that included bishops in the House of Lords, should understand its obligations in this regard, without prompting.³³ While acknowledging that a proposal to open the Crystal Palace and museums on Sundays would allow the working classes welcome access to cultural institutions, the *Magazine* regarded the suggestion as irreligious, preferring late evening openings. Piety trumped spurious class advantage.³⁴ However, by the 1870s and 80s, religious justification of Sabbatarianism was sometimes combined with a defence of Labour's right to a reprieve from toil.³⁵ As John Wigley has suggested, 'Social Sabbatarianism was implicitly a substitute for labour regulation.'³⁶ Similarly, the Connexion supported other Labour issues such as reduced working hours and improved working and safety conditions in a number of occupations. For example, they were vocal in their endorsement of Plimsoll's proposals to protect seamen, encouraging their members to petition Parliament on the issue.³⁷ The squalid housing of the London poor also aroused their indignation.³⁸ Increasingly Primitives were combining philanthropy with politics, voluntarism with state action.

Equally, from its early years, Primitive criticism of the Established Church combined religious, moral, economic and political grievances. The Connexion disparaged the Anglican Church for its inert evangelism, ritualism, priestly power, and privileged position in the State.

³⁰ *PMM*, 1875, 460-1.

³¹ *CM*, 1884, 218.

³² *PMM*, 1848, 167, 95; 1853, 536, 1870, 129 ; *PMQ*, 1877, 237-47.

³³ *PMM*, 1849, 57.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1853, 165-7; 1857, 3; 1858, 599.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1880, 128.

³⁶ J. Wigley, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), 79; D. Bebbington, 'Conscience and the State' in L. Hesselbee and P. Ballard, *Free Churches and Society: The Nonconformist Contribution to Social Welfare: 1800-2010*, (London: Continuum, 2012), 50.

³⁷ *PMM*, 1876, 315; 1884, 129, 255.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1883, 763; 1884, 62, 141.

They accused the Established Church of encouraging drinking and gambling, and impiously disregarding Sabbath observance. In addition to senior clerics sitting in the House of Lords, Anglican clergymen were often Justices of the Peace, and controlled local charities and schools, exercising political power locally and nationally.³⁹ So deeply entrenched was the power of the clergy in rural society that Arch's union for agricultural labourers espoused disestablishment as one of its aims in the 1870s.⁴⁰ Ingrained hostility to the Established Church partially explains Primitive Methodist notable involvement in the Anti-Compulsory Vaccination movement of 1853 onwards – Rev. H.T. Allen's imprisonment for refusing to vaccinate his children became a national controversy. The campaign was primarily a defence of individual liberty and conscience. However, Primitive hostility may have been occasioned in part by the Established Church's role in the implementation of the vaccination programme.⁴¹ Furthermore, until the late 1860s, the Church imposed financial burdens on its parishioners in the form of tithes. Some Primitives had faced imprisonment rather than pay. Jeremiah Dodsworth, an agricultural labourer who later became a Primitive minister, refused to pay tithes in 1833 and his subsequent imprisonment became a cause célèbre.⁴² The Church of England's innate political conservatism and class bias also provoked venom. In 1868, the *Magazine* spat out that the Anglican Church was 'directly opposed to all the progressive tendencies of the age. Class legislation is a thing now universally condemned; but every State-church is the very climax of class legislation.' It had supported 'the most tyrannical administrations and been but too ready to pray up, as just and necessary, the wars we have waged against liberty.'⁴³ By the 1870s, when its Party loyalties were becoming increasingly overt, Primitives considered the Established Church an enemy of reform, negatively associated with brewers, publicans and – significantly – the Tories.⁴⁴

The Connexion was not antagonistic to religion influencing government, only a mechanistic union of the two. Primitives did not wish the destruction of the Anglican Church, only the negation of its political power and influence that, for centuries, had buttressed class privilege, obstructed the repeal of unjust legislation and enforced disabilities

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1834, 48; 1849, 367-8.

⁴⁰ J. Sage, *The memoirs of Josiah Sage: concerning Joseph Arch and the pioneering days of trade unionism among the agricultural workers* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1951), 27-8.

⁴¹ J.G. Bowran, *The Life of Arthur Thomas Guttery* (London, Holborn Hall: 1922), 252; N. Durbach, *Bodily Matters: The Anti-Vaccination Movement in England, 1853-1907* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2005), 45; S. Williamson, *The Vaccination Controversy: The Rise, Reign and Fall of Compulsory Vaccination for Smallpox* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 160-2; B. Turner, *About Myself* (London: Humphrey Toulmin, 1930), 70-4.

⁴² Kendall, *Origins*, Vol 2, 61-62; *Accounts and Papers Relating to Elections; Church & c.*, (London: House of Commons, 1833), Vol. XXVII, 477-480; Anonymous, *The Three Death Cries of a Perishing Church* (Nottingham: Richard Sutton, 1835), 23-24; *PMM*, 1864, 256; E.J. Evans, *The Contentious Tithe: The Tithe Problem and English Agriculture 1750-1850* (London: RKP, 1976), 85.

⁴³ *PMM*, 1868, 440, 318.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1874, 383.

against Dissenters.⁴⁵ By contrast, they sought ‘perfect religious equality among all classes’ and the removal of disabilities endured by Dissenters, such as the right to University and other teaching appointments.⁴⁶ Until 1880, an irksome grievance was Nonconformists’ lack of burial rights in parish graveyards according to their own forms of worship. Some incumbents even refused Primitive Methodist corpses entry to the churchyard; others would not conduct any burial service themselves or allow others to do so. In 1880, despite opposition from the Established Church and the Conservative Party, Parliament redressed this grievance, although burial fees continued to irritate the Connexion for some years after. Primitive Methodists, concentrated in country districts, suffered more grievously than their fellow Nonconformists did from the intransigent attitudes of Anglican clergymen. Not unnaturally, they considered that only disestablishment would free the State Church from such pettiness.⁴⁷

Furthermore, the Anglican Church used its stranglehold on elementary education before 1870 ‘as a weapon in the struggle with Methodism’ and a means of ‘reinforcing deference’ towards the rural establishment.⁴⁸ In some parishes, parochial day schools even refused admission to children who attended Primitive Methodist Sunday schools, denying them any formal education.⁴⁹ In 1866, the government began to consult on the possible shape of a national elementary school system and, as Bebbington suggested, this educational debate was a major catalyst in prompting Nonconformity’s political engagement.⁵⁰ Consequently, the *Review* and *Magazine* devoted a significant proportion of their content to debating the alternative proposals. Some Primitives resented any state interference in education, speculating where such meddling would end. Against this defence of voluntarism, others argued in favour of accepting government grants to support their small number of denominational day schools. A minority even preferred an entirely secular system without any state aid to denominational schools. Others feared that a secular school system would threaten religion itself. However, the majority favoured a national school system offering non-denominational religious instruction that focused purely on the scriptures without sectarian commentary. They feared that the proposed legislation would increase the powers of the Established Church by awarding it control of education.⁵¹

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1871, 191, 410-12, 606; 1875, 18-23, 59-60.

⁴⁶ *PMM*, 1875, 188-9; 1882, 317; Davies et al., *Methodist Church*, Vol. 2, 163-4.

⁴⁷ T. Larsen, *Friends of Religious Equality: Non-conformist Politics in Mid-Victorian England* (Milton Keynes: Wipf and Stock, 2005), 54-5; *PMM*, 1872, 576; 1875, 188-9 and 446; 1878, 254; 1879, 127 and 253; 1880, 127-8, 316-7, 640; 1882, 192, 254, 383; 1883, 380; 1884, 254; *Hansard*, 31 March 1876 vol 228 c966, 04 February 1878 vol 237 cc922-3, 23 March 1876 vol 228 cc469-70. All *Hansard* references are to the House of Commons unless indicated otherwise.

⁴⁸ Obelkevich, *Rural Society*, 80. Also: Ashby, *Joseph Ashby*, 22-23

⁴⁹ *PMM*, 1845, 171.

⁵⁰ Bebbington, *Conscience*, 127.

⁵¹ *PMQ*, 1867, 59-66, 260-267, 317-332; 1868, 47-62, 92, 150-155; *PMM*, 1870, 103-8.

The resulting 1870 Elementary Education Act (Forster Act) generally met the requirements of most Primitives in regard to religious instruction. Rev. John Barfoot voiced the dominant view in 1871, welcoming the combined effect of the Endowed Schools Act of 1869 and the Elementary Education Act of 1870 in providing education for children ‘whether found in halls or cottages’. While accepting that the legislation was a compromise solution in the face of divergent opinion, he believed that it reflected the ‘current state of public opinion with considerable accuracy’. A conscience clause (Cowper-Temple) that allowed parents to withdraw their child from religious education reduced the danger of denominational control. Barfoot saluted the establishment of locally elected School Boards in some areas and wished that they had been established everywhere as they extended local democracy. Furthermore, Board Schools were free of denominational control and, consequently, offered a means of reducing the Established Church’s influence over education. However, Barfoot regretted that school attendance was not compulsory and parents had to pay fees.⁵² Although hopeful that their objections regarding state funding of denominational endowed schools would be resolved and vigilant for any proposal that might benefit these schools, Primitive Methodists largely came to accept the Forster Act as a workable compromise.⁵³ Despite these reservations, by 1884, their experience of the Act’s operation had diminished their concerns.⁵⁴ Far-sightedly, the Connexion looked to the day when the Universities would be open to all, not just ‘the exclusive privilege of the rich’.⁵⁵ Although the *Magazine* suggested that ‘Few would grumble about increased taxation if any permanent good, such as the extension of education came out of it’, taxation to support the military and militarism remained an irritant.⁵⁶

From its early years Connexional commentators condemned ‘the cruelty, crime and suffering’ of war.⁵⁷ For example, during the early days of Crimean War, the short-lived *Primitive Standard* supported peace for humanitarian, social and economic reasons and condemned ‘suicidal patriotism ... [as] the most malignant type of selfishness’.⁵⁸ It quoted Rufus Stebbins’ recently published *Plain Sketches of War* to express this combination of religious and social sentiment:

Give me the money that has been spent in war, and I will ... clothe every man, woman, and child in an attire of which kings and queens would be proud. I will build a school-house on every hill side and in every valley over the whole earth; I will build an academy in every town, and endow it; a college in every state, and

⁵² *PMQ*, 1871, 157-171.

⁵³ *PMM*, 1871, 639-40; 1872, 62, 699; 1874, p.190; 1875, 126; 1879, 574-5; 1880, 639-40; 1883, 124. *PMQ*, 1873, 42, 178-180. Bebbington, *Conscience*, 131.

⁵⁴ *PMM*, 1884, 399.

⁵⁵ *PMM*, 1885, 547.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 381.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1840, 357-8. Also: 1852, 544

⁵⁸ *Primitive Standard*, Dec 1853, 15.

fill it with able professors; I will crown every hill with a place of worship, consecrated to the promulgation of the gospel of peace'.⁵⁹

Denunciation of war and the work of the Peace Society were commonplace in Church publications.⁶⁰

Yet, despite their condemnation of the human suffering and economic consequences it entailed, Primitive Methodist attitudes to war were complex. The Church preferred international arbitration to war, but it did not always shrink from supporting military intervention. Indeed, the New Model Army and Oliver Cromwell were eulogized from the early days of the Connexion because they combined 'piety and patriotism' in a just cause. Religious and military fervour could be compatible, if in combination.⁶¹ The very existence of a Primitive Methodist mission to soldiers in Aldershot, and the absence of any criticism of soldiering in its work, underscores that the Church never consistently advocated absolute pacifism.⁶² Even when the human and economic cost of imperial wars was condemned, Primitives could approve of Christian soldiers stationed in imperial outposts and the emigration of British settlers and missionaries to the colonies. They spread Protestant Christianity – the purest of all faiths – and a progressive, Anglo-Saxon culture.⁶³ War itself could be justified in certain circumstances. In 1871 H.K. bemoaned the 'heavy price' in suffering created by war, but pointed to 'certain great advantages' that armed conflict could bring. Among these benefits were the freeing of slaves in the American Civil War, the march of nationhood in Italy and Germany, the spread of the Napoleonic Code, education, and Christianity.⁶⁴ However, Primitives particularly disapproved of Disraeli's adventurism in Afghanistan, even equating British atrocities there with those of Russia in Central Asia. Such shameful wars diverted public funds away from improving education and other useful social projects.⁶⁵ By contrast, in 1880 the *Magazine* welcomed the Liberal Party's policy of maintaining 'the honour of the Empire' while avoiding 'needless wars and territorial aggrandisement'.⁶⁶ As with many other political issues, Primitive Methodist and Liberal Party policies coincided.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Mar 1854, 51.

⁶⁰ *PMM*, 1850, 153; 1851, 10; 1852, 10; 1859, 207-8; 1872, 763; 1880, 124-5, 210; 1881, 252. *PMQ*, 1877, 225-6.

⁶¹ *PMM*, 1838, 82, 90, 243-8, 281-2.

⁶² Collier and Sherwood, *Prim Aldershot*.

⁶³ *PMM*, 1843, 233-5, 262; 1847, 173-5, 290-2, 483-5; 1848, 118; 1857, 720-2; 1859, 207-8; 1874, 253-4; 1885, 209-11; 1882, 587ff.

⁶⁴ *PMQ*, 1871, 31-44.

⁶⁵ *PMM*, 1870, 574; 1871, 191; 1874, 255; 1879, 60-61, 574-5, 639; 1880, 124-5, 316-7, 575, 640; 1882, 191-2. *PMQ*, 1881, 118, 702, 761.

⁶⁶ *PMM*, 1880, 316-7.

Indeed, from the 1860s, obituaries of politically active Primitive Methodists – consistently Liberals – began to appear regularly in the *Magazine*. These were sometimes not only pro-Liberal but transparently anti-Tory. When Thomas Mottram died in 1875 the *Magazine* took an overtly partisan approach:

Though a citizen of heaven, he did not neglect his citizenship on earth. He took a foremost place in parochial business, in politics he was a steady liberal, and when once solicited by a Tory landlord, since deceased, to vote for the Conservative party, he steadfastly refused.⁶⁷

Exceptionally, Tories who supported humanitarian or Sabbatarian legislation, such as Lord Shaftesbury, received qualified praise.⁶⁸ However, politicians in receipt of favourable mention were overwhelmingly Liberals and Christian.⁶⁹ Sir Culling Eardley, the Liberal politician and evangelical Christian who campaigned for disestablishment and against the Poor Laws received a glowing obituary.⁷⁰ Equally, politicians who were ‘ultra-Liberals in politics and sceptical in religion’ were anathema.⁷¹ Abraham Lincoln met with approval due to his ‘plebeian origins’, a life as a politician who ‘cast his vote on the side of freedom’, and a constitutionalist whose espousal of abolitionism was not ‘rabid’.⁷² John Wilson, who worked as a miner in the U.S.A. during the Civil War, regarded Lincoln as ‘a hero of the highest type, and one of the world’s greatest men’. Although a member of the Workmen’s Peace Society, he approved wholeheartedly of Lincoln’s use of military force to defeat the Southern States.⁷³ John Bright, Richard Cobden, and Gladstone also personified this amalgamation of religious, moral, and economic righteousness. Bright and Cobden were praised for their promotion of international arbitration and opposition to the Corn Laws; most of all they had ‘the hateful bread tax removed from the statute book’. The adverse effect of the Corn Laws on the Church’s working-class membership was substantial and Free Trade remained a highly-charged issue for Primitives.⁷⁴

Gladstone was the ‘people’s speaker, exposing abuses, promoting beneficent legislation, setting himself against costly and needless armaments, resting not till education be brought to every family in the land, taxation made equal, and the long bleeding wound of Ireland healed.’⁷⁵ Britain’s coercive misrule of Ireland, particularly under Tory governments, increasingly attracted the Church’s censure. By contrast, Gladstone’s attempts at giving Irish

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 1875, 551.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 1883, 252, 319.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1861, 49; 1864, 152-4; 1868, 742; 1872, 445-6; 1875, 551; 1880, 741; 1881, 242.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1864, 152-4; John Wolffe, ‘Eardley, Sir Culling Eardley, third baronet (1805–1863)’, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Available online: [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8393>]. [Accessed 16/04/2013].

⁷¹ *PMM*, 1863, 454.

⁷² *PMQ*, 1868, 330-341.

⁷³ Wilson, *Memories*, 171-180, 287.

⁷⁴ *PMQ*, 1869, 42-46. Also 1871, 171-87.

⁷⁵ *PMQ*, 1869, 47-8; McKibbin, ‘Marxism’, 322.

tenant farmers fair rents and tenure rights were applauded.⁷⁶ Similarly, the ‘People’s William’ who always ‘acted out of principle’ was preferable to Disraeli who, even when enacting approved of franchise reform, was motivated by expediency’.⁷⁷ Primitive endorsement of Gladstone and the Liberal Party was recurrent but always conditional on them supporting the Church’s political agenda⁷⁸ – even Gladstone could be criticised, as when he appeared to defend popery or his government passed a denominational Educational Act for Scotland.⁷⁹ The 1881 Conference expressed its ‘united’ sympathy for Gladstone’s recently elected government in the tasks it faced, though its support was contingent. The Church anticipated: regulation of the drinks trade, a continued policy of Free Trade; the consolidation of measures designed to bring justice to Ireland, attention to agricultural issues without public expense and ‘a firm and conciliatory policy’ in foreign affairs without ‘theatrical imperialism’.⁸⁰ They welcomed Liberal legislation designed to increase local government’s powers, parliamentary reform, and – significantly – to extend household suffrage to the counties.⁸¹

By the 1870s the Connexion promoted franchise reform and extension, hoping that an enlarged electorate would embrace more Nonconformists who would vote for reforming governments committed to ending Dissenters’ disabilities.⁸² Furthermore, they argued that any ‘enlargement of political privilege attaches the people more closely to the Throne, the law, and the institutions of the country.’⁸³ Under the householder requirements of the time, many Primitives were disenfranchised. Consequently, they welcomed the Franchise Bill of 1884, which extended the franchise to males who were not householders. When it was delayed by the House of Lords, the Church questioned the validity of that bastion of class privilege.⁸⁴ The *Magazine* welcomed the ultimate success of the subsequent Representation of the People Act and advised its members to exercise their novel electoral power wisely.⁸⁵ Although Church publications remained silent regarding women’s suffrage, the recently elected Burt, sharing a platform with the Primitive Methodist minister Rev. Hugh Gilmore in 1874, argued for universal suffrage irrespective of gender.⁸⁶

⁷⁶ *PMM*, 1845, 36-7; 1865, 440; 1874, 510-11; 1880, 764; 1881, 64, 193, 702; 1882, 191-2, 440; 1883, 192. *PMQ*, 1873, 106-114; 1881, 188-9, 240-253, 378-380, 402-41, 571-2, 646 – 66, 758-9.

⁷⁷ Wilson, *Memories*, 216-7. Also: Biagini, *Liberty*, 379-385.

⁷⁸ *PMM*, 1864, 256ff; 1868, 318; 1871, 606; 1873, 42; 1874, 190, 254; 1874, 190; 1875, 60, 188-9; 1876, 633; 1878, 192; 1880, 124, 252-3, 316-7, 764; 1881, 127, 505, 702. *PMQ*, 1869, 52-3

⁷⁹ *PMM*, 1871, 62-63, 124-125; *PMQ*, 1873, 42.

⁸⁰ *PMM*, 1881, 127, 505, 702.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 1879, 255; 1882, 191-2; 1883, 61; 1884, 320, 576, 640.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 1879, 126; 1881, 341. *PMQ*, 1871, 159-60; 1881, 457-8, 586-9.

⁸³ *PMM*, 1884, 192.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 399, 576, 640.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1885, 121.

⁸⁶ *NE*, 26 Dec, 1874, 3.

Gilmore, an avowed Christian Socialist who later became leader of the Primitive Methodists in Australia, was an ardent advocate of women's rights – as were a number of other Australian Primitive ministers – a supporter of trade unionism and a campaigner for land reform. He embraced the theories of Henry George, as did the future Primitive MP, George Edwards. Essentially, Henry George advocated the replacement of all taxes by a single annual tax on land. Land reform was an important issue for a Church with a strong rural base, although George's solution was never adopted by all Primitives.⁸⁷ In 1884, Rev. J. Welford expressed a more typical Primitive view. Although he declared George's land tax to be impractical and anti-democratic he did not deny the need for land reform. He defended the right to private property but criticised the concentration of land in too few hands whereas George's proposal smacked too much of unacceptable Socialism.⁸⁸

Until the end of the nineteenth century, the Church leadership strongly disapproved of Socialism. Although a small number of Northern chapels were influenced by Robert Owen's co-operative ideas in the 1830s, they were not typical.⁸⁹ In the 1840s the *Magazine* described Socialist doctrines as 'odious'.⁹⁰ Not least this hostility was because most Socialists were 'atheists, deists, pantheists and secularists' who questioned the divine inspiration of scripture.⁹¹ Even Rev. Joseph Spoor, a firm supporter of the Labour Movement from the 1830s onwards, considered Socialists and infidels to be synonymous terms: its devotees were violent drunkards and utterly lawless.⁹² Despite a small number of exceptions, such as Gilmore, most Connexional references to Socialism throughout the 1870s and 1880s were hostile. Christianity offered the only acceptable form of Socialism.⁹³

1.4 A representative campaign of the 1870s and 1880s

The Church's increasing engagement with parliamentary politics after 1870, their motives and methods of participation are apparent in the campaign against the Contagious

⁸⁷ *PMM*, 1876, 479-80. J. Moss, *The Sound of Trumpets: History of the Labour Movement in South Australia* (South Australia: Wakefield Press, 1985), 58, 132-3, 158.; Melissa Bellanta, 'Feminism, mateship and brotherhood in 1890s Adelaide', *History Australia*, 5, 1 (2008), 7.1 to 7.14; R.B. Walker *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Australian National University. Available online: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gilmore-hugh-3618/text5621>. [Accessed 29/04/2013]; M. Hutchinson, Smailes, George Wells, *Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*. Available online: http://webjournals.ac.edu.au/journals/adeb/s/_smailes-george-wells-1862-1934/ [accessed 20/09/13]. Edwards, *Crow-Scaring*, 52-3.

⁸⁸ *PMM*, 1884, 189; *Ibid.*, July 1873, qtd. in Scotland, *Revolt of the Field*, 136-7.

⁸⁹ *The Lancashire and Yorkshire Co-operator and Useful Classes Advocate*, April 1832, 5 and August 1832, 15.

⁹⁰ *PMM*, 1845, 172-3.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 1858, 161.

⁹² Rev E. Hall, *The Earnest Preacher: memoirs of the Rev Joseph Spoor* (London: G. Lamb, 1874), Chapter 7. Available online: <http://afinitas.org/Spoor/EarnestPreacher/index.html>. [Accessed 09/6/15]; Fynes, *The Miners*, 79; Colls, *Pitmen*, 191.

⁹³ *PMM*, 1872, 445-6; *PMQ*, 1881, 104.

Diseases Acts. Beginning in 1864, this series of Acts allowed the medical examination of women suspected of prostitution in garrison towns. The legislation was ‘a cruel and shameful evil and an injustice to working women’ who often had to travel to and from work at night.⁹⁴ Nonconformists, including Primitives, were prominent in the campaign against this legislation.⁹⁵ From the early 1870s, the *Magazine* expressed indignation against these ‘immoral’ Acts. It accused the police of regularly exceeding their duty by subjecting respectable working-class women to the indignity of an intimate medical examination. Furthermore, despite the humiliations women suffered and the trampling on their civil liberties, the Acts were ineffective in reducing prostitution as they ignored prostitutes’ male customers. They were implicitly unjust to women, disregarding male sinners.⁹⁶ Primitive Methodists were encouraged to join associations campaigning against these ‘unrighteous, immoral, unjust, and unconstitutional’ Acts,⁹⁷ while other churches were condemned for neglecting ‘their political duties and responsibilities’.⁹⁸ Conference requested that local societies petition Parliament in 1875, 1876 and 1878, only ceasing with the establishment of a Select Committee to review the legislation. Although other bodies – including the Wesleyan and United Methodists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists and Quakers – also submitted petitions, the Primitives were responsible for a disproportionate number in two of those years. In 1875, they submitted 24 per cent of all petitions, comprising almost 12 per cent of all signatories; their contribution in 1876 was even higher at 30 per cent and 17 per cent respectively.⁹⁹

Thomas Burt MP, who had taken an active part in the repeal campaign, served on the Select Committee.¹⁰⁰ In May 1882, Rev. Robinson Cheeseman, Secretary of Conference, gave evidence and emphasised the Connexion’s view of the Acts in testimony which captured the essence of Primitive politics. He complained that, in addition to being ineffective, the Acts were: ‘a violation of moral principle ... an encouragement to vice ... an injustice to women ... [and] a danger to constitutional liberty’. Only by repealing such immoral and unjust legislation could ‘the country be freed from the guilt it has incurred’.¹⁰¹

⁹⁴ M. Hamilton, ‘Opposition to the Contagious Diseases Acts, 1864-1886’, *Albion: Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 10, 1, (1978), 21.

⁹⁵ D. Bebbington, ‘Gospel and culture in Victorian Nonconformity’ in Shaw, J. and Kreider, A. (eds.), *Culture and the Nonconformist Tradition* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999), 47-8.

⁹⁶ *PMM*, 1871, 574-5. Also, *ibid.*, 1874, 316-317.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1875, 63.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1875, 318.

⁹⁹ *Report from the Select Committee on Contagious Diseases Acts, 1882*, 583-595; Hamilton ‘Contagious Diseases’, 24.

¹⁰⁰ Josephine Butler Collection, The Women’s library, London Metropolitan University: GB 106 3JBL/08/41, 3JBL/08/50 and 3JBL/08/58, respectively 10 Apr, 24 Aug 1874, and 21 Oct 1874. Available online: <http://archiveshub.ac.uk/data/gb106-3jbl.html?page=1#idm2182912>. [Accessed 02/03/15].

¹⁰¹ *Report from the Select Committee on Contagious Diseases Acts, 1882*, 228-9.

Thus, by the 1880s, Primitives engaged in political activity – although primarily as a moral crusade. A moral society implied justice for all classes and genders. Democratic, parliamentary methods were the most appropriate means of achieving this. Consequently, the Church increasingly endorsed state action to achieve its mission. It did not disavow individualism but was beginning to reach an accommodation with collectivism. As Catterall has suggested, Nonconformity was gradually co-opting state intervention in the battle against the evil of intemperance. Paradoxically, the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts, also taught them that, ‘campaigning to alter state policy drew attention to what the State might do more widely for society’.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Catterall, ‘Slums and Salvation’ in Husbellee and Ballard (eds.), *Free Churches*, 117.

Chapter Two: ‘As a people we are not blindly loyal’: 1886-1898

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins in the year that five working-class MPs closely associated with the Primitive Methodist Connexion entered the House of Commons as Liberals; it ends as a Primitive MP deserted to the Liberal Unionists. It demonstrates that the Church and its members became increasingly politically engaged, primarily through a commitment to the Liberal Party. However, this party allegiance began to fracture during the Home Rule debate – even if this was less so than in other denominations. Moreover, a minority of Primitives transferred their loyalty to the Independent Labour Party after 1893. Many of those who remained loyal to the Liberals hoped that a progressive Liberalism would promote measures of social reform through greater state intervention: a trend engendered by their increasingly socially-conscious religious beliefs. Their support for trade unions and the prominence they gave to land reform was notable, a reflection of the interests of their core membership: commonly miners and agricultural labourers residing in industrial villages and the countryside.

Except for the one desertion to the Liberal Unionists in 1898, the MPs who served during this period were Gladstonian Liberals. Despite endorsing temperance legislation and other aspects of the Church’s agenda, most were trade union leaders and prioritised Labour issues. Whenever possible, these union-sponsored Parliamentarians endorsed class collaboration both on principled and pragmatic grounds. Some trade union demands, such as the MFGB’s campaign for an eight hour working day for miners, brought the MPs for Durham and Northumberland into conflict with many of their co-religionists who represented pitmen in other regions. They acted in league with the employers, rather than supporting the wider Labour Movement. The North-Easterners attributed their opposition to a preference for union conducted negotiations – rather than state intervention – although the effect was a protection of their constituents’ sectional interests.

This chapter first describes the increasing politicisation and allegiances of the Church, as evidenced by the official voices of the Church, its institutional response – Conferences, Districts and other Church bodies – before considering the wider spectrum of views as revealed in the Connexional publications.¹ A similar appraisal of the MPs follows. Then

¹ The Church’s publications not only offered a forum for debate but – as was the case with *the PMQ and Christian Ambassador* in its early days – were sometimes in advance of the Church’s official views. The *Review* was temporarily closed down by the General Committee of the Church in the late 1850s after an article on Connexional history was considered controversial: Kendall, *Origins*, Vol 2, 397-8. *The Primitive Standard*, founded by London Primitives, also faced opposition from the

the main political priorities of the Church and its MPs are discussed under a number of headings. Inevitably, despite the organisational use of categories in this chapter and succeeding ones, sometimes issues are necessarily considered in several places. It concludes with a brief account of Primitive Methodism's only heresy case, one that demonstrates the Church's increasing endorsement of a social gospel by the end of this period.

Although this thesis utilises the widest range of evidence available, it inevitably reflects the views of the Church's most committed and, in many cases, educated or wealthier members – even if their social origins were plebeian. Working-class members were certainly present at Conference – which determined Connexional policy – though delegates were required to pay their own expenses, limiting the constituency of those able to attend and contribute. Ministers constituted a third of delegates. Rev. J.G. Bowran (writing as Ramsay Guthrie) highlighted this in a short story regarding a collier delegate, Tommy Pringle, attending the Conference of 1905. It may even have been a tract attempting to persuade working-class members to seek election to Conference. In 'homely pitmatic', Tommy, a trade union activist, expressed his satisfaction at being asked to chair one meeting. He explained that 'the Connexion's made up o' rich and poor' and the President 'spoke for the rich, while he spoke for the poor', yet all prayed and hymned together in equality. Furthermore, if all millionaires were Primitives, 'what a time there wad be in England'.² The picture drawn, however romantic, was of classes mixing at Church and collaborating to fashion a fairer, Christian society: creating an 'egalitarian bonhomie' which, as McKibbin has argued, tended to inhibit class antagonism.³ The Church's publications offer a wider spectrum of views, particularly in their letter pages, though the majority of columnists were ministers and male – women only contributing regularly from the last decade of the nineteenth century. Conversely, the MPs were more representative of the working-class membership but all male and disproportionately drawn from mining communities. Primitive Methodism was an important but not their only influence – they were answerable to their constituents and union membership. Hence, to reflect this diversity of background and interests, issues are discussed in terms of the Church's official pronouncements, the wider views of Primitives as expressed in the Church's publications and the MPs' parliamentary activity.

Primitive Methodist MPs referred to in this chapter

Those who served during 1886-98:

Connexional Book Committee and Conference: *Primitive Standard*, Oct 1853, 6-7; Dec 1853, 19; Jul 1854, 102.

² *PML*, 15 June, 18, 22 Jun, 44, 29 Jun, 62, 1905.

³ McKibbin, 'Marxism', 308.

Joseph Arch: 1885-6 and 1892-1900, Norfolk, Liberal#
Thomas Burt: 1874-1918, Northumberland, Liberal*
William Crawford 1885-90, Durham, Liberal*
George Doughty: 1895-1914, Lincolnshire, Liberal to Liberal Unionist
Charles Fenwick: 1885-1918, Northumberland, Liberal*
John Wilson: 1885-6 and 1890-1915, Durham, Liberal*

Others who served at a later date:

Enoch Edwards: 1906-12, Staffordshire, Liberal to Labour*
John Johnson: 1904-10, Durham, Liberal to Labour*
William Lunn: 1918-42, Yorkshire, Labour*
William Parrott: 1904-05, Yorkshire, Liberal*
Albert Stanley: Staffordshire, Liberal to Labour, 1907-16*

* indicates a significant involvement with a trade union in the coal industry; # represents involvement in any other union.

2.2 The political allegiances and agendas of Primitive Methodism

2.2.1 The institutional response

Although Connexional polity and practice dominated debate at Annual Conferences and District Meetings, delegates often discussed political matters in both plenary sessions and ancillary meetings. The political issues most frequently discussed were congruent with the main tenets of the Nonconformist Conscience and Liberal Party policy: temperance, Sabbatarianism, education, international arbitration, Nonconformist disabilities, and disestablishment.⁴ Yet, although temperance issues played a crucial role in its political agenda, the Church increasingly embraced a wider social manifesto. During the year of Victoria's Golden Jubilee, the Conference Address to the Churches made claim to a progressive influence on the nation's life. It asserted that, unlike Wesleyan Methodists, Primitive Methodism had influenced 'the social, mental and religious condition of the toiling millions of this land to an extent that had never been realized before'. Furthermore:

As a people we are not blindly loyal, but we are loyal and have sense enough to see that in respect to our system of government and its present head ... we might go a long way further and fare worse.⁵

The Connexion was already positioning itself as Kendall's 'His Majesty's opposition'.⁶ In 1892, demonstrating the Church's commitment to a progressive Liberalism, the President, Rev. J. Travis, endorsed Gladstone's Newcastle Programme of the previous year, even though the National Liberal Federation ultimately repudiated it. Although primarily concerned with Home Rule for Ireland, the Programme encompassed measures that some

⁴ *PMM*, 1887, 253-4; 1896, 556; 1898, 435. *MG*, 06 May, 1890, 5; 07 May, 1890, 6; 01 May, 1893, 6; 03 May, 1897, 10.

⁵ *PMCM*, 1887, 130-131.

⁶ Kendall, *History*, 172.

members of the Fabian Society initially interpreted as a pronounced shift towards collectivist policies – although they were disappointed in practice.⁷ It proposed: land reform; abolition or reform of the House of Lords; manhood suffrage; shorter parliaments; the establishment of district and parish councils; voter registration reform and the abolition of plural voting; a local veto on the liquor traffic; employers' liability for workers' accidents; Scottish and Welsh disestablishment and payment for MPs.⁸ Travis supported the Programme as 'the working classes of this country were not revolutionary but ... they aspired to be something higher than well-fed, well-clothed, and well-housed animals'.⁹ In Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Year, although the President, Rev. J. Jackson, emphasised that the Church's primary mission was personal and moral redemption of the individual, he applauded the social progress made during Victoria's reign to date but wished for more. He even welcomed the 'discontent' of the present age, the desire for continued social progress. It should not 'be complained of' and there was 'no need for alarm,' as dissatisfaction fostered progress.¹⁰

The Church's preference for the Liberal Party is also apparent in the frequency with which Party meetings took place in Primitive Methodist schoolrooms.¹¹ Gladstone himself used one for an election meeting in Flintshire.¹² A rare example of a Conservative Party public meeting hosted by a Primitive Methodist Chapel occurred in Walworth, London, in 1895. However, it was an unplanned overflow meeting and 'a number of opponents made their presence felt', but in an 'unobjectionable' way.¹³ Furthermore, Liberal politicians laid chapel foundation stones and opened bazaars. Ministers also delivered lectures that betrayed their Liberal sentiments. For instance, at Waterhouse Primitive Methodist Church in Durham, Rev. George Lewens, supported by John Wilson MP, gave a homily on the subject of Hugh Gilmore in 1892, focusing on his subject's radical politics, sentiments with which he agreed.¹⁴ Concomitantly, a Primitive Methodist Conservative was a rare enough animal for journalists to express surprise.¹⁵

⁷ *MG*, 01 Jun, 1892, 5; J. Townsend, *J.A. Hobson*, (Manchester: MUP, 1991), 11-12; A. F Havinghurst, *Radical Journalist: H.W. Massingham* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 48-9.

⁸ *Blackburn Standard and Weekly Express*, 03 Oct, 1891, 7.

⁹ *MG*, 01 Jun, 1892, 5. Also: H. J. Hanham, *The Nineteenth Century Constitution: 1815-1914* (Cambridge: CUP, 1969), 220-1 for more detail of the Programme.

¹⁰ *MG*, 18 Jun, 1897, 5.

¹¹ *MG*, 28 Aug, 1885, 5; 14 Oct, 1885, 8; 17 Oct, 1885, 8; 19 Nov, 1885, 8; 06 Feb, 1886, 5; 05 Dec, 1887; 14 Jan, 1888, 8. *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 29 Aug, 1885, 6; 31 Jan, 1899, 8.

¹² *MG*, 01 Dec, 1885, 8.

¹³ *The Times*, 13 May, 1895, 6.

¹⁴ *Leighton Buzzard Observer and Linslade Gazette*, 04 May, 1886, 5; *Sheffield Independent*, 19 Feb, 1890, 3; *Leicester Daily Mercury*, 02 Dec, 1890, 4; *NE*, 01 Jan, 1892, 4.

¹⁵ *SDT*, 02 May, 1898, 8.

2.2.2 The wider debate: the Connexional publications

Political matters never dominated the pages of Connexional publications, yet all commented on political events, policies, personalities, parties and philosophies. All shared a commitment to the Liberal agenda, though each paper varied in the quantity of political content.¹⁶ As Rev. C.W. Skemp (a Baptist minister) opined in the *Magazine*, the Primitive Methodist Church ‘recognized that politics, philanthropy, and social reform were within the sphere of Christian service, and should not be left to unspiritual men’.¹⁷ Although some Primitives argued that only individual church members, rather than the Church itself, should engage in political activism, a growing number argued for both. Individual salvation and social reform were increasingly perceived as necessary corollaries; legislation was essential but would never be sufficient by itself.¹⁸ For example, in 1893 the *Magazine* approved of the Wesleyan Hugh Price Hughes’ declaration that ‘Jesus Christ was not only an ecclesiastic and moral reformer, but a social and political reformer. Were he here today, he would lead a crusade against the many social and national wrongs from which the people unjustly suffer’.¹⁹ Primitive Methodists worried that they would lose their core membership if they did not embrace social and industrial reform. For example, ‘Delta’ argued that they must ‘seek to effect not only [the people’s] spiritual but their social salvation’ if they ‘wished to retain their affection’.²⁰ Rev. H. Yooll countenanced against a purely political pulpit; however, to meet the needs of the congregation, the preacher must touch on the ‘many social topics of our times, the temperance reform, the conflict between capital and labour, the moral side of political events’ in a ‘timely, discriminating humanistic’ way.²¹ While deploring the ‘rampantly political parson’ and political partisanship, Rev. John Forster also acknowledged that the pulpit could not ignore the wellspring of politics and ‘must lift up its voice against classism, against materialism, against lawlessness, against selfishness in all its forms’.²² The theologian A. S. Peake attributed his disinclination to join the Established Church to its opposition to ‘progress and reform’, and its alliance with ‘such a vested interest as the liquor traffic’. To Peake, the Primitive Methodist Church was Anglicanism’s polar opposite.²³

¹⁶ In the first quarter of 1893 alone, the *Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review* devoted 35 of its 192 pages to Parliamentary politics: *PMQ*, 1893, 1-192.

¹⁷ *PMM*, 1889, 512.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1893, 407-9. Also: *PMQ*, 1888, 623-36; 1892, 445-6, 660-670, 688-698; 1895, 494-503.

¹⁹ *PMM*, 1893, 408.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 660.

²¹ *PMQ*, 1894, 493-4.

²² *Ibid.*, 546-66.

²³ *PMM*, 1898, 836-7.

Without exception, the Primitive Press welcomed the recent extension of the suffrage; contributors wished for more, and were committed to local and parliamentary democracy.²⁴ Although they objected to violent actions in pursuit of political ends, preferring constitutional methods to advance reform, some commentators understood how adverse social conditions sometimes provoked direct action. They argued that unless government addressed justified social grievances, they risked social anarchy or revolution.²⁵ Connexional authors supported the right of groups to demonstrate. For example, one columnist considered that there was no case against Henry Hyndman and John Burns when the pair was prosecuted in 1886 after violent incidents occurred at a demonstration they had organised. The same writer was critical of Sir Charles Warren's ban on meetings in Trafalgar Square and police interference at other public meetings.²⁶ Also in 1886, commenting on riots in London, Leicester, and Bristol, the *Primitive Methodist* attributed their origin to want and poverty. The paper suggested that Primitive Methodists should welcome the current unrest, as 'it fills us with great hope, because we believe it marks the beginning of a social revolution which will hasten the coming of the kingdom of God among men'.²⁷ Taking up the theme later, the columnist added that those opposed to demands for greater equality were 'selfishly Conservative, and afraid that their share of comfort is going to be lessened'. Although they argued against violence as it drove potential supporters into the enemy camp, 'we fully sympathise with the object sought'. The current 'social agitation aims not to produce an unnatural and artificial equality, but to remove the barriers that hinder an approximate equality'. In the writer's view, society was still full of such barriers. However, the solution was in democratic parliamentary politics such as the campaigns which had won Free Trade, a free press, education, and franchise extension.²⁸ T. Somerset Bateman – the son of a Primitive Methodist Minister – concurred. Bateman suggested that the British workman wanted reform and 'will attend meetings and make his mark on voting-papers ... [but] holds aloof from red flags and vitriol-throwing'. In Britain, he declared, there had been no revolution save by act of Parliament.²⁹ In 1897, Yooll echoed this faith in democracy, voicing a common Primitive view that democratic government would:

rely less and less upon the authority which is based on force, and more and more upon intellectual, moral and spiritual influences as a means of securing national and international peace, order and progress.³⁰

²⁴ *PMM*, 1889, 438; 1889, 185; 1894, 836-7. *PMQ*, 1888, 376, 565; 1892, 67, 183.

²⁵ *PMM*, 1888, 29-31.

²⁶ *PM*, 15 Apr, 226, 1886; *PMQ*, 1888, 187.

²⁷ *PM*, 25 Mar, 185-6, 1886.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 01 Apr, 201-2, 1886.

²⁹ *PMM*, 1897, 446.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 94-6.

Primitive Methodists combined principle and pragmatism in their endorsement of the ballot box and peaceful public protest.

Most Primitives believed that only the Liberal Party would extend democracy and mitigate social grievances. In 1893, although he acknowledged that a ‘few’ Church members now gave their allegiance to the Conservatives, ‘Delta’ claimed that ‘the great majority’ of Primitive Methodists ‘had joined the Liberal Party’. That Party was ‘the natural instrument’ for the Church.³¹ Indeed, Connexional editors assumed that their readership were predominantly Liberals. *Primitive Methodist World*, established in 1883, was specific in its terms of reference from the outset. Its focus was to be spiritual, but it would represent ‘the working classes ... [and] be straight in its Liberalism, so long as Liberalism ... [was] in accord with its own best traditions.’³² Similarly, biographies and obituaries of Church members regularly referred to their subject’s Liberal allegiance.³³ A most revealing obituary for a Mr. Phillips described how his last act:

was to vote at the recent election, when the crucial question was Home Rule as per Mr Gladstone's bills. To give his vote, Mr Phillips must go to Hurworth, a distance of three or four miles. Friends sought to dissuade him from attempting the journey even in a cab, but he had made up his mind. He regarded it as his duty, and felt that it was probably the only thing left for him to do. On his return home, it was with very great difficulty they got him into the house and upstairs. His work was done. At the election on the Thursday, he served his country, and on the Saturday morning, July 10th, 1886, he breathed his last...³⁴

There are no examples of similar eulogies for Conservatives or Liberal Unionists.

Typically, editorial comments and articles in all the Connexional magazines and newspapers expressed antagonism to Tories, who were characterised as repressive, nepotistic, and ruling in favour of their class interest. This contrasted with support and admiration for Gladstone. This was most apparent during the Home Rule crisis of 1886 in which *Primitive Methodist's* coverage followed Gladstone’s lead with only minor reservations. Although the newspaper published a number of letters from Liberal Unionists criticizing Gladstone’s Home Rule Bill, the editor consistently dismissed their arguments with stinging rebuttals. The newspaper compared the turncoat Liberal Unionist Joseph Chamberlain to a ‘cave dweller’ and declared him a ‘false radical’.³⁵ Some commentators even welcomed the ‘purging’ of Liberal Unionists from local Liberal Associations as having a purifying effect.³⁶ Their heresies and impurities went beyond Home Rule – Liberal Unionists were even

³¹ Ibid., 1893, 658-60.

³² *PMW*, 11 Jan, 31, 1900

³³ *PMM*, 1891, 373; 1892, 129, 449-50; 1893, 182; 1894, 94-5; 1895, 305-6; 1896, 217,484; 1897, 358, 470; 1898, 866, 946. *PMQ*, 1892, 396.

³⁴ *PMM*, 1887, 49-51.

³⁵ *PM*, Jan 7–Jul 22, 2, 26, 66, 105-6, 137-8, 153-4, 190, 166, 213, 225-6, 233-4, 266, 273, 306, 321, 326-7, 465-6, 478, 1886.

³⁶ *PMQ*, 1889, 190.

considered less committed to temperance than ‘Gladstonian Liberals’.³⁷ However, there was some Primitive Methodist opposition to Home Rule and desertions to the Liberal Unionists or Conservatives. Although Tory Primitives were exceptional, the Liberal allegiance was not hegemonic by the end of this period. The existence of Conservatives in some London Primitive Methodist chapels was brought home to Ramsay MacDonald in 1898. Anticipating a positive response from the Primitives as an Independent Labour Party candidate in that year’s London County Council elections for South Hackney, he asked to use their halls for his hustings. To his surprise, he was refused brusquely on the grounds that the chapel membership all supported the Liberals or Conservatives.³⁸

Even though most Primitive Methodist writers were supportive of progressive politics and increasingly accepting of state intervention, many were critical of Socialism – a political creed that a Church that positioned itself as the people’s champion could not ignore. In 1886, Rev. Robert Clemitson, although not antagonistic to the possibility of land nationalisation, argued that Socialism – even that which described itself as Christian Socialism – was ‘centralisation with a vengeance’ and had no basis in scripture.³⁹ He urged Primitive Methodists to regard it with ‘uncompromising, relentless, and interminable hostility’. Christianity must transform man, not his environment.⁴⁰ Rev. T. Baron expressed similar sentiments in 1892 and criticised the materialistic basis of Socialism.⁴¹ When a resolution in favour of nationalisation was presented to the TUC in 1894, the author of the *Magazine*’s ‘Monthly Chronicle’ asserted that Socialism was a ‘declaration against individualism’ and private property. It would require a huge change in the social order and human behaviour, requiring the eradication of selfishness. Essentially, Socialism was impractical.⁴²

Yet, some Primitives were obviously attracted to the Socialist creed. An early indication of this was implied by a short story called ‘Cross Currents’, which appeared in the 1887 edition of the *Magazine*. It comprised almost eight per cent of that year’s publication. The action took place in a thinly disguised Middlesbrough. Although there were several subplots, including a tale of lovers who crossed class barriers and another that highlighted the error of substituting the worship of art or positivist philosophy for Christianity, the main theme was an argument for Liberal values as opposed to those of Anarchism or Socialism. The author, an anonymous Nonconformist minister, pitted an anarchist, bent on promoting strikes, assassinations, and acts of terror, against a young Nonconformist who was a

³⁷ *MG*, 07 May, 1892, 5.

³⁸ I.D. MacKillop, *The British Ethical Societies* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010 – original edition 1986), 148-9.

³⁹ *PMQ*, 1886, 132-9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 514.

⁴² *PMM*, 1894, 798-9.

proponent of mainstream Liberal Party policies. Both joined the local ‘Advance Club’ and attempted to capture the membership for their respective politics. Unsurprisingly, the story ended with the advocates of state Socialism refuted, the agents of anarchism foiled and in retreat. The reasonable virtues of free and fair trade, co-operation between employers and employed, the establishment of boards of conciliation and arbitration, the cheap and ready transfer of land, triumph. The young Nonconformist married the daughter of a local industrialist, and became a journalist for a radical Northern newspaper.⁴³ The tale would appear to have been a tract, warning those Primitive Methodists interested in Socialism – or even more extreme political philosophies – to beware. This type of fiction was a common ‘mode of transmission’ of the social gospel in the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁴

Despite such warnings, the gradual acceptance of an ethical form of Socialism by some Primitive Methodists, including ministers, is apparent from the late 1880s. All favoured a vaguely defined and moderate version of Socialism that emphasised Christian principles. As Bevir has suggested, Socialism ‘has no necessary core ... [it is] a fluid set of beliefs and practices that people are constantly making and remaking.’⁴⁵ In 1889, Edwin Richardson proposed that Christianity was the only ‘safe Socialism’ but did not rule out political co-operation with secular Socialists, so long as they espoused peaceful methods.⁴⁶ Rev. Albert R Carman went a little further, spurning ‘sans-culottic Socialism’ but endorsing a Christian version that embraced ‘Brotherhood’, and the principles of the Sermon on the Mount.⁴⁷ Rev. F. Richardson criticised William Morris for his hypocrisy in preaching Socialism without relinquishing his personal wealth, but sympathised with many of ‘the elementary demands’ of his Socialist creed.⁴⁸ Rev. W. Atkins opined that Socialism was essentially ‘to do unto others as you would that they should do to you,’ and implied equality of opportunity.⁴⁹ For Rev. Moore, the primary thrust of Socialism was contained in Robert Browning’s lines: ‘Lord, give us fewer giants but elevate the race’.⁵⁰

Espousing Socialism – however defined – did not necessarily imply rejecting the Liberal Party; the creed could be contained within a progressive Liberalism. This was exemplified in Rev. A.T. Guttery’s article of 1893 on ‘The New Labour Movement’. He suggested that the establishment of the more militant New Unions, and the Socialist ILP, was ‘the creation, not of agitation, but of unchecked capitalism.’ These new movements had

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1887, 1-6, 65-70, 129-134, 193-198, 257-262, 321, 321-7, 385-390, 449-454, 513-519, 577-83, 641-7, 705-10.

⁴⁴ Phillips, *A Kingdom on Earth*, 124ff.

⁴⁵ Bevir, *Socialism*, 13.

⁴⁶ *PMQ*, 1889, 313-26.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1892, 315-33.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 1892, 428-89.

⁴⁹ *Sidney Morning Herald*, 25 Jan, 1894, 7.

⁵⁰ *PMQ*, 1898, 613-25.

grasped the spirit of the time.⁵¹ He approved of their radical advocacy of graduated income tax, an enormous extension of the factory acts, Poor Law reform, and abolition of the House of Lords, which he accused of blocking social reforms that would benefit the working classes. He hoped that the old and new Labour Movements would produce a synthesis, a middle way. Although he remained open-minded on whether trade union activity or state intervention were the appropriate vehicles to reduce working hours – aware of differences of opinion within the Connexion on that issue – he did not consider the approaches irreconcilable.⁵² In this, Guttery was articulating a strand within Liberalism, later designated as ‘New Liberalism’, which increasingly advocated ‘a greater and more positive use of [state] interventionism’. Often, the term Socialism meant little more at this time.⁵³ Also in 1893, fresh from attending the ILP Conference at Bradford, Rev. John Forster went further. As the Church that was synonymous with the Labour Movement – particularly in the Northern coalfields – he argued that it must ally itself with ‘that class of reformers who are moving, but moving cautiously, in the direction of Socialism,’ even if he did not necessarily endorse the new party itself.⁵⁴ Such promotion of collectivism, or Socialism, did not necessarily imply a desertion of the Liberal Party. In 1904, John Johnson – a Primitive Methodist local preacher elected as Liberal MP for Gateshead that year – unashamedly advertised his attendance at the International Socialist Congress in Zurich of 1893. He only transferred his allegiance to Labour in 1910 when obliged to do so by his union.⁵⁵

In 1895, both Forster and Guttery developed their critique. Forster wanted an expansion of trade union rights and responsibilities, a similar process for the co-operative movement and municipal ownership of various industries and transport, with a view to all eventually being collectivised – he did not envisage the abolition of Capitalism but its reform.⁵⁶ Guttery criticised some secular Socialists for their attacks on Nonconformists; he considered their anti-religious vitriol would alienate potential supporters. Yet, sympathetic to their aims and considering ‘extreme individualism’ as ‘the tragedy and weakness of our age’, he endorsed tentative steps towards collectivism. Consequently, he set down practical proposals to reconcile the new and old agendas. They were essentially the current Liberal Party

⁵¹ *PMQ*, 1893, 154. For more on Guttery see: J.G. Bowram, *The Life of Arthur Thomas Guttery* (London, Holborn Hall: 1922). Available online: https://archive.org/stream/lifeofarthurthom00bowrialalifeofarthurthom00bowrialal_djvu.txt [Accessed: 12/10/13].

⁵² *PMQ*, 1893, 142-55. Also: *Huddersfield Examiner*, 24 Feb, 1894, quoted in R. Perks, *The new liberalism and the challenge of Labour in the West Riding of Yorkshire: 1885-1914*, 248. PhD thesis (Huddersfield Polytechnic, 1985). Available online: http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/4598/1/D065033_1.pdf. [Accessed: 06/06/15].

⁵³ M. Pugh, *The Making of Modern British Politics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 113-121.

⁵⁴ *PMQ*, 1893, 445-65.

⁵⁵ *PMM*, 1904, 267.

⁵⁶ *PMQ*, 1895, 13-24.

programme but with an increased emphasis on nationalisation of the land and great public enterprises, the employment of the workless on public projects and universal adult suffrage.⁵⁷

However, some Primitives felt that the Liberal Party no longer represented their or the Church's views. In 1895, Rev. W. Jones Davies was adamant that Liberalism and its 'shibboleths' had run their course and, moreover, the Liberal Party contained too many capitalists for it to represent the wage-earner. A new Party of the people was required: a Socialist one that, although not representing Labour alone, would 'regulate and control' individualism, promote equal pay for women and access to free higher education for all. It would be moderate and embrace gradualism but it would be an organization that the Christian 'may', perhaps 'ought', to join.⁵⁸ Davies, who remained a committed Christian Socialist, may have had the newly created ILP in mind.⁵⁹ A number of Primitive Methodist men and women, including the future Rothwell MP William Lunn, were among the early members of that Party. Lunn founded the Rothwell (Yorkshire) branch in 1893.⁶⁰ British born Primitive Methodist emigrants to the Colonies were also prominent in the establishment of both the Australian and New Zealand Labour Parties.⁶¹ By contrast, the emergence of the ILP concerned at least one unnamed *Primitive Methodist World* columnist. Although not critical of all elements in the ILP's programme, they were aggrieved that the Party's candidates split the progressive vote in some constituencies and proposed that an accommodation with this newcomer was necessary.⁶²

2.2.3 The background, political allegiances and proclivities of Primitive Methodist MPs

In 1886, a Connexional group of Liberal Party activists arranged a banquet to celebrate the election of a quintet of MPs the Church claimed as its own: Joseph Arch, Thomas Burt, William Crawford, Charles Fenwick, and John Wilson.⁶³ Except for Burt, the other MPs were or had been local preachers. Although never a member of the Church, Burt acknowledged the formative influence of his Primitive Methodist upbringing and the Church reciprocated by recognising him.⁶⁴ William Beckworth, a local preacher, declared to the assembled banqueters that these working-class MPs not only represented their constituencies, but the

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 533-41.

⁵⁸ *PMQ*, 1895, 716-25. Also: *MG*, 14 Jan, 1893, 7.

⁵⁹ *PML*, 17 Aug, 175, 1905.

⁶⁰ D. Howell, *British Workers and the Independent Labour Party: 1888-1906* (Manchester: MUP, 1983), 20-23.

⁶¹ M. Hutchinson, 'Smailes, George Wells', and R.D. Linder, 'The Australian Love Affair with the Australian Labor Party: 1891-1929'. Available online: webjournal@ac.edu.au [Accessed 21/11/13]. T. Laffan, 'Christian Socialism in Newcastle: 1890-1916', *The Hummer*, 3, 6, (2001). Available online: <http://asslh.org.au/hummer/vol-3-no-6/christian-socialism/>. [Accessed 09/05/15].

⁶² *PMW*, 18 Feb, 122, 25 Feb, 144, 04 May, 163, 1897.

⁶³ *PM*, 11 Mar, 147-9, 1886.

⁶⁴ Burt, *Autobiography*, 85-88, 113-127; Appendix.

Church and, for the first time, the 'toiling masses'.⁶⁵ Seven years later, Rev. James A. Cheeseman re-iterated Beckworth's sentiments and claimed that the Church now exercised 'great political power', through the newly elected Liberal Government and the five MPs it claimed as its own, all Liberals.⁶⁶ Another Primitive Methodist local preacher, George Doughty, a former carpenter who had risen to owner of a fishing fleet and director of the Humber Commercial Dock, became a Liberal MP in 1895. However, he would desert that Party for the Liberal Unionists in 1898.⁶⁷

Eighty-three per cent of the Primitive MPs during this period were Labour activists and their background and conduct within the Labour Movement was pertinent to their parliamentary careers. Burt, Crawford, Fenwick, and Wilson were former colliers from either Durham or Northumberland and miners' representatives for a considerable part of their careers, while Arch had risen to prominence as a leader of the first national agricultural labourers' union, NALU. For such wage-earners, before MPs were salaried in 1911, union support was essential for their parliamentary election and career.⁶⁸ Burt, Fenwick and Wilson were all regarded as moderate and conciliatory trade union leaders. They were exponents of the 'Defence, not Defiance' form of trade unionism that Alastair Reid has suggested 'showed aspirations to make a contribution to society rather than blow it up.'⁶⁹ Aaron Watson's summation of Burt's philosophy and practice as a trade union leader, applies equally to Fenwick and Wilson:

His determination from the first was to get better terms for the men by getting on better terms with the masters ... If the condition of the miners was to be improved it must be through amicable arrangement with the employers. It was a time in which trade union leaders were considered to be reckless authors of mischief. Well, Mr Burt has from the first, and in every crisis of his life, been a conciliator, with results that have made his influence most beneficially felt in every section of the labour world. He never aimed at "fighting the masters," but only at improving the condition of the men.⁷⁰

Burt, teasingly, once referred to his 'conservative proclivities' and was adamant that he did not promulgate class war; he yearned for 'some rational modes of adjusting the differences between employers and workmen on lines that will ultimately lead to a reconciliation of the

⁶⁵ *PM*, 11 Mar, 147-9, 1886.

⁶⁶ *PMQ*, 1893, 418.

⁶⁷ B. Lincoln, *The Life of Sir George Doughty: Commercial and Political* by Bob Lincoln (London: Page and Thomas, 1914). According to a report in the *Dundee Advertiser* (01 Aug, 1898, 6) Doughty had changed political horses before from Liberal to Liberal Unionist and then Liberal again.

⁶⁸ *DLB*, I, 26-9, 59-63, 93-4, 115-8, 348.

⁶⁹ From a paper delivered to the History and Policy Trade Union forum. Available online: <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/trade-union-forum/meeting/the-liberal-party-and-the-trade-unions> [Accessed 14/02/14].

⁷⁰ Watson, *Labour Leader*, 83-4. Also: *SDESG*, 01 Jul, 1890, 2.

conflicting interests of Labour and Capital'.⁷¹ This moderate and conciliatory approach was the prime cause of the antagonism they later faced from a younger, more radical generation of trade unionists.⁷² For example, George Harvey, an ILP member, later accused Wilson of being an 'enemy of the working class and servant of capitalism'.⁷³ However, their desire for industrial peace did not preclude the use of strikes in the face of obdurate and uncompromising employers. Strong unions were a necessary counterweight to organised Capital.⁷⁴ They argued that the unionization of industry would actually reduce the need for direct action. As Burt explained to the TUC in 1891:

We were told then, too, that trade unionism always meant strikes. Some of the stupidest, some of the most foolish strikes I have ever known have been by non-unionists and of only partially organised men, and you may take this as a fact, that if the union once gets its feet fairly set, in proportion to its power, there will be a diminution rather than an increase of strikes.⁷⁵

Although contemporaries considered Crawford less conciliatory than Burt, Fenwick, and Wilson as a trade union leader, in Parliament he largely followed their example.⁷⁶ Arch was also aware of the dangers of 'the reckless use of the strike weapon' and, like the miners, prioritised building the union above precipitant direct action.⁷⁷ Consequently, he suggested that the farmers and agricultural labourers had a common interest in combination: they were 'the Siamese Twins of the agricultural world'. He even attempted to gain farmers' support for his election to Parliament, although he did not always enjoy a harmonious relationship with them.⁷⁸

These working-class MPs applied the same conciliatory principles and practices to parliamentary politics. Though Wilson was elected as a representative of his class and occupational group to 'make their interest the interest of the nation', to counter the 'power-misusing class' who pursued their own selfish agenda, he believed his mandate necessitated 'running in conjunction with the Liberals'. For Wilson and Arch, as for many working-class radicals, Gladstonian Liberalism combined class and national interest. Arch considered that the election of these plebeian MPs was:

only the beginning of brighter and better days for the working classes, and you may rest assured that when the carpenter, the glass-blower, the man from the forge, and the agricultural labourer put their shoulders together within the walls

⁷¹ *PMQ*, 1886, 440 and 1889, 74.

⁷² L.H. Mates, 'The Syndicalist challenge in the Durham coalfield before 1914' in R. Kinna et al., (eds.), *Libertarian Socialism: Politics in Black and Red* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 57-77.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁷⁴ *PMQ*, 1889, 71-74; Burt, *Autobiography*, 193-4; Arch, *Ploughtail*, 129-131.

⁷⁵ Watson, *Labour Leader*, 186.

⁷⁶ Watson, *Labour Leader*, 179; *London Standard*, 04 Jan, 1888, 3; Beynon and Austrin, *Masters and Servants*, 60-64.

⁷⁷ Horn, *Joseph Arch*, 60.

⁷⁸ Arch, *Ploughtail*, 128-132; Horn, *Arch*, 167.

of St. Stephens, they will scatter so much radicalism that a great number of the gentlemen will catch the dreadful disease'.⁷⁹

Burt agreed that class representation was essential if Parliament was to reflect the full spectrum of sectional interests. Just as the legislature included veterans of the armed forces, the legal and medical professions, so it must embrace the labouring classes. However, he insisted that class representation was only necessary until social bias dissolved. The ideal MP should be free of class prejudice and self-interest. He proposed that Parliament already contained champions of the working classes, some of whom were wealthy employers; although not of the wage-earning classes, such MPs could be 'just and humane' in their unbiased consideration of Labour issues. Consequently, he advised the electorate always to vote for the 'best' parliamentary candidate, regardless of their class:

The best member is he who is free from class bias, who looks at every question on the broad grounds of justice and humanity, who will speak and vote for what is right, though it may cut against the grain, and may militate against his own interests.⁸⁰

Wilson expressed similar sentiments in parliamentary debate.⁸¹ Due to their conciliatory proclivities, these working-class Liberal MPs were described as Liberal-Labour or Lib-Lab MPs by their critics – terms they embraced unashamedly. The *Labour Leader* even rebuked them as being no more than 'toothless poodles' in their ability to defend wage earners' interests.⁸²

Not only did the MPs eschew class war but they were all suspicious of Socialism or disproportionate state intervention. They had no desire to turn the world upside down. Crawford and Wilson approved of a measured redistribution of wealth but not Socialism.⁸³ Burt's desired that the 'poor man's child shall have a fair chance in the race of life'.⁸⁴ While he supported parliamentary intervention to 'do what it can to remove every obstacle, to lighten his [the labouring man's] burden, to protect him from robbers' and to assist the 'weak, broken-down wayfarer', he insisted that the State should act as an 'inspector' not a 'manager'. In Burt's view, state management implied a loss of individual liberty. The State should foster, not weaken 'the self-reliance of the work people'.⁸⁵ Arch expressed an identical sentiment in his autobiography, advocating political action to promote 'self-help

⁷⁹ Arch, *Ploughtail*, 358.

⁸⁰ *Hawke's Bay Herald*, 26 Aug, 1889, 2. Also: Watson, *Labour Leader*, 216-7.

⁸¹ *Hansard*, 19 May 1886 vol 305 cc1449-50.

⁸² *Labour Leader*, 02 Apr, 1898. Quoted in J. Shepherd, 'Labour and parliament', in Biagini and Reid, (eds.), *Currents of Radicalism*, 190.

⁸³ *PM*, 11 Mar, 149, 1886.

⁸⁴ Watson, *Labour Leader*, 188.

⁸⁵ *Hawke's Bay Herald*, 26 Aug, 1889, 2.

and liberty'.⁸⁶ Fenwick captured the essence of the group's political philosophy in a speech seconding the Queen's speech of 1894:

If this House is wise it will give a sympathetic consideration to the cry of the working classes, and do all in its power to mitigate the hardships to which they are at times subject. I am not a revolutionist in this sense: I do not advocate extreme measures; I am opposed to all violent methods of procedure in endeavouring to obtain social reform. In my judgment, he is not a friend of the working man who gives such cowardly and foolish advice ... Wise and timely concessions will do much to calm the temper and the passions of the toiling masses, and will do much to promote the peace and goodwill amongst the people of this Empire.⁸⁷

As the historian and Conservative MP, J.A.R. Marriott, commented on his own contemporary parliamentary experience, all these Lib-Lab MPs were moderate in their demands and 'had no stomach for the "class war"'.⁸⁸

Just as class was no barrier to advantageous political alliances, religious loyalties did not necessarily preclude pacts with those who had a different or no faith. Arch shared platforms with an Anglican Canon and a Catholic Archbishop at meetings to raise money for his union, Burt and Wilson welcomed the intervention of Anglican clergymen as industrial arbitrators – a mediation process that sometimes resulted in wage reductions for their union members. Burt was a friend and ally of Charles Bradlaugh, the atheist MP. He considered that religious belief or lack of it should not be a bar to parliamentary election. This tolerance appears to have been a feature of the other Primitive Methodist MPs with a trade union background. During the 1870s and 1880s, all five appeared on the platform of several Durham Miners Galas with Bradlaugh, as did some influential Connexional ministers, such as Rev. Robert Hind.⁸⁹

2.3 Political issues

2.3.1 Labour and Capital

Labour and Capital issues, although never prominent, sometimes surfaced at Conferences, as at the Conference of 1893. The Mayor of Nottingham opened the event by remarking on the Church's positive influence on the working classes, which had helped them 'rise rapidly'.⁹⁰ Later, at a 'Working Man's Meeting' chaired by the jam

⁸⁶ Arch, *Ploughtail*, 404.

⁸⁷ *Hansard*, 12 March 1894 vol 22 cc37.

⁸⁸ J.A.R. Marriott, *Modern England: 1885-1932* (London: Methuen, 1934), 230.

⁸⁹ 1872 pamphlet advertising a meeting at Exeter Hall. TUC Library Collection. Available online at http://www.unionhistory.info/timeline/TI_Display.php?irn=2000019&QueryPage=..%2FAdvSearch.php [accessed 26/08/16]; R. Lee, *The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield 1810-1926: Clergymen, Capitalists and Colliers* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 172; Watson, *Labour Leader*, 163-72, 252-3; Durham Miners Gala: <http://www.dmm.org.uk/history/gala.htm>. [Accessed 6/9/13].

⁹⁰ *BM*, 09 Jun, 1893, 8.

manufacturer William Hartley, Councillor Jones of Chester agreed that ‘Socialists, politicians and religionists were all concerned about the welfare of working men’. He referred to John Burns and Ben Tillett, leaders of New Unionism who ‘looked forward to the abolition of capital and competition’. Jones insisted that there was ‘much truth in what they said’, yet economic reform by itself was not sufficient. He asserted that working men must also embrace the morality of Christ and defend their own and their employer’s best interests by adopting a strong work ethic. Tellingly, some attendees cheered Jones’ reference to Burns and Tillett. The combination of the millionaire Hartley’s position as Chair and Jones’ support for both employer and employee represented the Church’s desire to achieve justice for the wage-earner through the co-operation of Labour and Capital. However, some responses to Jones’ references to Burns and Tillett at the ‘Working Man’s Meeting’ indicate that there may have been a different balance of priorities between the employers and employees in the audience. The President, Rev. Travis, followed Jones with a claim that was patently a response to the recent establishment of Labour Churches: Primitive Methodists ‘were themselves of the working class,’ and 5,000 out of its 6,000 churches were ‘Labour churches’. Even if hyperbole, Travis’ assertion suggests that Primitive Methodism recognized a challenger to its self-image as champion of the working classes.⁹¹ For, as Travis asserted, Providence had assigned Primitive Methodists ‘a mission to the working classes’.⁹² Similarly, the Conference meeting during the week of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations, claimed Primitive Methodism as one, if not the primary, agent in the ‘improvement in the working and artisan classes of this country’. The Church had consistently supported the ‘intellectual, social, moral and religious progress’ of the working classes during Victoria’s reign.⁹³ At a local level, the Church’s closeness to the Labour Movement is evident in Hull’s Great Thornton Street Monthly meeting Minutes. Between 1883 and 1894, on at least nine occasions, the Circuit committee agreed to requests from the Hull Railway Servants Union to use one of the Circuit’s chapels for a day of revival meetings. Primitive Methodist local preachers officiated at these all-day events and the Circuit and Union appear to have shared the collections taken.⁹⁴

Likewise, contributors to the Connexion’s publications repeatedly asserted that their church was a champion of ‘the people’, ‘the working classes’ or ‘Labour’ in regard to both spiritual and material interests. For example, Rev. Carman argued that the Church must

⁹¹ *PM*, 22 Jun , 409-10, 1893. Individual PM chapels also claimed ‘Labour Church’ status: *PML*, 12 Apr 237, 1906.

⁹² *BM*, 09 Jun, 1893, 8; *PMCM*, 1893, 175.

⁹³ *PMCM*, 1897, 186.

⁹⁴ Minutes of Great Thornton Street Circuit Committee Meeting Minutes (Hull History Centre C DCW/88): Mar 05, 1883; Jun 07, 1886; Mar 04, 1889; Sep 29, 1889; Jun 01 and Sep 01, 1890; Mar 07, 1892; Jun 04 , 1894; and C DCW/ 89, undated, 1885. As some of the minutes are illegible, this list may not be complete.

champion the interests of ‘wage-earners’.⁹⁵ As reported in the *Primitive Methodist* newspaper of 1893, Primitives demonstrated this during a lockout of members of the MFGB. The miners had refused to accept significant wage reductions and the owners had locked them out. The newspaper described the lockout as ‘The Coal War’ and the dispute dominated its pages for several months. Letters from Primitive Methodist ministers described the dire straits of those affected by the dispute and asked for donations of clothes and money to assist those on strike. Huge numbers of Primitive donors responded. However, in addition to alleviating distress, at least one minister took an active part in demonstrations in favour of the miners, marching under his chapel banner.⁹⁶ Another chaired meetings in support of the miners and expressed ‘his indignation at the conduct of the Masters’ Federation’.⁹⁷ Although one anonymous correspondent to *Primitive Methodist* supported the justice of the miners’ case while censuring them for not accepting arbitration, the editorials and all other correspondence were firmly behind the miners. One editorial blamed the coalowners for seeking such a large reduction in wages, describing their actions as ‘positive greed’ and ‘a wrong-headed policy on their part’. The author affirmed the Connexion’s sympathy with ‘the miners, and with other classes of toilers in this country’; the miners deserved to be ‘well-paid’. The government eventually interceded to end the dispute; an intervention warmly welcomed by the paper, which hoped for the creation of Boards of Conciliation on which both employers and employees would be equally represented.⁹⁸

On both religious and social grounds Connexional columnists also endorsed state intervention where necessary to protect the working classes from exploitation. For example, in 1889, although he did not welcome the opening of museums, aquariums and picture galleries on Sundays, Thomas Danks defended the closing of workplaces and shops on Sundays. He insisted that the Sabbath was there to confer religious and ‘social benefits’ – indicating that it was partly a means of safeguarding the worker from excessive hours.⁹⁹ Rev. Yooll’s approval of how the 19th century had seen ‘a sure advance toward juster and kindlier conditions of life and labour for the masses of people’ through legislation such as the Factory and Employers’ Liability Acts was typical. For Yooll, although Capital was required to employ Labour, wealth was concentrated in too few hands and wasted on ‘idle luxury, [and] palatial residences’. Most of the labouring population would benefit ‘by almost any change in the economical [sic] order of things’. Trade unions were a ‘God-send’ to the labouring classes, but must work with

⁹⁵ *PMQ*, 1892, 317. Also, 1886, 99, 132, 137; 1893, 142-155; 1895, 494-503. *PMM*, 1893, 418, 658-60. The designations utilised not only reflected a populist sentiment but were clearly class related.

⁹⁶ *PM*, 04 Sep to 14 Dec, 611, 627,643,658,662,670-1,682-3,698-9,714-5,722,726,734,742,747-50,762-4,770,780-2,794-5, 826-7, 1893.

⁹⁷ *SDT*, 25 Sep, 1893, 5.

⁹⁸ *PM*, 19 Oct, 690-1, 694, 1893.

⁹⁹ *PMQ*, 1889, 300-312.

Capital and resolve their differences by conciliation and arbitration rather than strikes and lockouts. Yooll proposed that organised Capital and Labour must balance one another – neither should dominate. Furthermore, he promoted profit sharing, industrial partnerships, and co-operatives; for the unemployed he favoured the establishment of industrial settlements. However, he insisted that, whatever social reforms Connexional adherents adopted, they must adhere to Christian principles and peaceful methods.¹⁰⁰ Another contributor captured the dominant sentiment of the publications when he argued that ‘it is one of the first duties of the State to secure for the people the best possible conditions of life’.¹⁰¹

However, despite their obvious sympathy with wage-earners, Primitive Methodists wished to avoid social war whenever possible. Consequently, Rev. G.F. Johnson was critical of New Unionism’s greater use of industrial action: a strategy that he believed would weaken, rather than strengthen, the trade union movement.¹⁰² Similarly, in 1894, M.D. approved of the trade union movement’s attempts to redress the balance between Capital and Labour, but observed that it was also ‘invariably conservative, it is often selfish, and it is sometimes unreasonable’. Thus, he saw the Miners’ Federation campaign for a minimum wage as an example of the latter: a form of protectionism by one sector against the nation as a whole, despite their wish to achieve it by national negotiations with the coalowners.¹⁰³

Burt, Fenwick, and Wilson also opposed the MFGB’s campaign for a minimum wage. They remained committed to the ‘sliding scale’, the principle that wages should follow the price of coal. However, miners’ leaders in other regions, many of them also Primitive Methodists, were disillusioned with the system – some even claimed that coalowners were manipulating it by selling coal at ridiculously low prices to depress wages. The recently established conciliation boards had not secured wage levels that the Federation considered acceptable. Consequently, the MFGB became increasingly committed to the principle of a minimum wage: a basic, guaranteed wage that would be immune to the vagaries of the price of coal. Although the North-Eastern miners’ leaders disagreed with this demand, their membership was increasingly attracted to the campaign. The Durham and Northumberland miners’ associations had been expelled from the MFGB in 1893 for not supporting the organisation in that year’s dispute with the owners. Partly because the membership supported the minimum wage campaign, they eventually re-joined in 1907.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ *PMQ*, 1892, 430-46.

¹⁰¹ *PMM*, 1895, 318-9.

¹⁰² *PMQ*, 1893, 624-31.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 1894, 732-5.

¹⁰⁴ R. Church and Q. Outram, *Strikes and Solidarity: Coalfield Conflict in Britain 1889-1966* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 42-3; Marshall, *Militancy*, 15; H.W. Macrosty, ‘The Recent History of the Living Wage Movement’, *Political Science Quarterly*, 13, 3 (1898), 424-431.

Labour concerns – particularly those relating to miners – dominated the political activities of Burt, Crawford, Fenwick and Wilson. Indeed, all Crawford’s parliamentary speeches during his brief career as an MP were on mining issues.¹⁰⁵ The quartet particularly encouraged a variety of measures intended to diminish strife between Capital and Labour. One method Burt advocated to achieve this was the collection and publication of a wide range of ‘Labour Statistics’, including the: numbers, wages and gender of employees; incidence of industrial accidents; arrangements for labourers’ housing; the capital invested and profit margins of individual firms and their arrangements, if any, for profit sharing. Ironically, for a supporter of minimal government such as Burt, the inevitable consequence of the implementation of this measure was a growth in the number of people employed at the Board of Trade. However, according to Burt, the proclaimed benefit of publishing this information would be a reduction in ‘the friction which existed, and to put an end to strikes and lockouts in all the industries of the country’.¹⁰⁶ For similar reasons, Burt also promoted profit sharing, a strategy adopted by the jam manufacturer, William Hartley, and approved of by senior Connexional figures.¹⁰⁷

Further to pursuing the reduction of industrial strife, Burt, Fenwick, and Wilson co-sponsored and endorsed legislation that facilitated conciliation and arbitration, with an emphasis on the former. They supported the creation of Boards of Conciliation and Arbitration on which both employers and employed were represented, and took an active role in the establishment and operation of these bodies. However, they favoured voluntary conciliation above compulsory arbitration.¹⁰⁸ For example, Fenwick preferred ‘more machinery for bringing the parties to a dispute before a Board of Conciliation in a sort of friendly conference’ than formal arbitration.¹⁰⁹ Wilson wished to avoid ‘deplorable’ strikes or lockouts and had ‘more faith in voluntary conciliation than in any statute which that House could pass’.¹¹⁰ By the 1890s, even their political opponents recognised the desire of these MPs to avoid confrontations whenever possible. In 1895, the solidly conservative *Newcastle Courant* grudgingly described Burt and Fenwick as ‘orthodox representatives of labour in Parliament’ and ‘usually speaking with ‘common sense’. However, the newspaper was critical of their antagonism to ‘Toryism’ and their allegiance being ‘inseparably linked with ... Liberal politics’.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-william-crawford/>

¹⁰⁶ *Hansard*, 02 March 1886 vol 302 cc1773-5.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 22 April 1890 vol 343 cc1137-70; Peake, *Hartley*, 50, 71, 73.

¹⁰⁸ *JHC*, V150, 18; V151, 21 and 37. *Hansard*, 08 February 1895 vol 30 c32, 05 March 1895 vol 31 cc393-415, 27 July 1896 vol 43 cc735-52. *Board of Trade Report on Strikes and Lock Outs of 1892* (London: HMSO, 1894), 185. *The Times*, 04 Apr, 1904, 6.

¹⁰⁹ *Hansard*, 20 February 1896 vol 37 cc791-5.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 19 February 1896 vol 37 cc655-6.

¹¹¹ *Newcastle Courant*, 03 Aug, 1895, 4.

The four mining MPs acknowledged other irregularities, anomalies, and injustices to which wage-earners were subject. These included the unjust imposition of fines on workers, deductions from pay following an industrial accident, irregular payment of wages, unfair dismissal of individuals, the obstruction of Trade Union officials and members in discharging their duties and rights and the blacklisting of union activists.¹¹² They sponsored and supported legislation to improve the welfare and safety of the working classes. Although their focus was on coal mines, they did not overlook other industries. By way of example, they insisted on the investigation of accidents and safer working practices in collieries and railways – such as regulating the training and examination of steam engine and boiler operatives, and the inspection of their equipment. They argued for the appointment of sufficient mining inspectors, some of whom should be working miners and, at times, suggested the same for other industries. Moreover, they took steps to create a system whereby employers accepted liability for industrial accidents and paid a fair rate of compensation.¹¹³ Their agitation resulted in the partial successes of the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1887 and the Workmen’s Compensation Act of 1897. To the satisfaction of the miners, the latter – largely successful due to the advocacy of Joseph Chamberlain, a lifelong Unitarian – repealed clauses in an earlier Compensation Act of 1880 by which employers could force employees to contract out of the Act’s provisions.¹¹⁴ Typically, Wilson hoped that ‘friendly arrangements made between employers and workmen’ would characterise the operation of the Act.¹¹⁵ All five of the trade union MPs also campaigned to ensure that the hours of labour for wage-earners were not excessive. Although their support for limiting working hours was usually a straightforward Labour issue, it was sometimes associated with Sabbatarianism, such as legislating for Sunday early-closing.¹¹⁶ The MPs

¹¹² *JHC*, V143, 154 and 191; V144, 13-14; V145, 14. *Hansard*, 14 June 1888 vol 327 c111, 29 January 1891 vol 349 cc1275-6, 27 July 1896 vol 43 cc777, 23 February 1897 vol 46 cc972-4, 19 July 1887 vol 317 cc1334-5, 05 December 1890 vol 349 cc664, 30 June 1891 vol 354 cc1858-9, 22 March 1892 vol 2 cc1496-536, 06 February 1891 vol 350 cc148-9, 27 July 1896 vol 43 cc771-9.

¹¹³ *JHC*, V141, 19, 55, 244, 329; V142, 15, 16, 19; V143, 16, 54, 68; V144, 13; V145, 15, 16, 20; V146, 9, 12, 14, 23; V147, 16, 17, 18, 77; V148, 15, 16, 48; V149, 24; V150, 15; V151, 20, 23, 205; V152, 13, 16; V153, 19, 36. *Hansard*, 06 May 1887 vol 314 c1124, 15 August 1887 vol 319 cc495-646, 16 August 1887 vol 319 cc687-814, 04 June 1888 vol 326 c101, 14 June 1888 vol 327 cc109-10, 18 March 1889 vol 334 c13, 11 February 1890 vol 341 c42, 23 June 1891 vol 354 cc1205-7, 09 June 1892 vol 5 cc580-2, 25 March 1895 vol 32 cc32-3, 10 March 1896 vol 38 cc605-623, April 1896 vol 39 c1519, 27 July 1896 vol 43 cc767-71, 11 February 1897 vol 46 cc193, 24 May 1897 vol 49 cc1163, 25 May 1897 vol 49 cc1273-342, 26 May 1897 vol 49 cc1366, 27 May 1897 vol 49 cc1434-85, 01 June 1897 vol 50 cc54, 03 June 1897 vol 50 cc205-44, 05 July 1897 vol 50 cc1127-53, 05 July 1897 vol 50, 1159-60, 06 July 1897 vol 50 cc1225-93, 08 July 1897 vol 50 cc1388, 08 July 1897 vol 50 cc1397-8, 12 July 1897 vol 50 cc1608-5, 15 July 1897 vol 51 cc218-241.

¹¹⁴ L.J. Satre, *Thomas Burt, Miners’ MP, 1837-1922: The Great Conciliator* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1999), 52-3; *Hansard*, 01 June 1897 vol 50 cc66; *Fabian Tract No 82, The Workmen’s Compensation Act and What It Means And How To Make Use Of It* (London, The Fabian Society, 1901), 6; R.K. Webb on ‘Quakers and Unitarians’ in D. G. Paz, (ed.), *Nineteenth Century English Religious Traditions: Retrospect and Prospects* (London: Greenwood Press, 1995), 105.

¹¹⁵ *Hansard*, 01 June 1897 vol 50 cc66.

¹¹⁶ *JHC*, V141, 18; V144, 45; V145, 15; V146, 12; V147, 29; V148, 275; V149, 25; V150, 17; V151, 21; V152, 16; V153, 21. *Hansard*, 08 May 1888 vol 325 cc1667-707, 23 January 1891 vol 349

were also concerned that excessive hours of work could lead to accidents. For example, Fenwick asked a question about the case of a postal van driver who worked 19 hours a day and, consequently, ran over and killed a pedestrian.¹¹⁷

However, they were reluctant to involve the State in legislating hours of work where employees were unionised and could negotiate with their employers on such matters – only supporting state intervention when this was unlikely. They endorsed a principle Fenwick expressed in a debate of 1894 regarding a London Cab Strike:

He was wholly opposed to Parliament interfering in any way in industrial disputes between employers and employed. He as a workman thought that the workmen were quite competent to protect themselves. If they were permitted the freedom of combination, if no restrictions were placed in the way of their fairly combining and organising for the protection of their labour, he strongly reprobated any interference on the part of Parliament between capital and labour in any industrial conflicts.¹¹⁸

Wilson also emphasised this strong support for voluntarism. He proposed that the Board of Trade should only have powers to intervene in regard to hours of work and all other Labour issues:

in cases where employers and employed were not agreed. There would be no occasion to interfere if companies took a course similar to that followed by the North-Eastern, which company, in consultation with their employees, came to an arrangement as to the hours of work at Christmas time. The intervention of the Board would only arise in urgent cases, and there would be no legal fixing of a number of hours.¹¹⁹

Essentially the State should support the right of combination and provide the framework for conciliation and arbitration processes, only interfering when this was impracticable or broke down.

From the early 1890s, this approach brought Burt, Fenwick, and Wilson into conflict with the MFGB who were campaigning for a statutory maximum of an eight hour working day in coalmines. Many miners in Durham and Northumberland were opposed to their campaign as hewers in those counties were already working less than eight hours. These aristocrats of the coalface feared that the proposed legislation would deprive them of the beneficial working hours that their unions had achieved through collective bargaining. In addition, if other pitmen who still worked longer hours than the hewers – such as putters and stonemen – were to have their hours reduced, the inevitable consequence would be a change in the shift systems operating in the North-East. A double shift system was the norm

cc904-1008, 24 February 1891 vol 350 cc1504-10, 18 June 1891 vol 354 cc803-77, 24 February 1892 vol 1 cc1129-88, 07 April 1892 vol 3 cc883-964, 25 June 1896 vol 42 cc75-6.

¹¹⁷ *Hansard*, 11 July 1887 vol 317 c350.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 25 May 1894 vol 24 cc1308-9. Also: *Ibid.*, 23 January 1891 vol 349 cc916-920, 07 April 1892 vol 3 cc905-910, 25 June 1896 vol 42 cc75-6.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23 January 1891 vol 349 cc916-920.

and any alteration from this to one continuous shift or to three connecting shifts would entail considerable disruption to existing social and domestic arrangements. Durham and Northumberland were not members of the MFGB, which had failed to achieve an eight hour day through collective bargaining.¹²⁰ Many of the MFGB's leaders in Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and Staffordshire who were prominent campaigners were also Primitive Methodists. Some would later become MPs themselves: William Parrott, William Harvey, James Haslam, Enoch Edwards, and Albert Stanley.¹²¹ Arch, in addition to several other customary allies of Burt, Wilson, and Fenwick, also supported the eight hour campaign – as did the TUC.¹²² Although Congress initially supported an opt-out clause in the proposed legislation that would have permitted Durham and Northumberland to continue with their existing arrangement, the clause was soon dropped, making the North-Eastern MPs' position awkward. As members of the TUC's Parliamentary Committee, Fenwick, and Wilson were obliged to promote the MFGB's proposals. In practice, although they insisted that they used their best endeavours to get Eight Hour Bills introduced, they argued and voted against them in Parliament, representing their local trade union and constituents' interests, and thereby incurring criticism from other TUC delegates. The *Newcastle Courant* highlighted the conflict of interest Fenwick and Wilson faced, commenting that there was no such thing as a 'homogenous' Labour movement.¹²³ Fenwick's opposition to the eight hour campaign ultimately resulted in him losing his position as Secretary of the TUC's Parliamentary Committee.¹²⁴

Burt explained to many audiences that the North-Easterners' opposition was not apropos the principle of an eight hour day but how this was best achieved. He preferred that any reduction in hours should be by trade union action rather than legislation. However, the obduracy of Durham and Northumberland miners meant that their younger pitmen in particular, often employed in haulage, were condemned to continue working longer hours than those in most other coalfields. Concerned at this, Burt continued to investigate how their hours could reduce but, without changing the hewers' hours or the shift system, this was impossible and consistently rejected by union members' votes.¹²⁵ In Parliament, Burt, Wilson, and Fenwick opposed Eight Hour Bills in 1892, 1893 and 1897. They clearly explained their opposition in 1892 but kept a lower profile in 1893 and 1897.

¹²⁰ M.J. Daunton, 'Down the Pit: Work in the Great Northern and South Wales Coalfields, 1870-1914, *The Economic History Review*, 34, 4 (1981), 578-597. B. McCormick and J.E. Williams, 'The Miners and the Eight Hour Day, 1863-1910', *The Economic History Review*, 12, 2 (1959), 222-238. *Hansard*, 05 May 1897 vol 48 cc1541-83.

¹²¹ *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 03 Aug, 1892, 5. *Yorkshire Herald*, 20 Jan, 1894, 5. *Reynold's Newspaper*, 09 Dec, 1894, 1.

¹²² *Hansard*, 05 May 1897 vol 48 cc1541-83.

¹²³ *Newcastle Courant*, 10 Sep, 1892, 4.

¹²⁴ *DLB*, 1, 116.

¹²⁵ *NE*, 06 Nov, 1900, 4; *Hansard*, 23 March 1892 vol 2 cc1569-77; Watson, *Leader*, 209-10.

Except for Wilson, who made a few minor points in the later debates, they restricted themselves to voting against the motion – in the same lobby as many coalowners.¹²⁶ Significantly, in 1893, Burt was one of only two members of Gladstone’s government to vote against an Eight Hours Bill, which lapsed because of lack of time. Consequently, he was branded as a traitor to the working classes.¹²⁷ Although he denied it, supporters of the 1893 Bill also accused Wilson of ‘talking it out’.¹²⁸ It is hard to determine whether their advocacy of trade union, rather than legislative measures, was entirely principled, although it is undeniable that local interests determined their actions.

Similarly and unsurprisingly, sectional interests ruled Arch and Doughty’s parliamentary career. Land reform dominated Arch’s political career and will feature in that category. Doughty focussed on the fishing industry, primarily promoting the interests of ship owners. Although some of his speeches concerned the physical protection of fishing vessels and fishermen engaged in disputed Icelandic waters, he was primarily a spokesman for Capital: a premonition of his transfer of political allegiance.¹²⁹

2.3.2 Temperance, gambling and smoking

Temperance issues dominated the political agenda and priorities of Conference, District and local meetings.¹³⁰ A Manchester Synod of 1898 demonstrated this clearly. Uncharacteristically, a Mr G. Windsor urged all Primitive Methodists to abstain from voting for the Liberal candidate in West Staffordshire even though he was a Church official. Contrary to Church policy, the latter had refused to support any measure of temperance reform. Although Windsor did not name this wayward Primitive, the guilty party was one William Adams and his only opponent a Liberal Unionist. Adams, a miner’s son and a friend of Arch, was a wealthy man who had endowed chapels, served as a Circuit Steward and attended Conference several times. A number of delegates complained that Windsor’s request was ‘an unwarrantable interference with the election’ but the Synod reaffirmed its commitment to vote only for those parliamentary candidates who were in harmony with the Church’s support for the local veto and no compensation for brewers or publicans who might lose out by this measure. Adams lost the election.¹³¹ Individual chapels also articulated the importance of temperance to the Connexion. For example, on

¹²⁶ *Hansard*, 23 March 1892 vol 2 cc1557-621, 05 May 1897 vol 48 cc1547, 1582-3.

¹²⁷ Satre, *Conciliator*, 110-11; Watson, *Labour Leader*, 230.

¹²⁸ *Hansard*, 03 May 1893 vol 11 cc 1841-900.

¹²⁹ *JHC*, V151, 200; V152, 17, 288; V153, 79. *Hansard* 09 June 1896 vol 41 cc715-6, 22 June 1896 vol 41 cc1555-6, 09 February 1897 vol 46 cc8-9, 24 May 1898 vol 58 cc544-5, 06 June 1898 vol 58 c720, 30 June 1898 vol 60 cc628-9, 01 July 1898 vol 60 cc809-902, 05 July 1898 vol 60 c1120.

¹³⁰ *PMCM*, 1894, 174, 180. *Leeds Times*, 18 Jun, 1892, 7. *Sheffield Independent*, 20 Jun, 1889; 03 May, 1892,6; 28 Jun, 1897, 62. *Bristol Mercury*, 29 Apr, 1892, 6. *York Herald*, 07 May, 1888,5.

¹³¹ *MG*, 03May, 1898, 3. Also: *PMM*, 1910, 610.

‘Citizen Sunday’ in 1898, 5,000 sermons on the evils of drink broadcast from Primitive Methodist pulpits.¹³² The Church also used its network of national, Districts, Circuits, and chapels to petition Parliament on temperance. In 1891, it presented a petition of 200,000 names in favour of a Sunday Closing Bill of public houses: seeking temperance and Sabbath observance in combination.¹³³ However, despite Primitive Methodists being at the forefront of the temperance movement, total abstinence was never universal among members or local preachers. The histories and minutes of Hull’s Great Thornton Street Circuit demonstrate this. During the 1850s, there was considerable opposition in that Circuit to the establishment of a Band of Hope temperance organisation for children. Furthermore, in 1888 Church officials complained that the drink habit persisted among its membership, including some local preachers.¹³⁴

The Church’s publications echoed Conference by supporting Local Options and the closing of public houses on Sunday while opposing any suggestion of compensation to brewers or publicans. Their rationale for promoting temperance encompassed health issues, the excessive strain drink imposed on impoverished working-class budgets and the violence suffered by family members at the hands of drunken relatives.¹³⁵ Rev. Yooll joined the chorus of disapproval while recognising that the drink habit seized those in poverty because it offered ‘warmth, and society and forgetfulness’.¹³⁶ Opposition to drink could also be a Labour issue. Transcending moral strictures, one *Magazine* editorial opined that alcohol weakened wage-earners’ industrial muscle: the temporary euphoria of drink destroyed ‘independence and creates a social and economic weakness among the working classes, rendering it largely impossible for them to protect and maintain their rights’.¹³⁷ Increasingly Primitive voices advocated state regulation of the drinks trade or even prohibition; antagonism to drink was a major factor in shifting the Church towards a greater acceptance of state intervention and powers.¹³⁸

All the MPs favoured temperance to some degree and most were total abstainers. For the MPs temperance did not assume the priority it did for Connexional Conferences, District meetings and publications. Although Arch considered ‘intemperance’ a great evil among agricultural labourers, rather than total abstinence he urged ‘moderation in the enjoyment of

¹³² *Hartlepool Mail*, 01 Feb, 1898, 4.

¹³³ *MG*, 26 Feb, 1891, 6.

¹³⁴ Minutes of Great Thornton Street Circuit Quarterly Meetings, (Hull History Centre C DCW/88), 17 Mar, 1888. H. Woodcock, *The Hero of the Humber or the History of the Late Mr. John Ellerthorpe*. (London: Primitive Methodist Bookroom, 1880), 29.

¹³⁵ *PMM*, 1887, 64; 1888, 437-8; 1889, 491; 1892, 762; 1895, 910-11; 1898, 316-7. *PMQ*, 1888, 565. *PM*, 12 Jan, 27, 16 Mar, 169-70, 06 Apr, 219 and 223, 27 Apr, 267, 04, 275, 282, 1893.

¹³⁶ *PMQ*, 1892, 438.

¹³⁷ *PMM*, 1892, 762.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1891, 128; 1898, 56.

the drinks of the earth'. He did not sponsor any legislation.¹³⁹ Doughty supported the introduction of two Private Members' Bills aimed at preventing the sale of 'intoxicating liquors on Sunday', although his interest in temperance issues diminished rapidly after he crossed the floor of the House.¹⁴⁰ By contrast, Burt, Crawford, Fenwick, and Wilson were lifelong supporters of the Temperance Movement and, except for Crawford, sponsored temperance Bills.¹⁴¹ Despite his inaction in sponsoring any legislation, Crawford regarded any suggestion of compensation to brewers or landlords affected by temperance measures as 'villainous'.¹⁴² Fenwick expressed the mining MPs' views at a temperance meeting in Newcastle in 1886. He argued that the working classes would be better able to feed their families, even during economic depressions, if they spent as much on bread as they did on strong drink. He quoted statistics suggesting that the British worker spent twice as much on the latter as on the staff of life. If the working classes allocated the £370,000 a day they consumed in alcoholic drinks on shoes, clothes and food for their families, the economy would benefit in addition to their families. As the Parliament of 1886 contained many supporters of the Temperance Movement, Fenwick expected them to 'minimise the evil effects of that trade by placing the power of direct veto in the hands of the people'. Dr Rutherford, chair of the meeting, concluded that Fenwick's oratory and moral force would advance the cause of temperance in Parliament.¹⁴³

In practice, temperance measures made little legislative headway in Parliament and it did not take centre stage in any of the MPs parliamentary careers. Although all voted in support of temperance Bills, they rarely contributed to debate. For example, Wilson only intervened in one debate on the sale of alcohol on Sundays and asked two parliamentary questions on the matter.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, their motives partly derived from their Labour loyalties. By way of example, Fenwick supported legislation for the early closing of public houses on Saturday. However, the Bill aimed to reduce working hours for those engaged in the drinks trade – some of whom worked as many as 123 hours a week and were not unionised. It was not a direct assault against the evils of drink. Fenwick insisted on the necessity of state intervention to reduce the working hours of barmen and barmaids on the same principle that the State already protected women and young persons engaged in dangerous occupations from excessive hours of work. Furthermore, as before, he was

¹³⁹ Arch, *Ploughtail*, 242-3.

¹⁴⁰ *JHC*, V152, 14; V153, 21.

¹⁴¹ Wilson, *Memories*, 205-6; Satre, *Conciliator*, 50-51; Wearmouth, *Twentieth Century*, 111; *JHC*, V143, 41; V144, 13; V145, 12; V146, 8; V147, 19; V148, 89; V149, 96; V150, 15; V151, 20; V152, 14; V153, 21.

¹⁴² *Hartlepool Mail*, 02 Jun, 1888, 3.

¹⁴³ *Wellington Evening Post*, 08 May, 1886, 2.

¹⁴⁴ *Hansard*, 24 March 1886 vol 303 cc1750-68, 20 April 1891 vol 352 cc913-5, 27 February 1893 vol 9 cc530 27 February 1896 vol 37 c1213, 10 February 1897 vol 46 cc 121-123.

concerned that the 27 per cent of their income that the working classes spent on strong drink was an economic folly.¹⁴⁵

Gambling was also considered improvident, while any gains were an undeserved income, bordering on theft.¹⁴⁶ First and foremost the Church encouraged individuals to repudiate gambling.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, calls for legislative solutions were increasing. In 1889, Conference entreated the government to strengthen the existing laws against gambling and to apply them ‘with equal severity against all classes.’¹⁴⁸ The Church applied this even-handed precept in 1891 when it censured the Prince of Wales’s gambling – the basis of the Baccarat Scandal in that year – for the poor example he had set his subjects.¹⁴⁹ Also that year, M.C. protested at the lukewarm parliamentary reception to a proposal for a Royal Commission into betting and gambling ‘by which the unscrupulous make gain out of the weakness and vices of their fellows’.¹⁵⁰

Awarded less prominence than the evils of strong liquor or gambling, smoking was condemned by some Connexional authors as a threat to ‘health, mental force, stature ... thrift, manners, self-mastery, accidents, morals, and character’. Despite this, legislative solutions remained unvoiced, except for the young. Predominantly, the Church discouraged the habit.¹⁵¹ For example, one candidate for the ministry, a smoker, was ‘desired’ to abjure smoking – although he ignored the request and was accepted nonetheless. He was certainly not the only minister addicted to tobacco.¹⁵² During this period, the MPs were not active in promoting legislation related to either gambling or smoking.

2.3.3 Disestablishment and ecclesiastical matters

Conference, District Meetings, and Connexional publications continued to press for disestablishment throughout the United Kingdom, particularly in Scotland and Wales. They were concerned with the growing ritualism of the Church of England and the injustices and disabilities suffered by Nonconformists. Their goal was that of religious equality and the removal of disabilities, including those endured by Roman Catholics.¹⁵³ Significantly, in

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 09 May 1888 vol 325 cc1781-2.

¹⁴⁶ *PMQ*, 1891, 97-113; *PMM*, 1892, 228-30.

¹⁴⁷ *Burnley Express*, 09 Jul, 1892, 6; *Grantham Journal*, 16 Jun, 1894, 9.

¹⁴⁸ *Sheffield Independent*, 20 Jun, 1889, 2;

¹⁴⁹ *PMCM*, 1891, 139; *PMM*, 1891, 512; *Salisbury Times*, 10 Jun, 1891, 7.

¹⁵⁰ *PMM*, 1891, 136. Also: Ibid., 254.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 1889, 121. Also: Ibid., 1893, 23; 1896, 764, 947; 1898, 484.

¹⁵² *Western Times*, 14 Jun, 1887, 6. Also: J. Crump, ‘Charles Booth and the Primitive Methodists’, *PWHS*, 60.2, 2015, 52-3.

¹⁵³ *WDP*, 16 Jun, 1894, 8; *Liverpool Mercury*, 07 May, 1895, 6; *Sheffield Independent*, 08 May, 1895, 7; *Wrexham Advertiser*, 11 May, 1895, 3; *Cambridge Independent Press*, 05 Apr, 1895, 5; *BM*, 22 Nov, 1898, 3; *PMM*, 1887, 63, 253, 255, 573; 1889, 61, 573; 1891, 127, 190, 253-4; 1893, 191, 255-6 and 383; 1894, 319, 398, 473, 480, 550, 557; 1896, 222; 1897, 718.

1897 the *Magazine* accused the Lambeth Conference for being insufficiently committed to temperance or the fair solution of industrial problems, indicating that their objection to the Established Church was not purely liturgical.¹⁵⁴

Arch, Burt, Crawford, Fenwick, and Wilson supported disestablishment, although it was never their priority: none of them sponsored Private Members' Bills in that regard.¹⁵⁵ For Burt, religious debates diverted time and energy from more pressing matters. Although opposed to an Established Church, he had expressed impatience at the amount of Commons time wasted on ecclesiastic issues in 1874, his first year as an MP: 'some of the best weeks and months of the session [were spent] in deciding ... whether a clergyman should stand with his face to the east or to the west, or whether they should have lighted candles upon their altars'.¹⁵⁶ He was even at odds with the Primitive Church regarding one of their religious shibboleths: the sanctity of the Sabbath. In 1882, he had seconded a motion supporting the opening of the National Gallery and the British Museum on Sundays so that the working classes could access their collections.¹⁵⁷ He continued to advocate this principle and practice.¹⁵⁸ This stance may have been due to his occasional attendance at a Unitarian Church and 'detached interest' in Unitarianism as an adult.¹⁵⁹ The Unitarians encouraged 'higher cultural influences' and did not require unswerving 'respect for Old Testament and Sabbath regulations'.¹⁶⁰ During Doughty's service as a Liberal MP, disestablishment and disendowment was 'one of his more settled convictions'. However, according to his obituary in *The Times*, he recanted on this 'and every other item in the Liberal programme' when he joined the Liberal Unionists.¹⁶¹

The MPs involved themselves with other religious matters, although their engagement may have been motivated partly by class interest. For example, Burt and Arch sponsored Bills to overturn the Anglican injunction and legislation forbidding marriage to a dead wife's sister: marriages forbidden by civil and canon law on the grounds that they were incestuous. Consequently, Bills designed to rescind the ban challenged the dogmas of the Established Church and were supported by the Primitive Methodist Church. Repeal Bills appeared on an almost annual basis – a recurrence for which Burt was often responsible – until the successful enactment of the Deceased Wife's Sister's Marriage Act in 1907. Neither Burt nor Arch appear to have spoken in debate on this matter, so their motives are

¹⁵⁴ *PMM*, 1897, 797.

¹⁵⁵ *Leamington Spa Courier*, 09 Jan, 1886, 4; *Hansard*, 21 April 1909 vol 3 cc1525-95; *SDG*, 02 Apr, 1892, 3; *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 24 Feb, 1886, 3; *DLB*, 1, 93.

¹⁵⁶ Quoted in Satre, *Conciliator*, 63.

¹⁵⁷ *Hansard*, 19 May 1882 vol 269 cc1148-90.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 30 April 1896 vol 40 c207.

¹⁵⁹ Watson, *Labour Leader*, 165.

¹⁶⁰ Bebbington, 'Conscience and Politics' in Hüsselbee and Ballard (eds.), *Free Churches*, 50.

¹⁶¹ *The Times*, 28 Apr, 1914, 10.

not clear. However, other proponents of repeal argued that unmarried sisters often contributed to child care in working-class households – sometimes assuming a mother’s role when their sister died. Permitting a man to marry his dead wife’s sister would regularise this arrangement, make the arrangement respectable. The TUC supported repeal on such practical grounds. Furthermore, Burt and Fenwick also supported the introduction of legislation to make the approval of Nonconformist places of worship easier and to remove the requirement for a registrar to attend their weddings. This regulation, which created additional expense and inconvenience for Nonconformists, deterred worshippers from marrying in their own chapel and forced them to wed according to Anglican rites. The disability underlined the lower status of chapel compared to church, Nonconformist to Anglican.¹⁶²

2.3.4 Education

Among the many disabilities still suffered by Nonconformists, educational disadvantage was a significant grievance and continued to cause friction with the Established Church. Conference was particularly concerned that rural Primitive Methodists were still suffering persecution for their Methodist allegiance. In areas where there were no Board Schools, their children had to attend denominational schools and, consequently, the Church complained that many faced prejudice because of their Nonconformist faith.¹⁶³ In the 1890s, contentious Conservative Party attempts to increase state funding for denominational schools hauled education firmly back into the foreground of Primitive politics. Consequently, Conference sought government action to ensure that Board Schools, managed by ratepayers and offering undenominational religious teaching, became the norm and were accessible to all children. They campaigned for teacher training colleges, most of which used a religious test as part of their admission arrangements, to admit trainees from all denominations without prejudice and the government to withhold support grants if they failed to do so. However, any expansion of Board Schools should not impose additional burdens on ratepayers, but be covered by the State. Primitives were encouraged only to support MPs who adopted their principles concerning education, regardless of whether they were Liberals or Conservatives.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Mrs C. Mackenzie, *May a Man Marry His Dead Wife’s Sister?* (London: Hatchard, 1880). A. Kuper, *Incest and influence: The Private Life of Bourgeois England* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2010), 63-80. *JHC*, V141, 18, 86; V142, 12; V143, 13, 31; V144, 13, 31; V145, 13, 215; V146, 19; V147, 28; V148, 26; V149, 34; V152, 14; V153, 19. *Hansard*, 06 May 1884 vol 287 cc1548-94, 18 April 1888 vol 324 cc1605-68, 22 February 1907 vol 169 cc1151-215. *PMM*, 1887, 253-4. *MG*, 01 May, 1893, 6.

¹⁶³ *PMCM*, 1894, 173-4, 182.

¹⁶⁴ *PMM*, 1896, 398-9; *MG*, 18 Jun, 1898, 1; *PMCM*, 1898, 160.

In 1888, the author of the *Quarterly Review's* political notes, listed disestablishment and education as two of the three great questions of the day. (The third was land reform).¹⁶⁵ Most articles in the Connexional press echoed Conference's concerns, although a minority disagreed with Church policy and preferred an entirely secular educational system. However, all contributors supported increased educational opportunities regardless of class or denominational adherence.¹⁶⁶ For example, G.E.B. argued in 1888 for access to a liberal education for all: a 'ladder of opportunity reaching from the humblest cottage to the highest university honours'.¹⁶⁷ Primitives wanted to expand and improve secondary and technical education, teacher training colleges, teacher numbers and their salaries, and the quality of school buildings. Rev. Tolefree Parr expressed one significant reason for this in 1889. He was concerned that the continuing existence of some educational disabilities for Nonconformists – the withholding of BD and DD degrees, theological tutorships, college chaplaincies, academic prizes, and masterships of the Great Public Schools – was compelling some aspirational Primitives to desert the Connexion in favour of the national Church.¹⁶⁸

All the MPs valued education and appreciated the benefits brought by the Elementary Education Act of 1870. Joseph Arch used six pages of his autobiography to express the importance he attached to education, lauding the benefits of the 1870 Act and the 1891 Act that abolished school fees to the agricultural labourer.¹⁶⁹ He wished to see voluntary denominational schools 'swept away from off the face of the earth'.¹⁷⁰ John Wilson, reflecting on the educational opportunities available to the generations born after Forster's Act, quoted Giuseppe Mazzini¹⁷¹, the propagandist for Italian reunification, in the concluding paragraphs of his autobiography:

Without education you are incapable of rightly choosing between good and evil; you cannot acquire a true knowledge of your rights; you cannot attain that participation in political life, without which your complete social emancipation is impossible ... Education is the bread of your soul.¹⁷²

Wilson, Thomas Burt and Charles Fenwick spoke with a congruence of purpose and passion in their support for free and compulsory education in Board Schools. Arguing that direct elections to School Boards were highly democratic, they resisted any suggestion that Local Councils should take responsibility for schools. However, they did not seek the

¹⁶⁵ *PMQ*, 1888, 623.

¹⁶⁶ *PMM*, 1888, 527, 574-5; 1895, 855-9; 1896, 398-9 and 478; 1897, 158; 1898, 52-56.

¹⁶⁷ *PMQ*, 1888, 635.

¹⁶⁸ *PMQ*, 1889, 466-82; *PMW*, 08 Feb, 122, 1897.

¹⁶⁹ Arch, *Ploughtail*, 245-251.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 25-6.

¹⁷¹ Both Fenwick and John Johnson named Mazzini's writing as crucial in their political 'formation': Biagini, *Liberty*, 48.

¹⁷² Wilson, *Memories*, 320-1.

abolition of voluntary schools, only them receiving financial support from the rates or government. Furthermore, they believed that education conferred benefit on both individuals and the nation. They considered that an improved educational system – including better qualified teachers and an expansion to vocational training – would inform democratic processes and enhance Britain’s competitiveness against commercial rivals such as Germany, which already had a more efficient and extensive school systems.¹⁷³ However, Burt’s argument was the one these autodidacts felt most strongly: ‘We say educate a man not simply because he has got political powers ... but educate him because he is a man’.¹⁷⁴ Burt and Fenwick’s later involvement in the National Labour Education League – which promoted a national educational system for ‘every child’ – suggests that Burt’s use of the word ‘man’ was not gender specific.¹⁷⁵

These former miners, some of whom had begun work underground as children, also aspired to raise the school leaving age for subsequent generations of working-class children and to increase that at which they could enter employment. Wilson, supported by Burt and Fenwick, believed these views represented those of their class and their fellow trade unionists, with the possible exception of operatives in Lancashire where opponents of extending educational provision argued that child Labour was vital to family finances. He suggested that, on this issue, the national interest outweighed any local and parental concerns and that some employers who opposed their proposals were merely pursuing cheap child labour.¹⁷⁶

However, there were some areas of disagreement. In line with Church policy, Wilson endorsed unsectarian religious instruction, considering that – in Durham at least – there was no danger of sectarian indoctrination as the chapels were too strong.¹⁷⁷ Speaking at a Primitive Methodist Church Bazaar in 1896, soon after his election to Parliament, Doughty expressed support for School Boards and antagonism to denominational schools. According to the *Hull Daily Mail*, he pitted ‘Nonconformist against Churchman’. The paper advised Doughty to alter his views as Roman Catholic support had helped secure his slim majority at the recent general election. They suggested that, if he voiced similar views in future, Catholic support would evaporate.¹⁷⁸ However, Arch, Burt and Fenwick endorsed an entirely secular school system. Arch argued for secular education during the election of 1885, while Burt and Fenwick (in company with Rev. John Day Thompson, a future

¹⁷³ *Hansard*, 21 February 1890 vol 341 cc895-991, 29 July 1890 vol 347 cc1162, 11 June 1891 vol 354 cc146-7, 20 April 1893 vol 11 cc762-3, 28 May 1895 vol 34 c454.

¹⁷⁴ Quoted in Watson, *Labour Leader*, 104. Also: Wilson, *Memories*, 319-20.

¹⁷⁵ J. Martin, *Women and the Politics of Schooling in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press: 1999), 141.

¹⁷⁶ *Hansard*, 18 June 1891 vol 354 cc803-77. Also: 06 February 1893 vol 8 cc534-5

¹⁷⁷ *PMM*, 1896, 689.

¹⁷⁸ *HDM*, 02 Jan, 1896, 3.

President of Conference) became leading members of the Secular Education Defence League at its foundation in 1907.¹⁷⁹

2.3.5 Military matters

Conferences were consistent in their opposition to militarism and increased expenditure on the armed forces. Delegates regularly called on the government to pursue Britain's international interests by arbitration rather than war, proposing that European governments should pursue mutual disarmament and, in 1893 and 1894, Primitive Methodists combined with a number of other Nonconformist Churches to petition the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in this regard.¹⁸⁰ Chapels and Districts expressed the same sentiments.¹⁸¹ Conference even prohibited Primitive Sunday Schools from forming boys' brigades that taught military drill, a practice delegates considered 'subvertive [sic] of the advocacy of peace'.¹⁸² It is pertinent that, at the same time that the Church was proposing mutual disarmament, they were also seeking recognition by the armed forces so that they could minister to their members who had enlisted.¹⁸³ Furthermore, in common with most denominations, every constituent part of the Primitive Methodist Connexion joined in 'The Nation's Protest' against the persecution of Armenian Christians living in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁸⁴ Typical of Primitive responses to the atrocities, was Stalybridge chapel's:

profound horror and indignation at the continued massacres of the Christian population of Turkey, and assures the government of its cordial support in adopting effective measures, whether separately or in combination with other powers, to save the Armenian population from spoliation, rapine, and murder.¹⁸⁵

Stalybridge Primitives wished to 'stay the hand of the great assassin' [the Ottoman Sultan] and 'end the reign of terror and murder'.¹⁸⁶

The customary mantra of the Connexional press was a promotion of international arbitration as an alternative to armed conflict – the *pacifist* position. Only a small minority of contributors approved of a pure pacifism. One such was an 1886 reviewer of Tolstoy's *What I Believe*, a defence of Christian non-resistance and pacifism.¹⁸⁷ More

¹⁷⁹ Arch, *Ploughtail*, 355-6, 403; Watson, *Labour Leader*, 139; Biagini, *Liberty*, 213; The Pamphlet Collection of Sir Robert Stout, Volume 9: The Secular Education League, 19. Available online: <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Stout79-t9-back-d1.html>. [Accessed 19/2/14].

¹⁸⁰ *NE*, 16 Jun, 1887, 3; *MG*, 16 Jun, 1891, 7; 19 Jun, 1896, 9; *Liverpool Mercury*, 08 Apr, 1892, 5; *PMCM*, 1894, 174; *WDP*, 10 May, 1893, 7; *Gloucester Citizen*, 20 Aug, 1894, 4.

¹⁸¹ *The Times*, 02 Apr, 1889, 6.

¹⁸² *SDT*, 10 Jun, 1890, 5.

¹⁸³ *MG*, 09 Oct, 1891, 7.

¹⁸⁴ *Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough*, 22 Sep, 1896, 4. Also: Bebbington, *Conscience*, 116ff. *Liverpool Mercury*, 07 May, 1895, 6. *Sheffield Independent*, 15 Oct, 1896, 7. *London Daily News*, 09 May, 1895, 7. *PMQ*, 1894, 152-8; 1897, 542.

¹⁸⁵ *MG*, 19 Jun, 1896, 9.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 23 Sep, 1896, 7.

¹⁸⁷ *PM*, 1886, 59.

typical was an article by G.T. that argued for the establishment of formal mechanisms to support international arbitration. Anticipating the League of Nations, he proposed that successful international arbitration would require the apparatus of a High Court of National and International Justice to arbitrate between a 'federation of nations'.¹⁸⁸ Militarism and jingoism were condemned, as were unbridled imperial adventurism.¹⁸⁹ Sometimes a caveat was added. For example, Rev. Edwin Richardson submitted that there was 'little edifying' in Britain's imperial expansion although its record was no worse than other colonizing countries.¹⁹⁰ However, imperial annexations to expand markets, such as the occupation of 'Burmah', were 'a great national sin'.¹⁹¹ In the *Quarterly* of 1896 'Delta' rebuked the Tories for distracting the public from Home affairs by 'exciting their passions against foreign nations' and embarking on military adventures.¹⁹² It is not surprising that Primitive pens condemned the Jameson Raid of 1895-6 and Cecil Rhodes' involvement. Similarly, they considered the unworthy glorification of the raid in verse by the poet laureate (Alfred Austin) to be in poor taste.¹⁹³

In essence, the five new MPs of 1886 followed the *pacifist* advice offered by Rev. John Atkinson, President of Conference, at their celebratory dinner of that year. He anticipated that they would raise their voices against any 'unrighteous war', yet refrain from pleading for 'peace at any price'.¹⁹⁴ All, with the exception of Doughty, who was silent on military issues at this time, were involved in the International Arbitration League (originally called the Workmen's Peace Association). This organisation of Labour activists embraced Atkinson's principles.¹⁹⁵ The most pertinent parliamentary contribution of the MPs during this period was Fenwick's response to the Queen's Speech of 1894. In it, he gave a concise summation of the position held by his fellow MPs:

When we remember the vastness of her dominions, and ... the diversity of the character and temperament of her subjects scattered here, there, and everywhere amongst the nations of the earth, and involving liabilities and responsibilities which may at any moment lead to serious complications and breaches of the peace, we cannot but express our profound congratulations to Her Majesty that her relations with Foreign Powers continue to be amicable and satisfactory. Many people seem to think that working men take no interest in foreign policy or foreign affairs. That is a very great delusion. They take the keenest and the most watchful interest in these things, but I may be permitted to say on their behalf that they are not particularly in love with what is sometimes termed a "Jingo" policy. "Defence, not defiance" is the policy which they approve, and the government may rely upon this - that if there were any attempt to resort to what has been

¹⁸⁸ *PMM*, 1887, 748. Also: *Ibid.*, 1888, 232.

¹⁸⁹ *PMQ*, 1887, 338-40, 763; 1889, 62, 286; 1891, 88-90; 1892, 215; 704; 1894, 479.

¹⁹⁰ *PMQ*, 1886, 674.

¹⁹¹ *PMM*, 1888, 30.

¹⁹² *PMQ*, 1896, 344.

¹⁹³ *PMM*, 1896, 135, 478; *PMQ*, 1896, 536-8.

¹⁹⁴ *PM*, 11 Mar, 148, 1886.

¹⁹⁵ P. Laity, *The British Peace Movement: 1870-1914* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), 73-4, 108-110.

termed a spirited foreign policy, they must calculate at the outset upon this strenuous and most uncompromising opposition from the industrial classes in the country. This, however, is, I think, a contingency most remote.¹⁹⁶

Burt expressed similar sentiments. In 1886, he criticised the annexation of Burma as an unnecessary and costly war of questionable legality.¹⁹⁷ He consistently supported the ‘peaceful adjustment of differences between nations that has been more than once adopted by the Government of this country and carried on successfully for settlement of international differences’. He argued against any alliances with other nations that might involve Britain in costly foreign entanglements.¹⁹⁸

Arch and Fenwick also protested at the financial implications of military adventures. In 1886, Arch complained that unjust wars devoured resources that could have helped alleviate distress in the agricultural districts.¹⁹⁹ In 1889, Fenwick made an impassioned attack on increasing expenditure for the navy. He proposed that a mutual reduction of arms by the nations of Europe was more likely to maintain the peace than any one nation increasing its capability. Furthermore, he suggested that the only districts of the country that would support increased expenditure on the service were those that might benefit from naval contracts. In Fenwick’s estimation, the navy had sufficient resources for commercial defence and additional expenditure was wasteful.²⁰⁰ Yet, in 1898, quoting experiments that demonstrated the effectiveness of a mixture of Welsh and Northumbrian coal to power warships, he asked the First Lord of the Admiralty to consider Northumbrian coalowners’ bids to supply the navy positively. This parliamentary intercession followed Burt and Fenwick advising their local coalowners to lobby the appropriate House of Commons committee to promote the sale of their coal.²⁰¹ Rather than demonstrating hypocrisy, Burt and Fenwick’s promotion of Northumbrian coal to the navy reinforces the proposition that these men were never absolute pacifists and that sectional Labour interests were paramount in their considerations.

The majority of Burt, Fenwick, and Wilson’s parliamentary interventions regarding the military touched on Labour issues. They focused on the pay and conditions of service for workers employed in naval dockyards and barracks. They argued that the government should act as a good employer towards its civilian workforce. Furthermore, Fenwick and Burt were insistent that the armed forces only awarded contracts to companies that met the same criteria

¹⁹⁶ *Hansard*, 12 March 1894 vol 22 cc37-75.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 30 August 1886 vol 308 cc797-873.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 16 May 1892 vol 4 cc984-5.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 14 April 1886 vol 304 cc1582-612.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 20 May 1889 vol 336 cc504-81.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 23 June 1898 vol 59 cc1231-3, 24 June 1898 vol 60 cc30-1; *Newcastle Courant*, 30 Apr, 1898.

and operated transparently.²⁰² Responding to a speech in which striking workers were compared unfavourably with loyal soldiers and sailors, Fenwick suggested that most servicemen enlisted more for economic than patriotic motives. Consequently, they should not receive any more advantages on their return to civilian life as their ‘pensions [already] enabled them to compete unfairly with civilian workmen’.²⁰³

Although conscription did not become an issue until later, there were some indications of the MPs’ views on this matter. As early as 1887, Fenwick opposed enforced militia service in Jersey, arguing that the working classes of that island were strongly opposed to ‘compulsory military service’. The issue would gain prominence for Primitive Methodists and the Labour movement in the years immediately before and during the Great War.²⁰⁴

2.3.6 Ireland and other imperial matters

Although Conference delegates and other official voices of the Church generally supported Home Rule for Ireland, the issue divided Primitive opinion. At the 1886 Conference, ‘a large meeting of delegates’ adopted a resolution unanimously supporting Gladstone’s advocacy of Home Rule and pledged to campaign for his re-election.²⁰⁵ Similarly, the Conference of 1887 overwhelmingly adopted a resolution condemning a Conservative Coercion Bill relating to Ireland, with only six delegates arguing that ‘Conference should not interfere with political questions’. To substantial applause, the President ruled that Home Rule was a matter of Christian principle not ‘party complexion’.²⁰⁶ However, at the Conference of 1893, despite the obvious commitment of many delegates, that year’s President, Rev. J. Stephenson, ruled an attempt to include a resolution on Home Rule on the agenda as out of order. His decision was unpopular and resulted in ‘several cases of insubordination’.²⁰⁷ Similarly, Hull’s Thornton Street Circuit monthly minutes of 1890 revealed the Circuit’s support for the application of the principle of Irish Home Rule to Connexional government. Responding to a proposal to bring the appointment of local preachers under central control:

this being an age tending towards Home Rule, or Local Self Government we therefore reject the proposed legislation believing that the present District Missionary Committee can make better arrangements and take better oversight of the work than can be achieved by the proposed legislation.²⁰⁸

²⁰² *Hansard*, 25 February 1890 vol 341 c1160, 08 August 1890 vol 348 cc281-359, 05 February 1891 vol 350 c7, 06 February 1891 vol 350 cc148-9, 17 March 1892 vol 2 c1067, 16 March 1893 vol 10 cc202-3, 17 March 1896 vol 38 cc1153-4, 25 June 1896 vol 42 cc75-6.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 21 April 1896 vol 39 cc1412-43.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 21 April 1887 vol 313 c1404.

²⁰⁵ *MG*, 17 Jun, 1886, 4.

²⁰⁶ *NE*, 17 Jun, 1887, 3.

²⁰⁷ *MG*, 16 Jun, 1893, 8.

²⁰⁸ Minutes of Great Thornton Street Circuit Quarterly Meetings, (C DCW/ 88), 03 Mar, 1890.

So, support among Primitive Methodists for Home Rule was widespread. One contemporary even suggested that ‘English Gladstonian speakers’ in favour of Home Rule spoke with ‘a Primitive Methodist accent’, suggesting that the Church’s support was exceptionally notable.²⁰⁹ Most Primitive ministers were undoubtedly in favour of Home Rule. During 1892, leading Nonconformist ministers wrote to *The Times*, indicating their support for or opposition to Home Rule. Five Primitive luminaries supported Gladstone, while only one dissented.²¹⁰ Primitive support for Home Rule was substantial but not unanimous. Significantly, one anonymous Primitive Methodist minister who supported the Liberal Unionist position was keen to reassure his co-religionists that there was ‘not a drop of Tory blood in his veins’.²¹¹ Unsurprisingly, Primitive Methodists in Northern Ireland and Australia, both fearful of Catholic domination, were particularly concerned at the implications of the Home Rule Bill and dubbed it the ‘Rome Rule Bill’.²¹²

In the pages of the *Quarterly* of 1887, four Primitive Methodist ministers took part in a symposium on Home Rule and articulated the spectrum of Primitive views. Rev. Wenn adopted a strongly Liberal Unionist position while Rev. Jesse Ashworth – whose allegiance to Liberalism remained firm despite his criticisms on this occasion – considered that the priority given to Home Rule had diverted attention from more pressing issues, causing unnecessary dissension in the progressive and Liberal ranks. He argued that Gladstone should have consulted on the issue before declaring his policy. Rev. W. Antliff and Rev. Atkinson took the orthodox line that, without Home Rule, Ireland would be lost to the Empire.²¹³ However, the *Quarterly*’s editorial view was clear: ‘Home Rule or Coercion are the alternatives, and that there is no third is being slowly driven in upon the intelligence of the English people’.²¹⁴

Notwithstanding, Ashworth was correct to identify the potential dangers to the Liberal vote and the risk of Primitive Methodism’s political allegiance fragmenting. However, *Primitive Methodist World* contrasted Wesleyan desertions to the Liberal Unionists with their own denomination’s continuing loyalty to the Liberals.²¹⁵ Bebbington and Cawood’s research supports this, as does the tenor of many articles in the Church’s publication. The number of Primitive Methodist desertions to the Liberal Unionists and Conservatives was undoubtedly small, even compared to other Dissenting denominations. Bebbington has

²⁰⁹ *Ireland As It Is and As It Would Be Under Home Rule* (Birmingham, Birmingham Daily Gazette, 1893), 12.

²¹⁰ *The Times*, 29 Jun, 8, 1892; 07 Jul, 6, 1892.

²¹¹ *PM*, 1893, 14 Dec, 839.

²¹² *The Argus (Melbourne)*, 20 Apr, 1893, 7. Also: E. Biagini, *British Democracy and Irish Nationalism 1876-1906* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 252.

²¹³ *PMQ*, 1887, 101-126, 290-306, 451-470 and 702-722.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 381.

²¹⁵ *PMW*, 03 Aug, 513, 1893.

suggested that ‘class considerations might push them [Nonconformists] to left or right’ at this time, but ‘Liberalism was still the natural expression of their community life’; class was only one consideration in electoral preference, other influences being anti-Catholic and pro-imperial sentiments. Even so, he showed that, although only a minority of Nonconformists shifted their allegiance from Liberalism, Wesleyans were most likely to vote Unionist in the late Victorian and Edwardian period.²¹⁶ Although the majority of Primitives continued to support the Liberal Party, Home Rule was the cause or occasion of some desertions. In 1894, Ritson commented on how a minority of his congregation were now ‘Tories’; most accepted his political activity as a Liberal, except for one ‘rabid Tory’ who had taken offence and quit the Church over the issue of Home Rule.²¹⁷ However, writing in 1895 Rev. W. Jones Davies ascribed former Liberal Primitive Methodists’ opposition to Home Rule and defection to the Tories as based on class interests, to ‘fear of the people’ rather than to the Irish Question itself. Home Rule was a pretext rather than the root cause for shifts in party political allegiance.²¹⁸ He was partly echoing a fear expressed at the Conference of 1891, that the Church’s ‘wealthier people’ were worshipping Mammon, they forgot ‘the Bible but not the bank book or railway shares’.²¹⁹

The upwardly-mobile George Doughty was the only one of the six MPs to oppose Home Rule and desert the Liberals. He transferred his allegiance to the Liberal Unionists in 1898, ostensibly on the Irish issue. In an obituary of 1914, *The Times*, supporting Jones Davies’ contention that some wealthier Primitives used the issue of Home Rule as a defence of their change in political allegiance, suggested that he did so ‘on no very obvious provocation’. The obituarist proposed that, if Doughty had waited for the outbreak of the South African War, he would have had a ‘more substantial pretext’.²²⁰ In explanation for his defection, Doughty asserted that ‘he owed the radicals nothing’.²²¹ Unsurprisingly, in the light of such comments, but much to Doughty’s obvious chagrin, a Primitive Methodist chapel in Grimsby – which he had helped to build – immediately refused him the use of its schoolroom for election meetings.²²² His involvement with Primitive Methodism did not end immediately, partly because his first wife retained her Primitive allegiance until her death in 1904, but the process had begun.²²³

²¹⁶ D.W. Bebbington ‘Nonconformity and Electoral Sociology, 1867-1918’, *The Historical Journal*, 27, 3 (1984), 633-656. Bebbington estimated that 30 per cent of Wesleyans might have deserted to the Liberal Unionists. Also: I. Cawood, *The Liberal Unionist Party: A History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2102), 53, 173; G.R. Searle, *A New England? Peace and War: 1886-1918* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 143.

²¹⁷ *PMM*, 1894, 459-461.

²¹⁸ *PMQ*, 1895, 716-725.

²¹⁹ *PMCM*, 1891, 163.

²²⁰ *The Times*, 28 Apr, 1914, 10.

²²¹ *HDM*, 18 Jul, 1907, 4.

²²² *Ibid.*, 01 Aug, 1898, 4.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 20 Jun, 1899, 3 and 19 Jan, 1904, 3.

The other Primitive MPs supported Gladstone's Government of Ireland Bill of 1886. By doing so, Arch, Burt, and Fenwick maintained that they were representing the wishes of the majority of the working classes and their constituents who desired justice for Ireland. As Arch and Wilson lost their seats at the election of June 1886, they may have been mistaken in this belief. As a long-time advocate of Home Rule, Burt supported Gladstone's Bill with the proviso that he would not wish to exclude Irish members from St. Stephen's, and – as a Radical – he found the property qualification proposed by the Bill to be distasteful. Meanwhile Fenwick, who insisted that his support for Home Rule was a long-held predisposition and not the result of Gladstone's ability to cast political spells, contended that a measure of self-government was the only way to maintain the union with Ireland. He insisted that coercion, and increasingly draconian criminal legislation that surreptitiously aimed to suppress the Nationalists, had not reduced Irish grievances and never could. Addressing the injustices of British rule in Ireland was the only way of avoiding civil war there and, possibly, war with the United States of America. He was appalled at Lord Randolph Churchill's inflammatory anti-Home Rule speech of February 1886 in Belfast, which he blamed for subsequent Orange riots. Fenwick proposed that the Tories always blamed the Nationalists, not Ulstermen, for all the violence in Ireland. Furthermore, the minority of Ulster Protestants should not determine the future for Ireland's majority.²²⁴ Moreover, in Fenwick's view, Tory Irish policy acted in class rather than national interest. 'It was in keeping with the whole policy and traditions of the Tory Party to undertake to enact laws that would suppress the poor in favour of the rich.'²²⁵

Although Irish issues dominated most of the MPs' interventions, Burt in particular also campaigned against other injustices perpetrated by British imperial rule. In 1888, he was concerned with the importation and exploitation of 'coolie' labour to Jamaica.²²⁶ Similarly, in 1890, at a public meeting in Newcastle, he spoke against the British opium trade from India to China: a profitable venture that the government of India endorsed but the Primitive Methodist Conference found abhorrent and continued to criticise until its abolition in 1913. Burt seconded a motion calling on the government to ban the trade, insisting that no 'considerations of revenue should be allowed to interfere with righteous legislation'.²²⁷ The following year he acted as an advocate for the native population of India, exposing instances of British misgovernment in India. He contended that the government's refusal to reduce or remit recently increased rents exacerbated serious problems occasioned by famine and drought. Unsurprisingly, he continued, this indifference resulted in protests and

²²⁴ *Hansard*, 12 April 1886 vol 304 cc1316-416, 13 April 1886 vol 304 cc1439-550, 25 May 1886 vol 306 cc40-126, 07 June 1886 vol 306 cc1145-245, 03 September 1886 vol 308 cc1228-80, 22 March 1887 vol 312 cc1154-221, 27 April 1887 vol 314 cc105-48. *Spectator*, 14 Aug, 1886, 4.

²²⁵ *Hansard*, 27 April 1887 vol 314 cc1042. Also: Biagini, *British Democracy*, 53, 59, 69-70, 72.

²²⁶ *Hansard*, 26 November 1888 vol 331 c141.

²²⁷ *Newcastle Courant*, 25 Oct, 1890, 5; *PMCM*, 1894, 180; 1913, 252.

demonstrations, which British troops suppressed with injury to persons, the looting of houses and desecration of a temple.²²⁸ Nevertheless, despite these intercessions to promote just and moral dealings with colonial peoples, Burt considered the British Empire to be generally 'beneficent' although blemished in part.²²⁹

2.3.7 Land and landowners

The strength of Primitive Methodism was in the villages of England, and, consequently, rural issues were of great importance to the Church. Rural poverty caused agricultural labourers to emigrate from the land to town or to the colonies, and this affected the Connexion's numerical strength.²³⁰ While the Free Church in Scotland and Welsh Nonconformists in general defended the interests of the crofter or agricultural labourer, in England the Primitive Methodists were among their most prominent advocates.²³¹ This does not deny that land reform was of significance to other denominations, such as the Baptists and Congregationalists.²³² However, land reform was considered essential to rural Primitives' well-being, even for the Church's survival. The issue surfaced conspicuously at Conference in 1891. In that year, to applause and cheers, Conference President, Rev. Joseph Ferguson, exhorted delegates to confront the social evils of the age: the poverty of the 'struggling masses', and the 'exodus' from the land. The 'root of the evil' was that 'the land [was] treated as the property of one class'. Until that was changed, there would always be 'brutishness and ignorance, misery and starvation'.²³³ A number of prominent ministers were also particularly vociferous in advocating reform to wider audiences. Rev. John Day Thompson was reported to have declared 'that no permanent good could result from social legislation until society recognised and dealt with the root of the social evil, the Land Question.'²³⁴ Rev. Hugh Gilmore, albeit while in Australia, was even accused of using his radical views on land reform to attract adherents to his Church.²³⁵

The principal solution proposed by contributors to Church publications was the reform of primogeniture and entail, facilitating the easier transfer of land. In addition, they advocated fair rents, security of tenure, ensuring that tenants received compensation for

²²⁸ *Hansard*, 17 February 1891 vol 350 cc835-6, 19 February 1891 vol 350 cc1058-9, 13 March 1891 vol 351 c918.

²²⁹ *Newcastle Daily Leader*, 11 Dec, 1897, 6. Quoted in Satre, *Conciliator*, 116.

²³⁰ Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Struggle*, 103-5; *PMCM*, 1896, 183-4.

²³¹ R. Brown, *Society and Economy in Modern Britain: 1700-1850* (London: Routledge, 1991), 224-5. D.W. Howell, 'The Regions and Their Issues: Wales' in G.E. Mingay (ed.), *The Victorian Countryside*, Vol 1, (London: RKP, 1981), 71-80.

²³² *DGM*, 04 Oct, 1892, 3; *Edinburgh Evening News*, 04 Oct, 1892, 5; *Western Times*, 08 Nov, 1905, 3; Bebbington, *Conscience*, 56-7.

²³³ *MG*, 11 Jun, 1891, 6.

²³⁴ C.H. Spence, *Ever Yours: Cathleen Helen Spence's Autobiography, Diary and Some Correspondence* (Kent Town, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 2005), 177.

²³⁵ *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), 11 Nov, 1891, 6.

improvements, and the provision of allotments to agricultural labourers. A model landowner, according to an 1891 editorial in the *Magazine*, was Lord Tollemache, who only evicted a tenant once, provided model dwellings for his labourers with three acres of land, and built schools for their children.²³⁶ However, some Primitives backed more radical solutions. They were sympathetic to the total or partial nationalisation of the land. Revs. Gilmore and Ritson, who accepted this solution in theory, acknowledged that a realistic timescale was required to restructure the ownership of land – perhaps two or three generations. Pragmatically, they proffered graduated death, income, and land taxes as ways of effecting a measured redistribution of capital and land.²³⁷ Although there were shades of Primitive opinion, all commentators on the Land Question shared Goldsmith’s sentiment, quoted by Ritson, that ‘ill fares the land ... where wealth accumulates’. They had no sympathy with those ‘who toil not, neither do they spin’. Ritson also expressed a view with which there were no dissenters in the pages of Church publications: landowners should not receive mineral rights for those resources found under their land.²³⁸

The Land Question was of central importance to Arch when leader of the agricultural labourers and, later, as an MP. He devoted his maiden speech of 1886 to it. In that speech, he denied Tory accusations that he advocated land nationalisation. He opposed Socialist solutions to the problem of rural poverty but insisted that relieving poverty from ‘the poor rates’ was also inappropriate.²³⁹ Instead Arch supported repealing the laws of primogeniture and entail and bringing uncultivated land into use, rather than endorsing land nationalisation (except, possibly, as a long-term goal).²⁴⁰ He also promoted the repeal of the game laws in favour of the labourer and improvements to rural housing. However, he devoted most of his parliamentary energies to the provision of allotments for agricultural labourers. Arch backed awarding local councils the power to purchase land intended for this purpose.²⁴¹ The provision of allotments would:

Release [the labourer] from the grindstone of poverty; give them a fair field to labour in, and no favour. They did not want to rob landlords...The movement contained and gathered force in favour of nationalisation of land, but this demand of the labourers was immediate.’

²³⁶ *PMM*, 1891, 128.

²³⁷ *PM*, 25 Jan, 57-8, 1886. *PMQ*, 1886, 44-8, 132-9, 187, 250-8, 440-46, 648-91; 1891, 383; 1892, 67-83, 333; 1893, 456, 600-17; 1897, 388. *PMM*, 1891, 128; 1894, 479.

²³⁸ *PMQ*, 1892, 71.

²³⁹ *Hansard*, 26 January 1886 vol 302 cc483-8.

²⁴⁰ Arch, *Ploughtail*, 403-4; E. E. Barry, *Nationalisation in British Politics: The Historical Background* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1965), 64-5.

²⁴¹ Arch, *Ploughtail*, 145-173, 270-1, 342-5 *JHC*, V141, 18; V142, 15, 69; V143, 13; V144, 12; V145, 15; V146, 8; V147, 32; V148, 105, 639; V150, 18 and 40. *Hansard*, 26 January 1886 vol 302 cc443-530, 14 April 1886 vol 304 cc1603-4, 21 May 1886 vol 305 cc1780-92, 22 November 1893 vol 18 cc1473-524, 28 November 1893 vol 18 cc1986, 01 December 1893 vol 19 cc302-4, 05 December 1893 vol 19 cc566-7, 08 January 1894 vol 20 cc1035-131. Also: Horn, *Arch*, 157-160, 179-181, 192; J. Burchardt, *The Allotment Movement in England: 1793-1873* (London: Royal Historical Society, 2002), 212.

Arch warned that, without the palliative of allotments, the demand for more radical measures would increase.²⁴² However, his protestations that he personally opposed nationalisation of the land did not prevent *Punch* from implying that he and NALU intended to despoil landowners by force.²⁴³ He had fuelled this fear during his first year as an MP when he spoke five times in a debate opposing and criticizing a Conservative MP's Bill that promoted allotments but did not make provision compulsory. Arch derided the Bill as 'flimsy' and 'worthless'.²⁴⁴ However, he faced antagonism from some of his own union members who ascribed his negative approach and disregard for the labourers' interests, to securing party advantage.²⁴⁵ Although Arch defended his opposition on matters of principle, there could be some justification in the charge against him. His antagonism towards Tories, based on the effects of the Corn Laws that he experienced as a child, was expressed frequently in his autobiography: 'the Tories ... caused the iron to enter [his] soul very young, and you will never draw it out, it will remain there till I die'.²⁴⁶

Arch also campaigned to ensure that charities established to assist the rural poor served their intended recipients. To this purpose, the NALU published details of these bodies for the use of their members.²⁴⁷ Arch's final intervention in Parliament was to question to whether charitable funds intended for that purpose had been awarded to denominational schools. The minister's answer implied that a significant allocation had found its way into the support of Church schools – a double insult to the Primitive Methodist MP.²⁴⁸

The miners' MPs, particularly Fenwick and Burt, also supported legislation to provide allotments and other elements of land reform. Burt joined Arch and the Unitarian MP Jesse Collings in sponsoring the Allotments and Small Holding Bill of 1886.²⁴⁹ Burt was not against the principle of land nationalisation but argued that, to do so without compensation to the current landowners, would 'shake society to its foundations'. He also doubted that the Victorian State had the resources to manage such a large undertaking. Small-scale experiments should take place to test the efficacy of such a solution to the Land Question. In the meantime, he campaigned for reform of the laws of primogeniture and entail and the facilitation of land transfer. Burt was as concerned with the concentration of land in too few hands as with the opposite – both could be deleterious to the efficiency of

²⁴² *Hansard*, 01 December 1893 vol 19 cc300-04.

²⁴³ *Punch*, 17 Sept, 1887, 129.

²⁴⁴ *Hansard*, 21 May 1886 vol 305 cc1780-92.

²⁴⁵ Horn, *Arch*, 180-1.

²⁴⁶ Arch, *Ploughtail*, 10. Also: *Ibid.*, 60, 146, 201, 311, 356-7, 369, 379, 386, 388 and 390.

²⁴⁷ Horn, *Arch*, 159-60.

²⁴⁸ *Hansard*, 31 May 1894 vol 25 c27.

²⁴⁹ *Hansard*, 26 January 1886 vol 302 cc443-530. *Brisbane Courier*, 29 Apr, 1886, 3. Watts, *Dissenters III*, 237,

agriculture.²⁵⁰ However, in relation to issues of land ownership, Burt was mainly aggrieved at the requirement to pay royalties to landowners under whose property minerals lay. In his view, such payments were undeserved and increased the cost of coal and iron production, rendering British coal and iron uncompetitive.²⁵¹ Fenwick made similar arguments in Parliament, devoting his maiden speech of 1886 to sponsor a resolution on mining royalties. Fenwick's co-sponsor, Stephen Mason, proposed that a more equitable distribution of mining royalties would benefit the coal industry, that the landowners had a monopoly in breach of the principle of Free Trade. Fenwick finessed the argument:

Providence has made our beloved country to teem with mineral wealth ... and I regret that we have for so long looked upon this mineral wealth, this natural wealth that was undoubtedly placed there to minister to the comfort and happiness of the people, that it should be regarded by this country ... as the property of individuals.²⁵²

Debating a proposal of 1896 to reduce taxes paid by landlords, Fenwick opposed on the grounds that a contemporary depression in the coal trade – which had resulted in mine closures and unemployment – was partly a consequence of the coalowners' obligation to pay mining royalties to undeserving landowners.²⁵³ Despite Burt and Fenwick's strength of feeling, Wilson was the only one to support nationalisation of the land and the minerals beneath: for Socialists, the only logical solution to the Land Question.²⁵⁴

Other rights and privileges of the land-owning class vexed Arch, Wilson and Burt. A grievance that particularly rankled was a landowner's archaic right to take any ground game on all his property, even when it was found in a labourer's garden. The squierarchy's enforcement of the game laws could be 'unyielding and vindictive' and the poacher even perceived as 'heroically evading the cruel heel of authority'.²⁵⁵ For example, Wilson approved of how his father 'believed that game, be it bird or beast, was not the special monopoly of one class ... the right of property was with the man who caught the creature.'²⁵⁶ Burt concurred.²⁵⁷ The game laws so grieved Arch that he devoted 29 pages of his autobiography to them. Before and after his election as an MP, Arch campaigned against the landowners' unjust monopoly on game. The game laws subjected working men and women suspected of poaching to inappropriate restrictions of liberty and indecorous interference by the police. More so, they were impracticable in preventing game damaging

²⁵⁰ *PMQ*, 1886, 440-6

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Also: *JHC*, V142, 13.

²⁵² *Hansard*, 14 May 1886 vol 305 cc1113-42.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 29 April 1896 vol 40 cc136-8.

²⁵⁴ Barry, *Nationalisation*, 75, 111-2. *JHC*, V149, 106; V151, 22. H. Fawcett, *State Socialism and the Nationalisation of the Land* (London: Macmillan, 1883), 3-4.

²⁵⁵ R. Lee, *Rural Society and the Anglican Clergy 1815-1914: Encountering and Managing the Poor* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 115.

²⁵⁶ Wilson, *Memories*, 56.

²⁵⁷ Watson, *Labour Leader*, 139.

labourers' cottage gardens or allotments. Although he considered that the Game Act of 1880 – which allowed occupants to kill wild rabbits and hares – had blunted the unfairness, it was mere 'tinkering at a worn-out kettle' since it exempted game birds from its provision. Arch sought the total abolition of game laws.²⁵⁸ For Arch, the country squire still 'lorded it feudally over his tenants'.²⁵⁹

At a local level, the power of the squire and parson still rankled – even to those Primitives living in towns. For example, J.G. Hall – a Liberal Councillor and local preacher in Hull – was noted for his 'denunciation of Tory parsons and squires'.²⁶⁰ Councillor Hall's prejudices were shared by many Primitives. In 1893, the Church Stretton Quarterly meeting of 1893 complained of the dominance of village life by and 'persecution from squire and parson'.²⁶¹ Also that year, Brinkworth District supported the establishment of parish councils and, in a letter to *Primitive Methodist*, urged others to do the same – a request the paper endorsed. In addition to promoting such bodies as vehicles for greater working-class participation in local government, they were a means of wresting the operation of charities and other powers from the squire and parson.²⁶² Rev. M.P. Davison even suggested that the operation of parish councils would make rural life more agreeable for the village labourer and discourage migration to the towns and colonies.²⁶³

As ever the exception, even when he was a Liberal MP, Doughty does not appear to have taken any interest in land reform.

2.3.8 Women's suffrage and related issues

The Church supported female suffrage, although women continued to occupy a subsidiary role in Connexional government. They were employed as local preachers, yet there were no women ministers. Many acted as Sunday school teachers, but all delegates to the Annual Conference were male. However, several prominent Primitives regretted this and promoted change. They used the columns of the Church's publications to support an enhanced role for women in the Church, society and work and, although their proposals differed in degree and extent, some supported full citizenship on equal terms with men.²⁶⁴ As many articles in the Connexion's publications were anonymous or their authors identified only by initials, it is hard to be certain, but women themselves do not seem to have

²⁵⁸ Arch, *Ploughtail*, 145-173.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 34-5.

²⁶⁰ *HP*, 09 Oct, 1885, 5.

²⁶¹ *PM*, 14 Dec, 828, 1893.

²⁶² *PM*, 13 Apr, 226, 20 Apr 20, 251 and 27 Apr, 266, 1893: *PMQ*, 1893, 534-40.

²⁶³ *PMQ*, 1893, 534-40.

²⁶⁴ *PMM*, 1887, 28-31; 1891, 283-4; 1894, 77-8, 594; 1896, 490-8. *PMQ*, 1888, 505; 1895, 538, 724; 1896, 490-8; 1898, 282-3. *PM*, Feb 23, 117, 1893

contributed to any of the Connexional publications at the beginning of this period. However, by the mid-1890s they were beginning to author articles. One such was an 1895 profile of Lady Aberdeen, written by Evelyn Ingleby. Its subject was also significant:

Lady Aberdeen is an ardent supporter of the movement for the extension of the franchise to women, firmly believing that such a consummation is in the near future and will be found to work incalculable good for all classes of society, and that it will specially raise the status, intelligence and ability of women.²⁶⁵

Furthermore, in March 1897, *Primitive Methodist World* celebrated the academic success of Kate Hebbelwhite, a minister's daughter who had passed the Cambridge Senior Exam and gained a first class certificate. A month earlier, the paper had approved the successful second reading of a Women's Suffrage Bill.²⁶⁶

Indeed, despite women's lesser role in the Church, the Connexional papers supported women's suffrage. Rev. John Day Thompson was one of its most prominent ministerial advocates. In 1886, he contended that there was nothing 'in the root principles of New Testament teaching to forbid, but rather everything to favour, the political emancipation and advance of women'. Thompson preferred universal suffrage but acknowledged that an extension of the suffrage to property owning women might be more practicable. He suggested that only the vote and the participation of women as local and national politicians would allow them to redress their unequal access to education and the double standards of contemporary divorce laws. Although he concurred with a view held by some Liberals that women were more conservative and inclined to jingoism than men, he insisted that, 'taking her all in all, woman will exercise on the politics of the future a refining, elevating, and purifying influence which man's selfishness has so far long defrauded her'.²⁶⁷

The MPs all supported female suffrage and other issues related to women's well-being. For example, Fenwick and Wilson sponsored the unsuccessful Midwives' Registration Bill of 1897, which aimed at reducing the 'suffering and death...needlessly inflicted on both women and children of the so-called working classes through the want of medical training amongst those practising as midwives'.²⁶⁸ Furthermore, the trade union MPs supported legislation to reduce women's working hours, Arch objected to women toiling in fields and the mining MPs to their employment in collieries. A number of organisations promoting women's rights, such as the Society for the Employment of Women, considered their opposition inimical to

²⁶⁵ *PMM*, 1895, 371-4.

²⁶⁶ *PMW*, 11 Feb, 101 and 04 Mar, 164, 1897. It is worth noting that the Church ran a Ladies' College in Clapham from 1874-1881 or 1887 for the education of 'the daughters of our preachers and friends'. It offered preparation for qualifications accredited by the Royal College of Preceptors and Cambridge Local Examinations: D.E. Graham, *Three Colleges: Primitive Methodist Secondary Educational Ventures* (Englesea Brook: Eighth Chapel Aid Lecture, 1998), 24-30.

²⁶⁷ *PMQ*, 1886, 546. Also: P. Hollis, *Women in Public, 1850-1900: Documents of the Victorian Women's Movement* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1979 and 2013), 282.

²⁶⁸ *JHC*, 152, 59.

women's best interests. The trade unionists' antipathy to women working, at least in some occupations, was based on a melange of male occupational interest and moralistic concern. Arch openly articulated the fear that working women presented a threat to the level of male wages. In 1891, to counter such a danger and to satisfy the demands of natural justice, Burt urged the TUC to support equal pay for women where they did work. However, he considered coal mines too dangerous a workplace for women. In addition, he contended that a collier's life imposed particularly arduous domestic duties on their wives – burdens necessarily borne by his wife if the pitman's family were to survive. The miners' leaders also held Methodist inspired concerns that 'pit lasses' were exposed to immoral behaviours and coarse language at work.²⁶⁹ Yet, when the opportunity arose, Arch, Burt, Fenwick, and Wilson, voted for the extension of the suffrage to women in both local and national elections. Burt, co-sponsor of the 1892 Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill, was a prominent campaigner for female suffrage in and out of Parliament, continuing to chair or address public meetings on the issue. Wilson also sponsored a Bill promoting women's suffrage, while Fenwick campaigned for both sexes to enjoy equal rights in divorce proceedings.²⁷⁰ All the MPs supported the Parliamentary Franchise (Extension to Women) Bill of 1897, although Doughty voted in favour of further discussion before the Bill was sent to committee.²⁷¹

2.3.9 Other suffrage and constitutional issues

Women's suffrage was only one of the suffrage and constitutional issues that engaged Primitive Methodists. It offers only a partial picture of Primitive Methodists' efforts to extend democracy at both a local and national level. At a national level, to enable greater working-class parliamentary representation, Fenwick (assisted by Burt) took the lead in promoting legislation to introduce payment for Members of Parliament, a campaign that was unsuccessful until 1911. Fenwick argued that, without this innovation, British democracy could not function fully in accordance with the widening of the electorate in 1884. He noted that several other countries already paid their elected representatives. Furthermore, as Ministers of the Crown already received payment, as did some MPs who remained on the Army List, precedents existed. By opening up the Legislature to a wider pool of talent, to individuals able to represent a much wider range of occupations, constituents and interests,

²⁶⁹ *Hansard*, Deb 03 March 1886 vol 302 cc 1849-70, 03 June 1886 vol 306 cc826-7, 07 June 1886 vol 306 cc1124-5, 13 March 1890 vol 342 cc703-4. 03 February 1897 vol 45 cc1173. Horn, *Arch*, 80; Satre, *Conciliator*, 56-8. *PMQ*, 1889, 64. D. Rubinstein, *Before the Suffragettes: Women's Emancipation in the 1890s* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986), 110-29 for working women and trade unions' attitudes.

²⁷⁰ *JHC*, V147, 16, 20; V148, 329. *Portsmouth Evening News*, 03 July, 1890, 3.

²⁷¹ *Hansard*, 03 February 1897 vol 45 cc1173.

government would improve.²⁷² Fenwick dealt firmly with the class assumptions of opponents:

England being a wealthy country, with a large leisured class, larger probably than any other country in Europe, [they believed] therefore that class should be endowed with the privilege of legislating for all other classes in the community. To this I can only say it is a doctrine which, however it may commend itself to some minds, is sadly out of date in these democratic days ... Intelligence in every class must rule, and [if MPs were paid] the highest intelligence will undoubtedly find its way into this House.²⁷³

To refuse this change was ‘ridiculous ... it was a pernicious doctrine to prevent poor men from coming into the House. The entrance of such men would be beneficial to all classes, and would strengthen the confidence of the people in the Legislature’.²⁷⁴

All the MPs promoted further extension of the electorate. Doughty sponsored a Bill intended to permit fishermen, often absent at sea during elections, to vote.²⁷⁵ Arch, Burt, Crawford, Fenwick, and Wilson also campaigned for the widest possible interpretation of the householder franchise, so that agricultural labourers and miners living in tied accommodation were able to vote. On the same principle, that all classes should be able to take an active part in democratic processes, they proposed the abolition of property qualifications for magistrates. They also supported other measures to increase local democracy and the powers of local government – such as the authority to operate their own tramways.²⁷⁶

The MPs’ attitude to the royal family was another expression of their commitment to democratic and egalitarian principles. They verified Conferences’ assertion of Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee year that Primitive Methodists were ‘not blindly loyal’.²⁷⁷ Burt and Fenwick consistently condemned excessive public expenditure on the monarchy and their families, views they voiced clearly during a debate of 1889 regarding a request for increased government grants to support Victoria’s children. Burt bluntly stated that parents, including Royal ones, should make provision for their children and not expect the State to do so. He contended that the nation was loyal to the Crown but that loyalty could be strained unless the Royal family set a good example ‘of sensible housekeeping and of wise expenditure of money’. He suggested that republican feeling was often ‘a protest against

²⁷² *Hansard*, 06 July 1888 vol 328 cc631-80, 29 March 1889 vol 334 cc1179-22, 25 March 1892 vol 2 cc1885-930; *JHC*, V146, 11.

²⁷³ *Hansard*, 25 March 1892 vol 2 cc1891.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 06 July 1888 vol 328 cc635.

²⁷⁵ *JHC*, V166, 105.

²⁷⁶ *Hansard*, 26 July 1888 vol 329 c549, 11 March 1889 vol 333 cc1388-9, 13 March 1889 vol 333 cc1549-51, 03 March 1893 vol 9 c969. *JHC*, V142, 16 and 17; V143, 97; V144, 13, 37; V145, 13; V146, 8; V148, 14 and 434; V149, 25; V150, 25.

²⁷⁷ *PMCM*, 1887, 130

the artificial distinctions, the social inequalities, and the extravagance prevailing in high places'.²⁷⁸ Similarly, representing his union's views, Fenwick complained that:

some of us who are more intimately associated with the working classes have from time to time made application to the Government to spend money in the payment of factory, workshop and mine inspectors, and our applications have been met by the Government with direct refusal. It is because you will not recognise the claims which the working classes have upon the Treasury; it is because you will not take proper means to provide for their safety, that the working classes are so strongly opposed—at least it is one of the reasons—to an increase of the Royal Grants.²⁷⁹

2.4 Heresy?

Towards the end of this period, the Church conducted its only heresy trial – an occurrence that confirms the Church's increasing acceptance of a social gospel. In 1894 John Day Thompson published a sermon in which he promoted a liberal theology, arguing that ministers must go beyond preaching the 'Simple Gospel' alone; furthermore, he contended that the pulpit must also respond to serious social questions – what was later called the 'Social Gospel'. Two previous principals of the Church's Theological Institution used the pages of *Primitive Methodist World* to charge him with heresy.²⁸⁰ By contrast, several important figures in the Church, such as Dr John Watson, President of Conference in 1895, and the theologian A.S. Peake, rallied to Thompson's side. Significantly, Watson's daughter commented that: 'Mr Thompson's views were advanced but not more so than were those of many of our ministers'.²⁸¹ Both the General Committee of 1895 and the Conference of 1896 rejected the charge by an overwhelming majority.²⁸² When Thompson died in 1919, the *Primitive Methodist Leader* described the accusation of heresy as nothing but a 'dummy bomb' planted by the 'ultra-orthodox' and, subsequently, Thompson's theological views were so commonplace that 'one recalls with a smile to-day the time when he was regarded as "a dangerous heretic."'²⁸³ The failed attempt to eject Thompson from the Primitive Methodist Connexion, a rear-guard action by a conservative rump, illustrates the Church's increasing acceptance that the gospel of individual salvation also implied a firm commitment to social justice. This acceptance stemmed from a mixture of religious conviction and a need to embrace issues that appealed to and facilitated their mission to the lower classes: 'to retain their affection'.²⁸⁴ The Church's political agenda

²⁷⁸ *Hansard*, 29 July 1889 vol 338 cc1584-684. Also: 30 July 1874 vol 221 cc978-9, 08 July 1875 vol 225 cc1145-58, 15 July 1875 vol 225 cc1509-26, 31 July 1878 vol 242 cc778-804. *Satre, Conciliator*, 68-69.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 29 July 1889 vol 338 cc1584-684

²⁸⁰ Lysons, *Little Primitive*, 140.

²⁸¹ Watson's daughter, Annie, wrote an account of her father's life, parts of which were published in the *PMM* during 1924. Available online: finitas.org/Watson/RevJohnDD/JWbookCh7.html. [Accessed 8/04/15].

²⁸² Lysons, *Little Primitive*, 140; *NE*, 21 Jun, 1895, 4.

²⁸³ *PML*, 24 Apr, 215, 1919.

²⁸⁴ *PMM*, 1893, 660.

combined their variety of Christian ethics with a perception of their adherents' and their own existential needs. Although individual Primitives differed in their solutions to social problems, all agreed that progressive policies were best advanced through parliamentary democracy. For most Primitives this implied allegiance to the Liberal party, although that view was becoming less pervasive and persuasive for some.

Chapter Three: 'The social lot of the people must be improved': 1899-1913

3.1 Introduction

As the new century beckoned, the outbreak of the Boer War and Tory proposals to reform education drew Primitive Methodists into political agitation to an unprecedented extent. Furthermore, the Church increasingly emphasised its mission to save the people, not only from sin, but also from industrial, social, and economic exploitation. Although the precedence awarded to individualism or state intervention remained contested, the latter approach was increasingly acceptable to Primitives as a salve to redress the inequities of Landlordism and Capitalism. Loyalty to the Liberal Party persisted as the Church's primary secular allegiance. However, the Liberals' failure to repeal and replace the 1902 Education Act, which provided state funding for denominational schools, in combination with Labour issues, shifted some Primitives towards independent Labour representation. The Church's first Labour MPs were elected. Furthermore, a number of the trade union MPs were obliged to become Labour Party members consequent to their unions affiliating – an involuntary and unwelcome change of political allegiance for some. Others, usually a younger generation, no longer considered Liberalism or its exponents able or willing to represent working people and accommodate their increasingly collectivist views. Regardless of their diverging party allegiance and disagreements regarding the eight hour day and the minimum wage, co-operation was typical of the Church's MPs. Also, irrespective of their party allegiance, the Church was proud of those Primitive Methodists who were 'chosen to voice the aspirations of the working classes in the Parliament of the nation'.¹ By contrast, Doughty's political apostasy ultimately resulted in the Church denying any connection with him. Correspondingly, although a minority of Primitives supported the Conservatives, the Church and its publications consistently voiced an antagonism to Toryism.

Education was a significant catalyst to Primitive political involvement, although the political causes it embraced overlapped and merged. Primitive opposition to the 1902 Education Act transcended matters of religious education alone: it contained a desire to break the power of squire and parson while advancing local and national democracy. Similarly, in addition to addressing social and economic evils, the People's Budget and the Parliament Act were considered the first steps towards destroying feudalism's remnants and paving the way for full democracy. While the Church and its MPs were *pacifists*, rather than absolute pacifists, and divisions occurred regarding the causes and conduct of the Boer War, Primitives were mostly critical of that conflict. Indeed, some of the MPs endured significant hostility for their objections to the War, even if their complaints were specific and pragmatic rather than unconditionally anti-war. Similarly, Primitives'

¹ *PMCM*, 1907, 16-17.

commitment to industrial peace was neither inconsequential nor feeble; they always preferred to reduce strife by conciliation or, if necessary, formal arbitration. Individual male and female members recognised that the Church discriminated against women within its government and ministry, yet support for women's suffrage and extended educational opportunities was unquestioned. Women's position and roles within the family and Church expanded, although opposition to the employment of married women remained.

The chapter follows a similar organisation to its predecessor. It concludes with a brief summary of how some of the Church's hymns conveyed the essence of its politics: 'God Save the People'.

Primitive Methodist MPs referred to in this chapter

Those who served during 1899-1913:

Joseph Arch: 1885-6 and 1892-1900, Norfolk, Liberal#
Thomas Burt: 1874-1918, Northumberland, Liberal*
George Doughty: 1895-1914, Lincolnshire, Liberal to Liberal Unionist
Enoch Edwards: 1906-12, Staffordshire, Liberal to Labour*
Charles Fenwick: 1885-1918, Northumberland, Liberal*
William E. Harvey: 1907-14, Derbyshire, Liberal to Labour*
James Haslam: 1906-13, Derbyshire, Liberal to Labour*
John Johnson : 1904-10, Durham, Liberal to Labour*
Barnet Kenyon: 1913-29, Derbyshire, Liberal*
Horace Mansfield: 1900-10, Lincolnshire, Liberal
Levi Morse: Wiltshire, Liberal, 1906-10
William Parrott: 1904-5, Yorkshire, Liberal*
Arthur Richardson: 1906-10, Nottingham/Nottinghamshire, and 1917-18, Yorkshire, Liberal#
Thomas Richardson: 1910-18, Cumberland, Labour*
David Shackleton: 1902-10, Lancashire, Labour#
Albert Stanley: 1907-16, Staffordshire, Liberal to Labour*
John W. Taylor: 1906-19, Durham, Labour*
John Wilson: 1885-6 and 1890-1915, Durham, Liberal*

Others who served at a later date:

Joseph Batey: 1922-42, Durham, Labour*
John Cairns: 1918-23, Northumberland, Labour*
Thomas Cape: 1918-45, Cumberland, Labour*
William Carter: 1918-22, Nottinghamshire, Labour*
Thomas Casey: 1918-22, Yorkshire, Liberal*
George Edwards: 1920-24, Norfolk, Labour#
Thomas Fenby: 1924-9, Yorkshire, Liberal
Samuel Finney: 1916-22, Staffordshire, Labour*
Vernon Hartshorn: 1918-31, Glamorgan, Labour*
Alfred Hill: 1922-23, Leicester/Leicestershire, Labour#
Frank Hodges: 1923-24, Staffordshire, Labour*
William Lunn: 1918-42, Yorkshire, Labour*
George Shield: 1929-31, Northumberland, Labour*
Jim Simmons: 1929-31 and 1945-59, Birmingham/Warwickshire, Labour
Ben Spoor: 1918-28, Durham, Labour

Alfred Waterson: 1918-22, Northamptonshire, Co-op/Labour#

* indicates a significant involvement with a trade union in the coal industry; # represents involvement in any other union.

3.2 The political allegiances and agendas of Primitive Methodism

3.2.1 The institutional response

Conference reports indicate that many Primitives, including Church leaders and ministers, were advocating and engaging in radical politics. The Address to the Churches of 1902 implicitly acknowledged this in its plea for moderation. It declared that Christianity must be the motive force of ‘true social reform’ and cautioned Primitives against becoming too ‘enthusiastic about politics’, implying that some were in breach of this injunction.² Even Presidents of Conference were guilty, as was revealed at the ensuing Conference. Rev. T.H. Hunt, the new President, proudly acknowledged Primitive Methodists to be ‘political dissenters’ – to the accompaniment of hisses when he mentioned Joseph Chamberlain and applause when he criticized the Conservative government for their policies on education, tariff reform and support for the Established Church and publicans.³ Similarly, in 1904 Rev. R. Harrison claimed that the Church promoted the religious ‘needs and interests of the great democracy of this nation’ more than all other churches; Primitive Methodists were among ‘the most intelligent wage-earning classes of the people’ and the Connexion understood the ‘intelligent democracy of this country ... as few others do’. Moreover, he contended that the Church must:

enter the lists against the bloated and high-handed tyranny of materialism and monopoly. Unscrupulous politicians and sordid traders, for the love of gain, in one form or another, do not hesitate to barter the lives of the poor, the bodies and liberties of their fellows, and violate every known principle of moral integrity and political equity.⁴

Social evils were moral and religious problems.⁵

As the general election of 1906 loomed, an increased appetite for political engagement permeated the Connexion. The Conference Address of 1905 castigated the Tory government for outraging ‘moral and spiritual principles wherein we have been taught of God and our fathers bled and died’; the Church had supported ‘the people’ through ‘industrial, social and political crisis’ and must continue to honour this tradition.⁶ Rev. F.

² *PMCM*, 1902, 198-201.

³ *SDG*, 11 Jun, 1903, 3.

⁴ *PMCM*, 1904, 222-4.

⁵ Samuel Hynes, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*, Kindle version (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), location 970. [Downloaded: 20/06/14].

⁶ *PMCM*, 1905, 238.

W. Atkin, encouraged ‘every man and woman’ of his flock to ‘pay heed to politics, local and national’, and yearned for an increased ‘Labour representation’ in future Parliaments.⁷ During the election campaign that preceded the Liberal victory of early 1906, the Primitive Methodist training college in Manchester implemented Atkin’s suggestion, postponing examinations to allow trainee ministers to canvass for a Liberal victory.⁸ Support for the Liberal Party, even from ordained ministers, was commonplace.⁹ For example, Rev. Kidwell of Kirbymoorside heckled a Conservative candidate with a long list of ‘printed questions’, blaming the government for the ‘exodus’ of farmers from the land. Even taking account of its previous predilection for the Liberal Party, the Church’s overt support and partisanship was exceptional during the 1906 general election campaign. Inevitably, the Conference Address of 1906 welcomed the election of a ‘reforming’ Liberal government, claiming that the electorate had followed the lead of Dissenters in supporting an agenda committed to addressing ‘industrial, social and economic’ wrongs:

A welcome change has taken place in the political life of the nation. For some years in succession we protested by Conference resolutions against the acts of the late Government. The verdict of the nation was taken in January of this year. Grave moral questions were at stake.¹⁰

Conference saluted the Primitive Methodist MPs elected that year – a group that included Liberal and Labour Party members – as ‘chosen to voice the aspirations of the working classes in the Parliament of the nation.’¹¹

Although approval was never universal, the Church became more reconciled or resigned to Socialism and the Labour Party. To some extent it had little choice as an increasing number of its members were moving in that direction. For example, in Durham, although a shift to Labour from the 1890s onwards – at least among a younger generation of Primitive Methodists – created friction in chapel communities and was never total, that drift continued and a Labour allegiance became commonplace in that county.¹² An Anglican clergyman, Rev. Cyril Lomax, claimed in 1912 that, ‘the Primitives [in Durham] had been almost entirely captured by the Independent Labour Party’.¹³ Also, the case of James Robinson Corrin – a local preacher, the founder of the Manx Labour Party in 1902 and later its first representative in the Manx House of Keys – is instructive. Due to his fervent espousal of Christian Socialism, the local Circuit considered removing him from their list of approved

⁷ *MG*, 25 Apr, 1905, 4.

⁸ J. Munson, *The Nonconformists: In Search of a Lost Culture* London (London: SPCK, 1991), 281-2.

⁹ *The Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 31 Jan, 1899, 8; *PML*, 31 Jan, 73-4, 1907.

¹⁰ *PMCM*, 1906, 219.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1907, 16-17.

¹² Moore, *Pit-men*, 168-172; Catterall, *Righteousness*, 124.

¹³ Quoted in Lee, *Durham Coalfield*, 133.

preachers. However, after discussion, he retained his place on their preachers' plan.¹⁴ Perhaps in an attempt to placate a membership that was obviously splintering in its political allegiance and increasingly embracing Socialism, Rev. Jabez Bell described the Church as a 'socialistic community' at the Conference of 1907.¹⁵ Similarly, Rev. James Pickett, the President in 1908, echoed Sir William Harcourt and declared that, 'They were all Socialists now, but it should be their care not to be secularised by Socialism, but to evangelise it'. Significantly, Pickett's definition of Socialism went no further than legislation such as the Factory Acts, which he claimed would not have passed without the Church's agency, and was not hostile to Liberal principles.¹⁶ Yet, support for the Liberal Party, although sometimes qualified, continued to be the main current of Primitive Methodist allegiance. In his speech as retiring President in 1909, Pickett confirmed the Church's overwhelming support for the Liberals, despite misgivings regarding their disinclination to redress one of the Church's grievances: 'a fair and just settlement of the education question'.¹⁷ Indeed, Pickett remained strongly antagonistic to 'the Socialist junta in the Labour Party' with its 'wild-cat proposals'.¹⁸

Nevertheless, some Primitives embraced Socialism wholeheartedly. Conference luminaries expressed their concern that some preachers were even using the pulpit to spread Socialist propaganda. In 1909, repeating a point made the previous year, Rev. M.P. Davison reminded delegates that the pulpit was not an appropriate platform for 'the advocacy of their own particular form of socialism' or 'knowledge of modern Biblical criticism'.¹⁹ The two practices seem to have enjoyed a synergistic relationship, common enough within Primitive Methodism for Davison to repeat the injunction. However, the Connexion's preachers were not distinctive in this proclivity for Socialism; other Nonconformists, even some Anglicans, were culpable.²⁰

The splintering of political philosophies and allegiance, and the danger it presented to the Church's political agenda and religious harmony, inspired continued Conference calls for ministers and preachers to abjure partisanship. Although Rev. E. Dalton acknowledged that most Primitive Methodists were Liberals, in his Presidential Address to Conference in 1911 he beseeched preachers to keep their pulpits free of party politics. Yet he was not

¹⁴ R. Fyson, 'Labour History' in J. Belchem, (ed.), *A New History of the Isle of Man: The Modern Period 1830-1999*, Volume 5, (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2000), 284-5.

¹⁵ *NM*, 06 Sep, 1907, 6.

¹⁶ *Dominion*, 01 Aug, 1908, 12; *PMCM*, 1908, 231.

¹⁷ *MG*, 25 Jun, 1909, 9.

¹⁸ *PML*, 28 Aug, 609, 1913.

¹⁹ *PMCM.*, 1909, 218. *Aldersgate*, 1909, 703-6. Also: for evidence of political, if not partisan, sermons and speeches: *HDM*, 06 Apr, 1903, 4; 04 Aug, 1903, 5; 13 Sep, 1906, 4 and *Kent and Sussex Courier*, 30 Aug, 1912, 3.

²⁰ M. Johnson, 'The persuasive tongue of the outspoken Rev Henry Booth Coventry', *PWHS*, 60.2 (2015), 74-8.

advocating political quietism, only a pragmatic alliance with any party that would advance the Church's agenda: 'we must stand so free from partisanship that we shall be prepared to work with and for any party that attempts to reduce the Sermon on the Mount to practice'.²¹ Rev. W. Easy made a similar point at the Bristol Synod of 1912. He insisted that the Church should not remain indifferent to the 'injustice and oppression' of 'the masses' and must embrace 'something larger than mere individual salvation'; however, he also counselled that 'it must not pledge its Gospel to any form of political economy or social theory' or 'ally itself to any political party'.²²

For the Church leaders, radical politics and religion were locked together in a symbiotic relationship. Primitives were proud of their continuing role in fostering a national spirit desirous of 'Social Justice, for National Welfare and for international peace'.²³ Furthermore, applauded by delegates attending the Social Service meeting at the Conference of 1913, Rev. J. Morrison insisted that only a practical Christianity would appeal to the working classes. He suggested that Primitives must not:

point men and women's eyes to the skies, and while they were craning their neck Heavenwards to be entirely oblivious of the cankering and pestering evils which existed around their feet ... [the] only party spirit in Christianity should be on behalf of the poor.²⁴

As Bebbington has suggested, for many Nonconformists the social gospel was 'generated primarily by practical experience of Christian work ... a response to the difficulties of mission'.²⁵ William Straker, the Primitive Methodist President of the Northumberland Miners' Association and friend of Burt and Fenwick, also 'criticised past religions which taught men to look for their recompense in another world'. However, he insisted that any attempt to remedy social injustice would prosper only when 'associated with religion'.²⁶ Ritson – for whom Primitive Methodism, 'sprang from the people, knew the people and loved the people' – captured this in his Presidential Address of 1913:²⁷

the prevailing Social Conditions in our land are a great hindrance to the progress of the Kingdom of God and our Church, and they are very closely bound up with religious life. The problem of our village Churches was seen to be aggravated by the Land Problem. Bad and insufficient housing was found to account for some of the decreases in our villages as in our towns. Insufficient wages, especially in rural districts, is also a drawback to the efficient working of many churches. The sordid scramble for mere existence, to which many of our people are doomed, tells against religious life. The struggle of the Democracy for better conditions of life and labour was clearly seen to be detrimental to our own Church work. Probably no

²¹ *MG*, 09 Jun, 1902, 9; *PML*, 15 Jun, 385-6, 1911.

²² *Gloucester Journal*, 11 May, 1912, 10. Also: *Aldersgate*, 1912, 502; Rev J.D. Jackson, *The Message and the Man: 14th Hartley Lecture* (London: W.A. Hammond, 1912), 154.

²³ *PMCM*, 1911, 232.

²⁴ *DDT*, 13 Jun, 1913, 2.

²⁵ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 212.

²⁶ *MH*, 11 Dec, 1911, 10.

²⁷ *PML*, 12 Jun, 394, 1913.

Church in our nation is so closely related to these things as ours, or feels more acutely its effect upon church life. We are supremely a Church of the people. Thus is borne in upon us with great force, not only for the peoples' sake, but for our own Church's sake, the social lot of the people must be improved, and better conditions secured. We have no desire for our Church to be the battleground of parties. That must be absolutely avoided. Still we have a divine mission in relation to the social life around us. What we call social questions are also social sins ... The Cross is their utter condemnation.²⁸

Although the Church did not wish to be 'the battleground of parties', Primitive Methodism's embrace of progressive politics was evident at the Church's 1907 centenary celebrations at Mow Cop, the site of the first Camp Meetings. One Liberal Primitive Methodist MP, Enoch Edwards, chaired the 'principal indoor celebration' and five others, four representing the Liberal Party and one the Labour party, were the main speakers. 'Throughout the whole meeting there were continuous outbursts of applause of enthusiasm such as are rarely seen.'²⁹ In 1909, the anonymous author of *Nonconformity and Politics* – almost certainly a Baptist minister – acknowledged Primitive Methodism's exceptional preoccupation with politics. He castigated Primitive Methodists for their 'political activities which the present writer considers inadvisable, they are often far in advance of all the other Free Churches – always, of course, with the best of motives and the purest zeal'.³⁰ Similarly, *Aldersgate's* evident pride in the selection of Charles Fenwick as a Privy Councillor in 1911 revealed the importance of political involvement to the Connexion and its primary current of allegiances. Fenwick, who epitomised the Lib-Lab tradition, personified the Church's preferred politician. Furthermore, his lofty appointment signified the improved status of the Church and its members.³¹

3.2.2 The wider debate: the Connexional publications

The Church's publications offer a more detailed account of its political trajectory and party allegiances. The creation and development of a weekly newspaper exemplifies the evolving tone of Connexional publications. In June 1905, the *Primitive Methodist* changed its name to the *Primitive Methodist Leader*. Rev. George Bennett, the editor from 1905 to 1930, explained that the rebranded newspaper aimed to aid Primitive Methodism in its desire to 'acquire a more sympathetic attitude' to 'the social and material aspiration of the masses': something that the Church had awarded 'too little' prominence.³² Speculatively, the choice of title, *Leader*, was a response to the ILP's *Labour Leader*. In January 1909, the *Leader* and

²⁸ *PMCM*, 1913, 7-8.

²⁹ *HDM*, 27 May, 1907, 4.

³⁰ A Nonconformist Minister, *Nonconformity and Politics* (London: Isaac Pitman, 1909), 59. Possibly written by J.J.F. Bradley, the Congregational minister of Bedworth (1908-23) who opposed Welsh disestablishment: (*Brecon County Times, Neath Gazette and General Advertiser*, 20 Feb, 1913, 2).

³¹ *Aldersgate*, 1911, 228.

³² *PML*, 15 Jun, 2, 1905.

Primitive Methodist World, the specifically Liberal Connexional weekly paper, combined.

The first editorial after that amalgamation explained that:

Moral, social and political conditions concern us, and because they affect us, aid or hinder our work, we in turn try to affect them and make them minister to the progress of the Kingdom of our Lord. This is ordinarily our second duty – sometimes it is our first. And so it comes to pass that we are interested in such matters as Licensing, Education, the social conditions of the people in its many-sidedness, and in the great questions of Religious and Civil Liberty.³³

The *Leader* proudly announced that it was committed to ‘Liberty, Equality and Fraternity’, although its writers would continue to ‘argue from the centre outwards – the safest course at all times’.³⁴ In practice, the tone of the *Leader* – and the other publications – was anti-Tory; its first editorial cast the Conservative Party as ‘the age-old enemy of the working classes’.³⁵ Guttery expressed this most forcibly in the run-up to the 1906 election. Admitting that a minority of the Church were Tories, he declared that, ‘The Primitive Methodist who boasts of his ecclesiastic democracy and votes for Toryism is an abomination’.³⁶ Hard on his heels, Dr John Clifford, a prominent Baptist, issued a ‘call to arms’ in the pages of the *Leader*, urging the Labour and Liberal Parties to work together to defeat ‘Toryism ... [which is] the historical and persistent foe of the labouring classes’. For Clifford, the Tory government’s ‘hereditary antagonism’ towards the working classes was manifest in its Education Act of 1902 and its anti-trade union legislation.³⁷ Accordingly, Tory Primitive Methodists were uncommon enough for obituarists to note their exceptionalism: ‘although a Primitive Methodist, [he] was a Conservative in politics’.³⁸

Contributors to the publications encouraged Primitive Methodists to engage in local and national politics, although emphasising the pre-eminence of principles over party.³⁹ Characteristically, most were favourable to Liberalism, although the Liberal Party itself was not beyond criticism as Primitive Methodist political allegiances became fractured – particularly between the Liberal and Labour parties.⁴⁰ However, regardless of party allegiance, all Primitives still considered themselves to be, in Rev. W. Curry’s words, ‘champions of the common people’: Labour advocates preceding the Labour Party.⁴¹ Consequently, the main debate revolved around the suitability of the Liberal or Labour Party to implement the Church’s manifesto. Revs. J. Ritson, R. Hind, and A.T. Guttery represented

³³ *Ibid.*, 07 Jan, 3, 1909.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 15 June, 9, 1905. Also: *PMW*, 18 Oct, 807, 1900; *PML*, 26 Oct, 338, and 14 Dec, 443, 1905; *Aldersgate*, 1903, 921.

³⁶ *PML*, 16 Nov, 383, 1905.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 14 Dec, 443, 1905.

³⁸ *SDT*, 02 May, 1908, 8.

³⁹ *PM*, 6 Sep, 590-1, 1900; *PMW*, 18 Jan, 51, 1900.

⁴⁰ *PML*, 6 Aug, 559, 1914.

⁴¹ *PMQ*, 1906, 269-85.

influential strands in this debate. While Ritson continued to advocate the necessity of a greater distribution of income, he felt that the Liberal Party was the most practical vehicle to achieve this, rather than any party advocating extreme Socialism or revolutionary violence. He feared that the creation of a separate Labour Party, rather than an increase of Lib-Lab representation, threatened the radical vote and weakened the potential for parliamentary reform. It was an unwelcome development and implied the demise of the essential principles of 'Liberalism'.⁴² Hind also preferred the strengthening of Labour representation within the Liberal Party to a separate Party, as that approach was more likely to influence government policy and practice. Yet, if not ideal, Labour Party victories were preferable to Tory wins.⁴³ His ideal was Albert Stanley, a Liberal Primitive Methodist MP, who was 'a Radical ... with just a spice of Socialism ... severely just to property' but strongly representing working-class interests.⁴⁴ However, Hind feared that Liberal failure to repeal the 1902 Education Act would result in Primitive desertions to other parties. However, such defectors were not likely to 'turn Tory' – they were more likely to favour 'Labour, Democratic, Socialistic, or anything else that will give just and righteous laws, and who will legislate without fear of the Lords and Bishops before their eyes.'⁴⁵ Guttery shared Hind's concerns, and expressed 'sheer disgust' at the Liberal Party's failure to repeal the 1902 Act, but predicted departures to the 'Tory Party or extreme Socialism'.⁴⁶ His own support for the Liberals continued to be contingent and, in 1910, he declared that he would support Labour in the forthcoming election.⁴⁷ So strong was this sentiment that the Primitive's Education Committee shared Guttery's view that Church members 'must decline to act as the hand-maiden of the [Liberal] Party', unless their grievances were redressed.⁴⁸ However, the Liberals had no educational Cromwell to offer and they failed to repeal the 1902 Act, partly because of the Lords' veto. Consequently, Primitive Methodist allegiance to the Liberals weakened and antagonism towards the House of Lords increased.⁴⁹

Although allegiance to the Liberal or Labour Party continued to be disputed territory, there was an increasing acceptance or tolerance of the new arrival. The key question was whether the new political party espoused a Christian and reforming agenda. The *Leader* exemplified this in 1908 when it welcomed the Labour Party's selection of the proclaimed Socialist Thomas Richardson – one of its local preachers – as its parliamentary candidate

⁴² *PML*, 31 Aug, 605, 28 Dec, 909, 1911; 28 Aug, 613, 1913.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 21 Dec, 474, 1905; 11 Jul, 481, 1 Aug, 529, 19 Dec, 878, 1907. Also: *PMW*, 15 Feb, 137, 01 Mar, 160, 1900.

⁴⁴ *PML*, 08 Aug, 529, 1907.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 03 Jan, 10, 1907.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 21 Feb, 116, 1907; 04 Mar, 136, 1909; 23 Nov, 796, 1911; 27 Feb, 134, 1913. S. Koss, *Nonconformity in Modern British Politics* (London: Batsford, 1975), 90-91, 118.

⁴⁸ *PML*, 23 Nov, 796, 1911. Also: *Ibid.*, 31 Jan, 74, 1907; *Aldersgate*, 1909, 80-81.

⁴⁹ *Aldersgate*, 1906, 1000-1. Also: *PML*, 14 Feb, 100, 106, 1907

for Consett. The paper commented that ‘Primitive Methodism has given, and still gives, many of its sons to lead in social betterment.’⁵⁰ Some Primitives were attracted to the Labour Party as they considered it a Socialist organisation. Others perceived it as the Liberal Party’s heir apparent: a vehicle for the expression of morality in politics, rather than an embodiment of Socialism. This was exemplified in 1909 when a contributor to the *Leader* described the Labour Party as sound in its Liberalism and praised its leaders’ ‘sanity, dignity, good sense ... [their] moderation, level-headedness, and a resolute loyalty to great moral causes inspire hope for its future’.⁵¹ Support of this nature indicated a promotion of working-class interests without sanctioning class warfare. For example, in 1909 Rev. F. Jeffs suggested that the Labour Party was ‘occupied with the more direct and specific advocacy of the wage-earning classes’, ‘its motives were predominantly noble’ and its ‘idealism united with common sense’. However, he advised Primitive Methodists to commit themselves to Christian principles rather than any one party: politics must not become ‘a weapon of mere class interest’.⁵² Endorsement of the new party of Labour was increasingly common, although sometimes qualified and never universal.

Party allegiance and economic theories were contested, yet most Connexional contributors increasingly perceived individual and social salvation to be necessary corollaries. Outright defences of individualism were uncommon, unlike expressions of support for collectivism and increased state intervention to improve social conditions. In 1907, Guttery’s influential pen commended a non-revolutionary Christian Socialism – a constructive creed that he believed would ultimately ‘replace competition with co-operation’.⁵³ Tellingly, the *Leader* printed three letters in response – two signed themselves as ‘a Christian Socialist’ and defended Guttery, one arguing that ‘individualism’ was unscriptural. Only one correspondent was hostile: Rev. T.W. Walker responded by insisting that, while individualism was scriptural, Socialism was not.⁵⁴ Walker’s views were increasingly unrepresentative of Primitive views while Guttery’s were in the ascendant.⁵⁵

However, the most compelling argument for Socialism was a religious one: its perceived compatibility with early Christian practice and usefulness for missioning. For example, in 1905 Isabel Stuart-Robson extolled the virtues of the Anglican priest and theologian F. D. Maurice. She praised his attempts during the mid-nineteenth century to ‘sweep away the idea, held by so many working people at the time: that Christianity was

⁵⁰ *PML*, 07 Jan, 8, 1908.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 04 Feb, 77, 1909.

⁵² S. Horton, (ed.), *The England of the Future* (E. Dalton, London, 1909), 52-66.

⁵³ *PML*, 12 Dec, 856, 1907.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 26 Dec, 895, 1907.

⁵⁵ *PMQ*, 1899, 616; 1900, 501-10; 1904, 337-344, 418-432; 1906, 315-25, 666-76; 1912, 692-706. *Aldersgate*, 1910, 687-90.

opposed to socialism'.⁵⁶ In 1907, Rev. Samuel Horton, who became President of Conference in 1921, was troubled that the Church was out of touch with the 'working man', and this deficiency was obstructing its evangelism. The only solution was to embrace a form of Christian Socialism that:

says that the strong shall help the weak, that men are not opponents, but brothers, that to make money is not the true end of life, but that each should live for all and all for each. Christianity began with communism, and will, I think end with it. Our present social system has produced a little handful of millionaires at one end of the social scale and a very large army of paupers at the other. A Christian State should know nothing of either.⁵⁷

Horton suggested that a Christian Socialist political agenda should include land reform, improved housing for the working classes, a more equitable distribution of profits between Capital and Labour, arbitration replacing strikes and lockouts in industry and war in national disputes.⁵⁸ Corresponding articles by H. Jeffs, J. Forster, W. Jones Davies and H.J. Taylor, mostly writers associated with the Primitive Methodist Social Services Union, reached their apogee in Taylor's 1911 series on 'Christianity and Socialism' which appeared in the *Aldersgate*. This collection of essays concluded with the proposition that 'The future belongs to a purified socialism'. Taylor, in common with other Primitive Methodist advocates of a vaguely defined Socialism, equated its ideal form with Christ's Sermon on the Mount: an unselfish faith that required the transformation of the individual in combination with that of society.⁵⁹ Their Socialism was barely distinguishable from 'New Liberalism' and did not necessarily require separation from the Liberal Party. Perhaps the most pronounced advocacy of Socialism that appeared in a Church publication during this period was a letter to the *Leader* from an E. Langford Cook. It balanced religious and pragmatic endorsements of Socialism. He denounced the Church's failure to proclaim a 'thunderous denunciation and damnation of the hellish social system which exists', enfeebling its ability to mission the working classes. Methodism required 'Not Saints – but Socialists.'⁶⁰ This was at one extreme of the spectrum of Primitive Methodist stances. However, one telling indication of Primitive Methodists' greater acceptance of or lesser antagonism towards Socialism is the apparent lack of Primitive Methodist involvement in the Nonconformist Anti-Socialist Union. The few references to that organisation in Primitive publications are either hostile or lukewarm.⁶¹

⁵⁶ *Aldersgate*, 1905, 615-8.

⁵⁷ *Aldersgate*, 1907, 135.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 130-41. For a fuller account of all those issues see Horton, (ed.), *England of the Future*.

⁵⁹ *Aldersgate*, 1911, 52-54, 120-121, 191-2, 292-3, 368-9, 470-1, 544-5, 632-3, 712-3, 786-7, 896-7, 985-6. Also: *Ibid.*, 1902, 335; 1907, 30-32; 1909, 1000; *PMQ*, 1907, 704-719; 1908, 385-400; 1909, 788-9. H. Jeffs in Horton (ed.), *England of the Future*, 40-49.

⁶⁰ *PML*, 18 Aug, 503, 1910.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 21 Jul, 497, 1910 and 27 Feb, 141, 1913.

Furthermore, some short stories that appeared in the *Magazine* capture the general tenor of the dominant Primitive Methodist political allegiances, doctrines and concerns. Norman Hawthorne's 'Clifford' of 1907 presents two protagonists: John Spencer and Angus Clifford. Spencer, a mine-owner and former Liberal who has lost his Nonconformist religious faith is fearful of Socialism and, consequently, joins the Conservative Party. Clifford, a doctor and 'a socialist in the best sense of the word ... always trying to give something to the needy and to serve them', primarily by providing sanitary housing, is an ardent Liberal. The story concludes with Clifford carrying through his reforms against the opposition of one intransigent property owner and Spencer returns to his former religious and political allegiances.⁶² Rev. Edward McLellan's 'Herod of Blaisenham' runs on similar lines. A young radical, Geoffrey Herod, returns from Oxford University 'waving the red flag' and making 'incendiary speeches' against squire and parson. Influenced by Methodism, Geoffrey moderates his views. He realizes that the 'civic activities [of Methodism] are the expression of its social conscience, and that is the outcome of individual salvations'.⁶³ He decides to stand for Parliament: 'His ambition was to infuse the political currents of the time with Christian idealism. Linking himself definitely with progressive movements, he would seek to redeem them from mere party politics by throwing upon them the glow of the Sermon on the Mount'.⁶⁴

Primitive Methodists were yoking Christian ethics to the collectivist or Socialistic tendencies of the times. As Bebbington has suggested, Methodists have shown a propensity to adapt 'to their surrounding culture, merging their attitudes with the common assumptions of their societies'.⁶⁵ Writing in 1905, A.V. Dicey, the legal theorist, proposed that collectivism, or Socialism, as opposed to individualism, characterised the spirit of the time – a tendency that had increased during the course of the 19th century, and of which he disapproved. In essence, he defined collectivism or Socialism as increased state intervention 'to confer benefit on the mass of the people', exemplified by an increasing tendency towards enacting legislation such as the Workmen's Compensation Acts of 1897 to 1900.⁶⁶ In 1906, the economist J.A. Hobson echoed much of Dicey's analysis, but he approved of the trend. He described this 'properly understood' Socialism or advanced Liberalism as 'the active promotion or approval of legislation which can only be explained as a gradual unconscious recognition of the existence of social property in capital which it is held politic to secure for the public use'. As examples of this, Hobson cited the Factory Acts, Truck Acts, Employers'

⁶² *Aldersgate*, 1907, 9ff–937.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1913, 684.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 845.

⁶⁵ D.W. Bebbington, 'Methodism and Culture' in Abraham and Kirby, (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*, 712.

⁶⁶ A.V. Dicey, *Lectures on the Relation Between Law and Public Opinion in England During the Nineteenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1905), 62-9, 210-301.

Liability Acts and the introduction of graduated income tax.⁶⁷ This increasing acceptance of state intervention was approved of by some Tories but saw its most obvious manifestation in the programmes of ‘New Liberalism’ and Socialism – both of which appealed to many Primitives.⁶⁸

The *Leader’s* endorsement of Municipal Trading – sometimes referred to as Municipal Socialism – provides one example of an increased acceptance of collectivism although at a local rather than national level. An editorial of 1905 criticised Burt’s support for a Bill permitting private ownership of London’s electrical supply. The columnist argued that such utilities should not be monopolised by ‘a syndicate of rich men’ seeking to profit from the supply of utilities, but placed under municipal control for the benefit of the ‘consumer’. Municipal trading kept down costs to the benefit of the wage-earner.⁶⁹ Also, the paper railed against the ‘selfish and antiquated’ House of Lords for blocking a plan of London County Council to build a tramway.⁷⁰ Significantly, Peter Lee, the Primitive Methodist miner and Labour Party Chairman of Durham County Council, enjoyed ‘a long career promoting municipal socialism in local government’.⁷¹

3.2.3 The background, political allegiances and proclivities of Primitive Methodist MPs

Burt, Doughty, Fenwick, and Wilson continued to serve as MPs throughout this period. Similarly, Arch remained an MP until 1900. Another 13 MPs, either active Primitive Methodists or closely associated with the Church, were elected. Of these, at least 12 were or had been local preachers and ten were trade union leaders, primarily in the coal industry. Initially, three were Labour Party members, the others Liberals. However, five of the

⁶⁷ J.A. Hobson, *Problems of Poverty: An Inquiry into the Industrial Conditions of the Poor*, Kindle version (London: Methuen, 1906, 6th edition), location 2425-8, 2270-78 and 2370-85. [Downloaded: 24/01/15]. Also: for accounts of the growth and acceptance of collectivist ideas during the 19th and early 20th century see P. Thane, ‘The Working Class and State Welfare in Britain 1880-1914’, *The Historical Journal*, 27,4, 1984, 877-900 and D. Marquand, *Mammon’s Kingdom*, Kindle version (Penguin, 2014), location 603-672 [Downloaded 21/03/15].

⁶⁸ G. Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare in Britain 1830-1990* (Oxford: OUP, 1994), 154-5. Also: 107-200.

⁶⁹ *PML*, 13 Jul, 98, 1905. Burt’s support, contrary to that of the other PM MPs, may have been due to the possibility that the private supply would be controlled by a Newcastle based firm – with the consequences that entailed for Northumbrian coal – which had a plan to rationalise the existing chaotic system of local control. T.P. Hughes, ‘Managing Change: Regional Power Systems, 1910-30’, *Business and Economic History*, 2,6, 1977, 53-4.

⁷⁰ *PML*, 27 Jul, 129, 1905. For a more detailed discussion of the motives behind and arguments for and against ‘municipal trading’ or, as it was sometimes called, ‘municipal socialism’, see R. Millward, ‘The political economy of urban utilities’, in M. Dauntton, (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain: 1840-1950*, Vol. 3 (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), 315-349 and B. Shaw, *The Common Sense of Municipal Trading* (Westminster: Archibald and Constable, 1904.) Although strongly arguing for municipal trading, Shaw conceded that some utilities, such as electricity, may be better under regional or national control.

⁷¹ S. Bruce, ‘Methodism and Mining in Durham County: 1881-1891’, *Northern History*, 48, 2 (2011), 339.

Liberals transferred to the Labour Party after 1909.⁷² In total, 14 of the 18 MPs were trade union leaders or activists, 12 in the coal industry. Significantly, six of them were residents of Durham or Northumberland.

David Shackleton, elected in 1902, was the first Labour Party (initially LRC) member with connections to the Church. Although William Parrott, a Yorkshire Miners' agent, had considered standing for the Labour Representation Committee in Leeds, he ultimately preferred to represent the Liberals in Normanton; consequently, in 1906 John W. Taylor – an ILP member and colliery mechanic's agent from Durham – became the second Primitive Labour MP. However, five others – James Haslam, William Harvey, Albert Stanley, John Johnson, and Enoch Edwards – followed suit after the MFGB's affiliation to the Labour Party in 1909. Some of these did so reluctantly or without any significant alteration to their political principles.⁷³ When the MFGB was considering affiliation to the Labour Party in 1908, Haslam and Harvey had even described the new Party's members as 'quacks' who advocated 'unadulterated socialism'.⁷⁴ The import of these reluctant MPs whose 'political and social imagery owed most to the Bible' weakened Socialist influence within the Labour Party.⁷⁵ Unsurprisingly, in 1910, four 'militant' ILP executive members complained about this influx of pressed recruits. They protested that the Labour Party had been infected with the 'curse of compromise' and 'treated to a grotesque exposition of Primitive Methodist politics' that had created a 'masquerade of mistaken identities'.⁷⁶

Despite the ILP militants' objections, these former Liberal MPs were firmly committed to social reform. Haslam's objections to 'unadulterated socialism' did not prevent him from supporting the nationalisation of canals and railways. In 1910, he expressed some sympathy with 'the people who preached Socialism' although he considered the Liberal Party was still the most realistic vehicle for reform.⁷⁷ Harvey was also an advocate for social reform, although he had reservations about the creation of a separate Labour Party. Speaking at a Chapel Bazaar, he declared that:

Methodism meant more to him than singing yourself away to everlasting bliss or talking about golden streets or jasper walls. It was more important to him that the streets of Chesterfield should be well paved than that the streets of heaven should

⁷² See Appendix.

⁷³ R. Gregory, *The Miners and British Politics: 1906-1914* (Oxford: OUP, 1968), 26-52; R.D. Dalton, *Labour and the Municipality: Labour Politics in Leeds 1900-14*, 61-3 and 111. PhD thesis (University of Huddersfield, 2000). Available online: <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/4872/1/327145.pdf> [Accessed 14/02/15].

⁷⁴ *MCLGA*, 25 Jan, 1908, 8.

⁷⁵ B. Waites, *A Class Society at War: England 1914-1918* (Berg: Leamington Spa, 1987), 57.

⁷⁶ *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 29 Jul, 1910, 5.

⁷⁷ *Derbyshire Courier*, 25 Jun, 1910, 10. *JHC*, V163, 334. Nationalisation of the railways was supported by a significant number of Liberal businessmen' and trade unionists: Packer, *Liberal Government and Politics: 1905-15* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 126.

be. It was more important to him that the children should wear shoes and clothes than talking about what angel's robes were; that they should have good water than that they should talk about the streams that make glad the city of God. Take care of earth and heaven will take care of itself.⁷⁸

Haslam continued to speak on both Liberal and Labour Party platforms until his death, yet in 1912 he even suggested that, if he were to step down as an MP, he would support a Liberal candidate as his successor. Haslam's Primitive Methodist successor as MP, Barnett Kenyon, prevaricated between sitting as a Liberal member and signing the Labour Party constitution. Kenyon had hoped for the same latitude as Haslam. However, denied this, he remained a Liberal. Similarly, Burt, Fenwick, and Wilson refused to stand as Labour candidates. However, in 1914 the Northumberland Miners insisted that Burt and Fenwick's successors must accept the Labour Whip. Although one of these, John Cairns, a Primitive Methodist, had supported the principle of independent Labour representation for some years, he only joined the Labour Party consequent to his union's decision. In 1906 he had stood as a Liberal candidate in Newcastle. Similarly, another future Primitive mining MP, William Carter, was also required to transfer his party allegiance. However, the Osborne judgement of 1909, which denied trade unions the right to use their funds for political purposes, appears to have reconciled him to Labour so that, by 1918, his support was wholehearted.⁷⁹

Few of the Primitive MPs who sat during this period described themselves as Socialists. Taylor and Thomas Richardson, early members of the ILP, were exceptional in doing so. In combination with Joseph Batey, another Primitive Methodist, Richardson opposed John Wilson and the conservatism of Gladstonian Liberalism within the Durham Miners' Association. Unlike Wilson, they supported the campaign for a minimum wage – although they remained concerned about the implications for Durham of the MFGB and Labour Party's commitment to an Eight Hours Bill. In 1902, Richardson established one of the largest ILP branches in the country, while Batey ultimately became a dominant figure in the Durham Labour Party County Executive.⁸⁰ William Lunn, who joined the ILP as early 1893 and became an MP in 1918, was also a focus of opposition to the older

⁷⁸ Quoted in R. Goadby, *A Prize Pair of Prims*, (Crewe: Methodist Chapel Aid Lecture, No. 10, 2000).

⁷⁹ *DLB*, 2, 79. Gregory, *Miners*, 68-90, 144-172. *The Derry Journal*, 01 Jan, 1906, 8. *MG*, 25 Aug, 1913, 7; 13 Dec, 1913, 12; 20 Feb, 1914, 10. *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 05 Jul, 1912, 6. *MH*, 04 Dec, 1909, 10; 08 May, 1914, 5. *NEP*, 24 Jan, 2, 1910; 27 Jan, 3, 1910; 07 Oct, 1910, 7; 02 Nov, 1918, 2. *YPLI*, 27 May, 1912, 5.

⁸⁰ Marshall, *Militancy*, 7, 96, 157, 193, 205-6, 278-9, 283-6, Appendix F; Frank Webster, *Durham miners and unionism, 1831 - 1926: a sociological interpretation*, 44-5, 91-2, 229-30. Durham University. MA thesis (Durham University, 1974). Available online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/10050/45-46> [Accessed 15/06/15]; R.M. Martin, *The Lancashire Giant: David Shackleton, Labour Leader and Civil Servant* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 174; Matthew Worley, (ed.), *The Foundations of the British Labour Party: Identities, Cultures and Perspectives, 1900-39* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 197.

generation of Yorkshire miners' leaders. He was a foil to men such as William Parrott and Ned Cowey, fellow Primitive Methodists within the Yorkshire Branch of the MFGB and committed Gladstonian Liberals. Vernon Hartshorn, another Primitive Methodist miner and future Labour MP, fulfilled a similar role in the South Wales coalfield.⁸¹

Although these Socialist trade unionists transferred much of their Liberal heritage into the Labour Party and their left wing critics considered them moderate – they were more radical than their Lib-Lab forebears. David Howell suggested that Taylor – a former Liberal who rejected the Party but still embraced many Liberal tenets – and Thomas Richardson were ‘politically moderate’ whose ‘values could have been accommodated within a Liberalism more progressive than that of Durham’.⁸² Their primary motivation in instituting ILP branches in Durham was their perceived need for independent Labour representation, considering that Wilson and his ilk did not represent their interests.⁸³ Despite Wilson’s suggestion that his opponents within the DMA were influenced by syndicalism, Frank Webster asserts that, ‘Strikes and militant syndicalism were not part of [his Primitive opponents’] vocabulary.’⁸⁴ Abnormally, Frank Hodges, a former Primitive Methodist and miner in South Wales who became a Labour MP in 1923, briefly embraced syndicalism before the Great War. However, he rapidly rejected the creed in favour of Guild Socialism. The latter, although drawing on some syndicalist ideas, advocated gradual reform and, consequently, was more acceptable to Christians. The Welsh Liberals also labelled Hartshorn a dangerous revolutionary, yet the syndicalists within the South Wales Miners’ Federation considered him a reactionary. Although Hartshorn and Hodges were less radical than characterised by some critics, they represented a significant break with the conciliatory stance of the first generation of Primitive Methodist MPs and miners’ leaders.⁸⁵

⁸¹Carolyn Baylies, *The History of the Yorkshire Miners: 1881-1918* (London: Routledge, 1993), 242, 252; David Rubinstein, ‘The Independent Labour Party and the Yorkshire Miners: the Barnsley By-Election of 1897’, *International Review of Social History*, 23, 1, (1978), 102-134; D. Evans, *Labour Strife in the South Wales Coalfield: 1910-11* (Cardiff, Educational Publishing Ltd, 1911), 170-215.

⁸² Howell, *British Workers*, 47-49.

⁸³ Gregory, *Miners*, 70-71.

⁸⁴ Webster, ‘Durham Miners’, 46. Also: Marshall, *Militancy*, 95-6 and 292.

⁸⁵ *Spectator*, 14 Sep, 1912, 2; F. Hodges, *Nationalisation of the Mines* (London: Leonard Parsons, 1920), 113-121; K. Davies, ‘Hodges, Frank (1887–1947)’, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48757, accessed 4 June 2014; Barry, *Nationalisation*, 212-4; L. Barrow and I. Bullock, *Democratic Ideas and the British Labour Movement: 1880-1914* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 266; Phillips, *Kingdom on Earth*, 211-2; Gregory, *Miners*, 125-35; Duncan Tanner, *Political Change and the Labour Party: 1900-1918* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), 218; Church and Outram, *Strikes*, 62, 67-8 J.T. Murphy, a Primitive Methodist local preacher and Sunday School Superintendent who temporarily passed through syndicalism after he had ‘shaken off’ his religious faith on his way to membership of the Communist Party, was exceptional: R. Darlington, *The Political Trajectory of J.T. Murphy* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998), 1-3.

Typically, an increasing number of younger Primitives embraced the Labour Party and a form of ethical Socialism, which embodied much of their former Liberalism. In a *Magazine* article of 1912, Rev. William Younger highlighted this generational shift by asserting that ‘almost all the [Primitive Methodist] young men, both ministers and laymen, have reached a position far in advance of their immediate predecessors. The majority of them are favourable to a socialistic ideal.’⁸⁶ Younger had been a founder of the Free Church Socialist League in 1909.⁸⁷ Indeed, as early as 1891, Burt realized that many younger trade unionists considered him ‘a back number’.⁸⁸ The older generation of Primitive Methodist trade union leaders and MPs had established labour organisations and a Lib-Lab presence in Parliament, but some of their younger co-religionist and union activists believed they had outlived their usefulness. William Harvey’s preferred inscription for his tombstone, a reference to Acts 13:36, acknowledged this: ‘He served his day and generation, and then fell asleep’.⁸⁹ Those of his generation who were required to transfer their nominal allegiance to the Labour Party subsequent to the MFGB affiliation did not convert to Socialism. However, Taylor, Thomas Richardson, Batey, Hodges, Lunn, and Hartshorn, a new generation of Primitive Methodist miners’ leaders, embraced independent Labour representation and ethical Socialism. They were dissatisfied with the Lib-Labism of their unions’ leadership – although other factors may have played a part. By 1912, even Fenwick, although denigrating ‘revolutionary’ Socialism, and rejecting nationalisation of the mines as a solution to the coal industry’s problems, cited the Wesleyan Labour MP Philip Snowden’s brand of Christian Socialism positively; he was prepared to co-operate with Socialists who accepted progress ‘must be slow and steady’.⁹⁰

Although some future Primitive MPs remained satisfied with Liberalism – such as Thomas Casey and Thomas Fenby – others freely joined the Labour Party during this period: Alfred Hill, Thomas Cape, Ben Spoor, Jim Simmons, and Alfred Waterson among them. Few of the Labour converts expressed any reasons for their abandonment of the Liberals. However, Spoor’s membership shift coincided with the reviled Education Act of 1902, which supported Church schools from the rates bills. As he focused on education as a local politician, the 1902 Act may have driven him from the Liberal fold. Several of his Durham co-religionists also shared his interest in education and served on the education committees of local councils or on School Boards: Johnson, Thomas Richardson, and

⁸⁶ *Aldersgate, 1912*, 545-6.

⁸⁷ P. d’Alroy Jones, *Christian Socialist Revival 1877-1914: Religion, Class and Social Conscience in Late Victorian England*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 377.

⁸⁸ Quoted in M. Ceadel, *Semi-Detached Idealists: The British Peace Movement and International Relations, 1854-1945* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 143.

⁸⁹ Gregory, *Miners*, 38-9.

⁹⁰ *MH*, 26 Jul, 1912, 3.

Taylor.⁹¹ Simmons is the only one of this group who has left us a clear reason for his conversion from Liberalism to Labourism. Brought up in a family of house painters with a strong attachment to the Liberal Party, he began to transfer his own allegiance in 1909 while debating in a Model Parliament. He joined the ILP sometime after 1911 when Churchill employed troops ‘in an attempt to cow the railwaymen who were on strike’: a Labour issue. However, Simmons rejected Marxism, finding the Socialism of the ILP compatible with his particular interpretation of Christianity.⁹² For Simmons, Socialism was ‘based on giving, not getting’.⁹³ Religious and Labour factors played a part in his decision.

For many younger Primitive politicians, Socialism was only a political manifestation of their religious beliefs – just as Liberalism had been for an earlier generation. According to his local minister, the Sermon on the Mount provided the basis of Spoor’s Socialism.⁹⁴ Similarly, William Straker explained that the future MP George Shield – a fellow Primitive Methodist and union colleague – ‘believed that through Socialism only could the ethics of Christianity be applied’.⁹⁵ Similarly, Mr Holmes, an unsuccessful Labour candidate for a Hull constituency in 1907 and a former local preacher of seven years standing, abandoned his evangelical activities ‘to fight the battle for labour’. However, his Primitive Methodist adherence and religious commitment persisted. Politics merely offered another parallel route to building the New Jerusalem in Hull. During one political meeting he ‘brought his vocal powers into use, commencing the singing of the “Doxology,” in which the large crowd joined.’⁹⁶

Despite Doughty’s exceptionalism in his adherence to the Unionist cause, the other middle class MPs of this period, all employers – Levi Morse, Arthur Richardson and Horace Mansfield – remained in the Liberal fold. Morse, who only asked two questions and made no contribution to debate in a four year parliamentary career, does not seem to have been a particularly vigorous politician.⁹⁷ However, Mansfield, a pottery and tile manufacturer, was a Vice-President of the Liberal Labour League, an organisation that

⁹¹ ‘The City of Leicester: Parliamentary history since 1835’, *A History of the County of Leicester: volume 4: The City of Leicester* (1958), 201-250. Available online: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=66565&strquery=Hill>. [Accessed: 09/06/14]; *DDT*, 17 May, 1913, 6; *DLB*, 3, 31-2; H. Tracey, (ed.), *The Book of the Labour Party: Its History, Growth, Policy, and Leaders*, Volume III (Undated), 268-9; Marshall, *Militancy*, 135, 141, 157, 181, F1 and 2.

⁹² Simmons, *Soapbox Evangelist* (Chichester: Janay Publishing Company, 1972), 11-17; *DLB*, 13, 339ff.

⁹³ Simmons, *Soapbox*, 173.

⁹⁴ *PML*, 08 Jun, 1911, 375.

⁹⁵ *DLB*, 3, 163. Also: Wearmouth, *Twentieth Century*, 97.

⁹⁶ *HDM*, 29 Nov, 1907, 6. The Doxology sung was possibly ‘Praise God from whom all blessings flow’, a Primitive favourite: Sid Chaplin, ‘Durham Mining Villages’ in M. Bulmer (ed.) *Mining and Social Change : Durham County in the Twentieth Century* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015 reprint of 1978 edition), 76.

⁹⁷ <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-levi-morse/>

existed to increase working-class representation within the Liberal Party.⁹⁸ Representing an agricultural district, he continued the campaign for allotments that had characterised Arch's trade union and parliamentary career.⁹⁹ Richardson, a tea merchant and grocer who was described as a Lib-Lab MP despite his status as an employer, long enjoyed a mutually supportive relationship with the Labour Movement.¹⁰⁰ He even came close to standing for the LRC in the 1906 election.¹⁰¹ Ultimately remaining a Liberal, he claimed to speak 'for the Labour Party' in Parliament, although his purpose was to emphasise that the Lib-Labs – even one who was an employer – were as capable of representing working-class interests as the arriviste Labour Party.¹⁰²

Indeed, the Church perceived itself as blind to class distinction and committed to full democracy. In 1906, Guttery boasted that Primitive Methodism's 'wealthy members are loyal to democracy, and its poorer ones are sane in their aspirations. We have no social divisions amongst us, such as embitter other churches.'¹⁰³ Correspondingly, he counselled that 'Free Churchmen must allow no middle-class timidity or prejudice alienate them from a Labour Movement that is full of national hope and promise'.¹⁰⁴ Echoing Guttery's sentiments, in 1906 the *Leader* praised Charles Fenwick as 'an advanced yet sane reformer'.¹⁰⁵ It is noticeable that the subjects of the most detailed articles relating to the MPs elected in that year were regarding Wilson and Fenwick: local preachers, Liberals, trade unionists, and moderates.¹⁰⁶ Significantly, the Church obviously disapproved of Doughty after he crossed to the Liberal Unionist benches. Although Primitive Methodist commentators were pleased to claim Burt and Shackleton as their own, despite Burt never having been a member of the Church and Shackleton's undetermined connection, they were quick to deny Doughty. In 1906, when some newspapers claimed that Doughty was a Primitive Methodist, the *Leader* insisted that it was 'some years since he [Doughty] has ceased to be associated with us'.¹⁰⁷ However, in the same edition that denied Doughty, Guttery asserted that J. Hodge, a former Presbyterian turned Wesleyan, and W. Brace, a Baptist, were Church members; the explanation may be that they were trade unionists and

⁹⁸ *MG*, Feb 29, 1904, 5.

⁹⁹ *JHC*, V158, 49, 270; V161, 75; V162, 15-16, 108-9. *Hansard*, 29 April 1901 vol 93 cc54-5, 11 June 1903 vol 123 cc646-7.

¹⁰⁰ *NEP*, 15 Nov, 1906, 5; 15 Jan, 1910, 7; 03 Dec, 1917, 2. *DDT*, 14 Dec, 1908, 3; 10 Jun, 1910, 2. *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, 12 Dec, 1904, 2. *HDM*, 08 Sep, 1908, 6. *SDT*, 23 Oct, 1911, 9. *Aldersgate*, 1910, 245.

¹⁰¹ Labour History Archive and Study Centre (People's History Museum/University of Central Lancashire): LP/LRC/8/279, May 14, 1903; LP/LRC/19/391-2, Jan 1905; LP/LRC/20/211-212, 1905 Feb 3-6; LP/LRC/22/207-212, 1905, Mar-Apr. *NEP*, 16 Jan, 1906, 5.

¹⁰² *Hansard*, 10 July 1907 vol 177 cc1688; *PML*, 28 Dec, 485

¹⁰³ *PML*, 01 Feb, 66, 1906.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 15 Mar, 163, 1906.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 08 Feb, 85, 1906.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 22 Feb, 117, 1906.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 01 Feb, 66 and 74, 1906. Also: *Aldersgate*, 1910, 245; Stead, 'Labour Party', 568.

Liberal or Labour Party members, unlike Doughty.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, as he travelled upwards socially, Doughty distanced himself from his early Primitive Methodist allegiance and radical leanings. In 1907, he even dismissed his former Party as ‘Socialists’ bedfellows’ when they attempted to reverse the 1902 Education Act – a particular vexation for Primitive Methodists.¹⁰⁹ His apostasy was total: religious, social, and political.

3.3. Political issues

3.3.1 Labour and Capital

In 1905 the Conference Address emphasised that the Primitive Methodist Church had stood ‘by the people ... in many a time of industrial, social and political crisis’. However, as the Address made clear, its motives were partly pragmatic: industrial and social conditions directly influenced its own fortunes as its largely wage-earning membership often declined during trade depressions.¹¹⁰ Yet, while self-interest played a part, the Church’s utterances were heavily laced with moral indignation. For example, Conferences and Districts protested against the exploitation of Chinese coolies imported into South Africa as they lived and worked in degrading conditions, bordering on slavery.¹¹¹ At a 1909 ‘Social Questions’ session, Ben Spoor, then a local councillor, denounced the ‘curses of Commercialism and greed ... selfish political ideals ... false social standards’ and ‘hideous industrialism’ which combined to make life miserable for the wage-earner.¹¹² Although specific British Labour issues were rarely debated, in his Presidential Address of 1913 Ritson supported the ‘aspiration of the people for a minimum wage’.¹¹³ His views echoed those expressed by Philip Snowden in the House of Common only two months before in which the Labour MP had argued that human beings had a right to a minimum wage due to ‘the moral and Christian faith of the nation’.¹¹⁴ Support for trade unions at an institutional level was widespread, although never universal. In 1911, Lincoln and Grimsby Districts passed a resolution that its chapels should only use firms that employed unionised labour.

¹⁰⁸ David Howell, ‘Hodge, John (1855–1937)’, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Sept 2013 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33913>, accessed 3 June 2014] John Williams, ‘Brace, William (1865–1947)’, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2011 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/47328>, accessed 3 June 2014]

¹⁰⁹ *Lincolnshire Echo*, 12 Oct, 1907, 4; *DDT*, 28 Nov, 1910, 2.

¹¹⁰ *PMCM*, 1905, 238. Also: *Ibid.*, 1909, 217 when the claim of declining membership being linked to economic conditions was repeated.

¹¹¹ *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 06 May, 1904, 3; *PMCM*, 1906, 219.

¹¹² *PML*, 24 Jun. 422, 1909

¹¹³ *DDT*, 11 Jun 1913, 3. Also: *PML*, 20 Mar, 1913, 195.

¹¹⁴ J. Thompson, ‘Political economy, the labour movement and the minimum wage, 1880-1914’ in E. H. H. Green and D. Tanner, *The Strange Survival of Liberal England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 74.

However, to the disappointment of some, a similar motion failed at that year's Conference.¹¹⁵

Yet, the Church's publications regularly expressed overt support for the Labour Movement. For example, Rev. W.L. Taylor commended the Tolpuddle Martyrs for what they had achieved for 'industrial freedom', concluding that 'the suffering of one generation spells enfranchisement for the next'.¹¹⁶ Ritson welcomed the resurgence of agricultural trade unionism under the leadership of the Primitive Methodist local preacher and future MP George Edwards.¹¹⁷ In 1906, H. Jeffs listed the Tory government's failure to reverse the Taff Vale judgement as one of its notable failures.¹¹⁸ Similarly, an article in the *Aldersgate Magazine* criticised the Osborne judgment of 1909 and acknowledged a need 'to restore the full privileges of Trade Unions in respect to their funds'.¹¹⁹ Yet, the Church was only supportive of a defensive form of trade unionism. Conciliation and arbitration were preferable to industrial action, although strikes were sometimes necessary due to employers' obduracy. Primitive Methodism was sympathetic to wage-earners and their efforts to gain a fair distribution of profits and shorter working hours, but unofficial strikes were regrettable and violent acts committed by strikers deplored.¹²⁰

Responses to the 1912 Miner's Strike, called in pursuit of a minimum wage which they had failed to secure by negotiation with their employers, exemplified the Church's attitudes to Labour and Capital. Primitive opinion had shifted significantly since M.D.'s assertion of 1894 that the campaign for a minimum wage was 'selfish' and 'unreasonable'.¹²¹ With provisos against extremism – such as the militancy and violence of syndicalism – Ritson and Guttery supported the miners during the dispute. They praised the pitmen's passive resistance, saw the principal burden of guilt for the strike on the owners' greed and intransigence, and exulted in the Liberal Government's interventionist Coal Mines (Minimum Wage) Act of 1912, which established local arbitration boards to set minimum wages for colliers. Neither could envisage a Conservative government exhibiting such diplomacy and leadership in Labour's favour.¹²² Guttery had even

¹¹⁵ *PML*, 25 May, 343, 1911; 01 Jun, 364, 1911.

¹¹⁶ *HR*, 1910, 36-45.

¹¹⁷ *PML*, 03 Jul, 484, 1913; Alan Howkins, 'The Centenary of the Farm Workers' Union', *Rural History Today*, 12 (2007), 1, 8.

¹¹⁸ *PMQ*, 1906, 315-25. Also: *Aldersgate*, 1900, 800.

¹¹⁹ *Aldersgate*, 1910, 917-8. According to Pelling, Osborne was a former member of the Social Democratic Federation: 'The Politics of the Osborne Judgment', *The Historical Journal*, 25, 4 (1982), 890-1.

¹²⁰ *PMW*, 04 Jan, 5 and 06 Dec, 948, 1900. *Aldersgate*, 1900, 160. *PML*, 24 Aug, 193, 21 Sep, 258, 16 Nov, 383, 1905; 21 Jan, 45-6, 12 Aug, 550, 1909; 09 Feb, 89, 06 Apr, 225, 06 Jul, 477, 13 Jul, 493, 1911; 11 Apr, 245, 1912; 4 Jul, 553, 1913.

¹²¹ *PMQ*, 1894, 732-5.

¹²² *PML*, 22 Feb, 121, 29 Feb, 137, 07 Mar, 148, 155, 14 Mar, 175, 21 Mar, 188, 183, 28 Mar, 204, 04 Apr, 224, 229, 11 Apr, 245, 1912

suggested that, to settle the dispute, Government might need to nationalise the mines, as the coalowners were incapable of managing them efficiently and fairly. He mocked those who ‘dread socialism more than they dread sin’.¹²³ For Ritson the strike demonstrated that ‘Individualism’ had ‘broken down’ and the ‘nation driven’ to increased ‘State interference’ and ‘various degrees of Collectivism’ – even though the imposition of a minimum wage by legislation was unsought by all the parties involved in the dispute. Moreover, Ritson prophesied that the establishment of minimum wages in one industry would inevitably spread to others, benefitting other wage-earners. He sympathised with Dr Alfred Russell Wallace’s suggestion that out of the ‘labour troubles’ of their time, the working classes would ‘arise’ from their position as ‘the under-dogs of society’ and ‘a new and better social order’ emerge.¹²⁴ The dispute and its legislative resolution were presented as a strike to end all strikes, an industrial victory that promised a means for the peaceful reconciliation of Labour and Capital. Guttery suggested that the successful conclusion to the dispute and the prospects of further industries implementing a minimum wage, would make ‘syndicalism impossible’ in Britain, and vindicated the form of trade unionism evident during the strike. He emphasised that the union’s ‘prominent leaders’ were trained in Primitive Methodist chapels in which they had learnt to ‘storm the ramparts of privilege ... without riot’ and imbibed the principles of ‘persuasion, patience and judgment’.¹²⁵ The *Leader* was also at pains to remind their readers of the miners’ close association with the Church. One columnist noted that miners in Stoke on Trent, ‘so far from spending their time drinking and dog-racing – as some capitalist newspapers suggested all colliers were doing while on strike’ – had renovated the Heron Cross Chapel. Other correspondents and columnists even recorded religious revivals amongst the colliers in their districts. As had happened in the Denaby Coal Strike of 1902-03, chapels raised funds and established soup kitchens to feed the families of all those affected by the strike.¹²⁶ At the end of the dispute, Emily Jones Davies – wife of Rev. W. Jones Davies – praised the ‘sober sense of dignity’ exhibited by ‘English workpeople’ during the recent unrest and encouraged her co-religionists to take pride in the Church’s affinity with working people and its continuing role in educating them for leadership.¹²⁷

The transport strikes of 1911-13 elicited similar responses. In 1913, Ritson expressed his support for the strikers. He argued that, ‘In the main this widespread unrest is due to the conviction of the workers that they are not getting their fair share of the prosperity of

¹²³ Ibid., 07 Mar, 148, 1912.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 21 Mar, 193, 1912.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 224, 224, 1912.

¹²⁶ Baylies, *Yorkshire Miners*, 32. *PML*, 14 Mar, 167, 1912. Also Ibid., 168, 169 and 21 Mar, 187, 195, 28 Mar, 203, 215, 219, 04 Apr, 222, 233, 11 Apr, 240, 18 Apr, 259, 1912.

¹²⁷ *PML*, 18 Apr, 254, 1912.

the country. And they are right.’¹²⁸ Furthermore, he asserted, ‘As a means of gaining the fair share the strike is a clumsy device, but in too many cases it seems the only method available.’¹²⁹ He proposed that nationalisation of the railways was ‘a necessity’, if industrial peace was to be restored.¹³⁰ In contrast to the railway owners, decent employers – such as Hartley and W.H. Lever – introduced profit sharing schemes, built sanitary housing with fair rents, ideally in garden villages or cities, and provided pensions for their employees. The Church preferred Labour and Capital to work in partnership.¹³¹

The Church also supported female wage-earners whom they considered exploited. The Cradley Heath dispute of 1909, a strike involving women chain-makers, began and ended in meetings held in the local Primitive Methodist chapel schoolroom, from which they also received their strike pay and food supplied by well-wishers. In 1909, their ‘sweated industry’ was one of six brought under the aegis of Trade Boards, covering industries where wages were ‘exceptionally low’ and consisting of representatives of the employers and the employed, with some independent members.¹³² Campaigners argued that the low wages paid to women, particularly to homeworkers, employed in sweated industries, provided an encouragement to prostitution, and their poor working conditions were sources of infant mortality.¹³³ Primitive Methodist support for the strikers combined Christian charity, economic and moral motives.

Rev. W. Younger captured the essence of the Church’s stance on Labour issues in an article of 1906. By his estimation, nine tenths of Primitive Methodists were wage-earners: the Church was ‘practically a working class church’. Consequently, he celebrated the increased numbers of working-class MPs, many of them Primitive Methodist local preachers, and predicted that ‘the struggle of this century will be that of labour aiming to secure justice in national status and resources’.¹³⁴ Without exception, Primitive columnists supported improved pay and working conditions for wage-earners. They endorsed legislation that offered enhanced health and safety at work, an increased minimum age for working underground in mines, and encouraged co-operative businesses such as farms.¹³⁵ Advocacy of a day of rest continued to combine Sabbatarianism with the needs of workers

¹²⁸ Ibid., 17 Aug, 573, 1911. Also: Ibid., 31 Aug, 601, 1911.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 04 Sep, 629, 1913.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 24 Aug, 589, 1911.

¹³¹ Ibid., 28 Sep, 267, 1905; 24 Jan, 58-61, 1907; 21 Jan, 46, 28 Jan, 61, 1909; 26 Jan, 57, 1911; 23 Jan, 53, 1913. *Aldersgate*, 1900, 160; 230; 1902, 1909, 284-6, 473-6

¹³² S. Blackburn, *A Fair Day’s Wage for a Fair Day’s Work: Sweated Labour and the Origins of the Minimum Wage Legislation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 121-42; Communist Party History Group ‘Rouse Ye Women’: *The Cradley Heath Chain Makers* (London: Communist Party, 2012), 20, 25-6.

¹³³ Packer, *Liberal Government*, 148.

¹³⁴ *Aldersgate*, 1906, 975.

¹³⁵ *Aldersgate*, 1899, 543-4. *PML*, 03 May, 279, 1906; 31 Jan, 77, 1907; 01 Sep, 599, 1910.

for relief from toil.¹³⁶ H.W.E. argued that Sunday trading, in addition to preventing shop assistants from worshipping, denied them a day of rest and recuperation, ‘necessary to the health and strength of the community’.¹³⁷ Ritson proposed that a statutory rest day for the police would require additional recruitment and, consequently, provide employment opportunities for the unemployed.¹³⁸

The Church’s concern for the workless increased as unemployment became a prominent national issue. *Leader* editorials supported Keir Hardie’s efforts to establish a national system of public works to create employment opportunities for the workless at union rates of pay.¹³⁹ However, H.J. Taylor argued that such schemes were merely palliatives and a ‘real remedy’ required that the ‘economic machine’ be re-adjusted in favour of ‘the people’ rather than Capital.¹⁴⁰ Primitive Methodist publications partly opposed the Aliens Act of 1905 because it discriminated against the poorer class of immigrant, possibly refugees from religious or political persecution. In addition, they feared that the measure could facilitate the use of foreign workers as strike-breakers, consequently reducing wages and increasing unemployment for British wage-earners. Similarly, Connexional concern for Chinese coolies in South African Mines was primarily humanitarian, but tinged with an anxiety that cheap Asian labour restricted employment opportunities for the white working-class. Moreover, some editorials suggested that the mine owners did not want to employ white labourers who would combine in trade unions to improve their wages and conditions.¹⁴¹ Such considerations co-existed with artlessly expressed racial stereotyping. For instance, in 1906, Rev. Hind protested that the Chinese coolies were often outlaws, committing ‘robbery, pillage, rape, and arson’.¹⁴² During the election of that year, Liberal Party campaigners played on the same combination of philanthropic and Labour concerns.¹⁴³

Although Doughty’s actions require separate exemplification, the other Primitive Methodist MPs often collaborated in pursuing Labour policies that reflected those of the Church. Although two issues generated dissension – the eight hour day and minimum wage for miners – co-operation was typical. Significantly, when John Wilson spoke in

¹³⁶ *PMQ*, 1904, 710-9.

¹³⁷ *PML*, 31 Jan, 65, 1907.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 24 Jul, 533, 1913.

¹³⁹ *PML*, 20 Jul, 114, and 10 Aug, 162, 1905. For an example of Hardie’s speeches on this matter, *see Hansard*, 20 June 1905 vol 147 cc1174-203. Also: Finlayson, *Citizen*, 114.

¹⁴⁰ *Aldersgate*, 1909, 870-1

¹⁴¹ S. Auerbach, *Race, Law and the ‘Chinese Puzzle’ in Imperial Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 30. *PML*, 06 Jul, 74, 13 Jul, 98, 20 Jul, 114, 03 Aug, 146, 10 Aug, 162, 12 Oct, 306, 28 Dec, 481, 1905; 24 May, 349, 1906; 06 Jun, 378, 04 Jul, 466, 1907; 04 Feb, 78, 1909. *Aldersgate*, 1903, 250 and 1003; 1904, 77. *PMQ*, 1906, 324.

¹⁴² *PML*, 24 May, 350, 1906.

¹⁴³ R.K. Bright, *Chinese Labour in South Africa, 1902-10: Race, Violence, and Global Spectacle* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 160-1.

opposition to Enoch Edwards on the Coal Mines (Eight Hours) Bill, he regretted the ‘difficulty’ of the situation, ‘not because he had a bad case ... but because he found himself in opposition to Hon. Members with whom he had worked shoulder to shoulder on many occasions’.¹⁴⁴ For example, the MPs worked together to repeal the effects of the Taff Vale Decision of 1901 that made trade unions liable for any loss of profit to the employer during a strike, and the Osborne Judgement.¹⁴⁵ The latter, despite being a direct assault on Labour Party funding, affected all trade union sponsored MPs adversely and, consequently, united them across party lines. (Henry Pelling cites Burt, Shackleton, and Taylor in this context; Taylor initiated one attempt to reverse the judgement.)¹⁴⁶ Although health and safety issues in coal mines were still a high priority, legislation aimed at protecting those who found it difficult to unionise, such as the police, shop workers, the unemployed and those employed in ‘sweated industries’ also saw them work together, even when they were in opposition regarding the Eight Hours Bill.¹⁴⁷ For example, in 1907 and 1908, as the eight hours debate reached its peak, Edwards and Fenwick, on opposite sides in the argument, co-sponsored Bills requiring employers to provide ‘character notes’ (references) to employees seeking alternative employment.¹⁴⁸ One rare exception of dissension occurred during a debate on including ‘the right to work’ in the unsuccessful Unemployed Workmen Bill of 1908. Edwards, Fenwick, Johnson, Parrot, Arthur Richardson, Taylor, Stanley and Wilson voted for inclusion with the Labour Party and a minority of Liberals, while Levi Morse joined Doughty in voting against.¹⁴⁹

However, there was more serious dissension over the eight hour day and the minimum wage – exemplifications of sectionalism in the Labour Movement. Edwards, Harvey, Haslam, and Stanley were prominent in the campaign for an eight hour day. Conversely, Burt, Fenwick, and Wilson opposed them, voicing their union members’ anxieties that a successful Eight Hours Bill would require Durham and Northumberland miners to adopt a three-shift system with major consequential disruption to their communities. However, after 18 months of debate the campaign for an eight hour day finally succeeded in 1908. Despite the North-Eastern MPs’ concerns, all the Primitive Methodist MPs present during its passage voted in support, but only after Durham and Northumberland were allowed a

¹⁴⁴ *Hansard*: 11 May 1906 vol 157 cc41-92.

¹⁴⁵ *JHC*, V157, 48; V158, 13; V159, 23; V160, 18; V165, 22; V166, 52; V167, 18. *Hansard*, 13 April 1910 vol 16 cc1321-63, 06 August 1912 vol 41 cc2975-3087, 29 January 1913 vol 47 cc1355-463. *SDESG*, 28 Jul, 1902, 3. *MH*, 06 Jun, 1903, 5. *SDG*, 07 Dec, 1904, 3.

¹⁴⁶ Pelling, ‘Osborne’, 896 and 908. Also: *Hansard*, 13 April 1910 vol 16 cc1321-63.

¹⁴⁷ *JHC*, V162, 17, 125, 423; V163, 21, 23, 27, 62, 113 and 161; *Hansard*, 20 June 1905 vol 147 cc1174-203; *WDP*, 16 Mar, 1910, 10. Also: J. Shepherd, ‘Labour and Parliament’ in Biagini and Reid (eds.), *Currents of Radicalism*, 203-4.

¹⁴⁸ *JHC*, V162, 43 and V163, 68.

¹⁴⁹ *Hansard*, 13 March 1908 vol 186 cc10-99. See J. Harris, *Unemployment and Politics: A Study in English Social Policy 1886-1914* (Oxford: OUP, 1972), 165-8, 240-4.

period to prepare for the significant changes to their working practices that the new Act implied.¹⁵⁰ Inevitably, the resultant disruption to the shift system in Durham caused a significant number of unofficial strikes. On polling day for the 1910 election, 8,000 miners marched through Gateshead protesting at Johnson voting for the Act. They carried banners proclaiming, 'Down with Johnson, the three-shift candidate' and he lost the election.¹⁵¹

The minimum wage campaign also divided the MPs, although there was a shared desire to avoid employing industrial action in its pursuit. Haslam, Harvey and Edwards wished to achieve the minimum wage by negotiation and had significant concerns about the MFGB calling the 1912 strike, the first national strike of miners. Burt, Fenwick, and Wilson also had reservations regarding both the practicality of implementing a minimum wage and the advisability of a national strike. As with their opposition to the Eight Hours Bill, they believed that wages should be negotiated by collective bargaining, still cautious of seeking state intervention unless necessary. However, the MPs voted together consistently during the passage of the Coal Mines (Minimum Wage) Act of 1912, the North-Easterners acceding to the TUC's and their members' wishes.¹⁵²

Due to their reluctant acquiescence in the 1912 miners' strike, Earl Grey, the Northumbrian magnate, accused Burt, Fenwick and Wilson, of having been 'sidetracked' by new unionism. According to Grey, they had abandoned the conciliatory methods of 'old unionism' by which the miners had gained so much:

What appears to me ... is that there is a battle going on, not between Labour and Capital – because there always has been that battle – but a new battle of a strange character between the old unionism and Radical individualists who have endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation between Labour and Capital by collective bargaining, and a new unionism which appears to repudiate arrangements and contracts and to aim at the abolition of the right of private ownership.¹⁵³

Grey was undoubtedly articulating a sincerely held coalowner's perception. However, the Church and its MPs' preferred relationship between Capital and Labour was still a 'Defence, not Defiance' approach, an outlook on industrial relations that could be described as *pacifist*. Exemplifying this was the Labour Dispute Bill of 1911 that Fenwick and Enoch Edwards presented to Parliament in 1911 in association with Will

¹⁵⁰ *Hansard*, 10 December 1908 vol 198 cc779-907, 11 December 1908 vol 198 cc942-1098, 14 December 1908 vol 198 cc1285-361, 18 December 1908 vol 198 cc2269-94. *JHC*, V161, 28; V162, 15; V163, 22, 62.

¹⁵¹ Gregory, *Miners*, 78-9

¹⁵² *Derbyshire Courier*, 11 Nov, 1893, 7. *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, 10 Jan, 1912, 6. *SDESG*, 01 Dec, 1911, 5; 05 Jan, 1912, 7; 05 Jul, 1912, 5. *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 03 Jan, 1912, 5. *WDP*, 11 Jan, 1912, 10. *YPLI*, 12 Feb, 1912, 7. *Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald*, 01 May, 1912, 3. *MH*, 26 Jul, 1912, 3. *Hansard*, 22 March 1912 vol 35 cc2229-345, 22 March 1912 vol 35 cc2345-402, 22 March 1912 vol 35 cc2417-27. Also Thompson, 'Political economy', 62-88.

¹⁵³ *Hansard*, Lords, 27 March 1912 vol 11 cc650-726.

Crooks and Arthur Henderson (the latter a Wesleyan). The Bill proposed the suspension of any intended industrial action for a ‘cooling-off period of 30 days’ – to allow time and space for mediation – and fines for strikers who ignored its provisions. Demonstrating that these MPs had a different conception of trade unionism to many in the Labour Movement, their Bill was not well received by the TUC.¹⁵⁴ Fenwick believed that ‘strikes never solved anything at all’. However, his motivation was partly pragmatic; commenting on the employment of a national strike to achieve the MFGB’s pursuit of a minimum wage, he explained that his experience taught him that ‘Society would always protect itself against measures of that kind’.¹⁵⁵ Burt epitomized the Connexion’s traditional promotion of industrial peace without accepting the wage-earner’s subservience, when he told the Northumberland Miners’ Association that, until the industrial system changed, ‘they could not abandon strikes’. ‘However’, he continued, ‘if they could not abandon strikes they could not abandon conciliation and reason, and appeal to argument in their settlement of disputes’.¹⁵⁶ In a similar vein, a *Leader* editorial on the 1912 Coal Strike, although critical of the MFGB ‘at one crucial period of the deliberations’, attributed the miners’ success, the strikes’ pacific nature, and attempts to resolve the dispute quickly, to the determination and diplomacy exhibited by the chairman of the MFGB, Enoch Edwards, and his ‘comrades’ Albert Stanley and W.E. Harvey. The author was at pains to emphasise that Edwards was a ‘prudent peacemaker’, exemplifying the very essence of the Sermon on the Mount, and he ‘never conceals his supreme devotion to Jesus Christ and his loyalty to the Primitive Methodist Church’.¹⁵⁷

Following the Coal Mines (Minimum Wage) Act of 1912, Taylor and Harvey sponsored a Bill to introduce a minimum wage and regularise the hours of labour for agricultural labourers.¹⁵⁸ They were attempting to implement a TUC policy of 1910 – initiated by the future Primitive MP George Edwards and adopted by the Labour Party in 1912 – that equated the farm workers’ pay and conditions with those in sweated industries. Edwards’ Eastern Counties Agricultural Labourers’ and Small Holders Union had failed to secure their employers’ agreement to establishing an arbitration panel with similar powers and composition to the Trade Boards and sought to achieve the same end by legislation.¹⁵⁹ Like the miners Edwards wished to avoid industrial war.

¹⁵⁴ *DLB*, 1, 117; *JHC*, V166, 424.

¹⁵⁵ *MH*, 26 Jul, 1912, 3.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 21 Jul, 1911, 4.

¹⁵⁷ *PML*, 28 Mar, 203, 1912.

¹⁵⁸ *JHC*, V168, 132.

¹⁵⁹ A. Howkins and N. Verdon, ‘The state and the farm worker: the evolution of the minimum wage in agriculture in England and Wales, 1909-24’, *Agricultural History Review*, 57, II (2009), 259-62.

The MPs also embraced purely moral causes – improved animal welfare and the prohibition of incest, prostitution, procuration and obscene publications¹⁶⁰ – yet, congruent with the opinions expressed in Connexional publications, their morality sometimes coincided with Labour interests. One such was the employment and treatment of Chinese coolies in South African mines. Burt was particularly active on this issue both in Parliament and outside.¹⁶¹ Speaking at one Primitive Methodist chapel, he criticised the conditions under which the Chinese labourers were employed as inimical to ‘the dignity of labour’ and asserted that the mine owners’ foremost desire was to secure ‘cheap labour’ that would work at lower rates than white miners.¹⁶² Similarly, although Fenwick asserted that he did not wish ‘to curtail the employment’ of Chinese seamen on British ships, he insisted that they ‘should not be employed under terms and conditions which practically amounted to sweating or unfair agreements which tended very largely to deprive British-born subjects of their legitimate calling’.¹⁶³ The MPs’ opposition to the Aliens Act of 1905, as expressed by Wilson and Fenwick and supported by the votes of Burt, Mansfield and Parrott, embodied the same mix of moral justifications alongside class and Labour considerations. Like many in the Labour Movement, they feared that the Act, a project inspired by apprehension regarding Jewish immigration, was antagonistic to poorer immigrants yet employers wishing to import strike-breaking labour could exploit it.¹⁶⁴ Indicating that their motives were primarily in defence of Labour interests – even if sometimes employing racial stereotypes – Edwards, Shackleton, and Fenwick sponsored Bills to prevent British workers’ employment as blackleg labour abroad.¹⁶⁵

On the issues of Chinese labourers and the Aliens Act, Doughty presented a stark contrast with his former co-religionists. In 1904, Rev. John Bradbury, the Primitive Methodist minister for Grimsby, responding to Doughty’s support for the use of Chinese labour in the Transvaal mines, published a letter that he had written to the MP. Bradbury accused the mine-owners of preferring cheap and compliant workers, describing the Chinese labourers as ‘slaves’ and ‘chattels’. He asserted that his own congregation at Flottergate, a chapel with which Doughty had previously been well acquainted, was ‘practically unanimous and strongly resolute [in] opposition to the decision you have

¹⁶⁰ *JHC*, V161, 13; V162, 158; V163, 137; V164, 130; V165, 38, 107; V166, 30, 114, 204, 212; V168, 83.

¹⁶¹ *Hansard*, 13 July 1905 vol 149 cc548-9, 18 July 1905 vol 149 cc1059-60, 27 July 1905 vol 150 cc682-715, 26 November 1906 vol 165 cc1253-4; Watson, *Labour Leader*, 301-306.

¹⁶² *MH*, 11 Nov, 1905, 3.

¹⁶³ *Hansard*, 03 March 1908 vol 185 cc618-56.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 27 June 1905 vol 148 cc268-325, 03 July 1905 vol 148 cc847-76, 10 July 1905 vol 149 cc110-62, 17 July 1905 vol 149 cc903-57, 18 July 1905 vol 149 cc1137-61; H. Wray, ‘The Aliens Act of 1905 and the Immigration Dilemma’, *Journal of Law and Society*, 33, 2 (2006), 302-23; A. Bashford and J. McAdam, ‘The Right to Asylum: Britain’s 1905 Aliens Act and the Evolution of Refugee Law’, *Law and History Review*, 32, 2, (2014), 314-319.

¹⁶⁵ *JHC*, V162, 423; V163, 113. Auerbach, *Race*, 40 and 42.

supported'.¹⁶⁶ Although the epistolary exchange between Doughty and Bradbury was civil, what makes it remarkable is that the two were old acquaintances; only months before their public disagreement Bradbury had acted as a pallbearer at the funeral for Doughty's first wife.¹⁶⁷ It is significant that Doughty's second marriage was to a Roman Catholic, according to the rites of her own Church, and he received an Anglican burial.¹⁶⁸ By the time of his second marriage, Doughty was described as 'one of the dandies of Parliament, a conspicuous diner out and a prominent entertainer at the House itself'.¹⁶⁹ This was hardly the image presented by the other Primitive Methodist MPs. Although some of Doughty's actions were aimed at improving the situation of the share fishermen who numbered among his constituents, such as his campaign to include them within the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act, the majority of his political work was as an advocate for the fishing industry, in which he had a major personal interest.¹⁷⁰

During the year following the difference with Bradbury, Doughty consistently voted with the government during the passage of the Aliens Act. Yet, in 1911, he supported a Tory amendment to that Act, ostensibly to prevent the immigration of undesirable aliens while protecting the genuine refugee from exploitation in 'sweated conditions'. He even spoke at length regarding a clause proposing that immigrants must be paid at rates set by the local Trade Boards and, consequently, requested backing for the amendment from Labour members. However, such support was not forthcoming. Charles Roberts and Ramsay Macdonald declared the proposal to be little more than an attempt to exploit the electorates' xenophobia in the wake of the Sidney Street Siege. They condemned the amendment for masquerading as a 'socialistic proposal' by guaranteeing Trade Board, rather than Trade Union, rates of pay to immigrants.¹⁷¹

3.3.2 Temperance, gambling and smoking

In addition to issues of church government and belief, two political topics dominated Conference discussions: the drinks trade and education. Conference supported numerous attempts to restrict the sale of alcohol on Sundays or to children and increase regulation of licensing arrangements – including enhanced rights for those objecting to the granting of licenses. All these Private Members' and government promoted attempts failed, except for

¹⁶⁶ *HDM*, 07 Apr, 1904, 5; *YPLI*, 15 Apr, 1904, 9.

¹⁶⁷ *HDM*, 19 Jan, 1904, 3.

¹⁶⁸ *MCLGA*, 30 Apr, 1914, 10; *HDM*, 15 Aug, 1907, 6.

¹⁶⁹ *HDM*, 18 Jul, 1907, 4.

¹⁷⁰ *Hansard*, 04 December 1906 vol 166 cc781-860, 26 April 1911 vol 24 cc1807-8.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 28 April 1911 vol 24 cc2106-85.

an increased tax on whisky, The Children's Act of 1908, which restricted the sale of alcohol to minors, and the Temperance Syllabus of the Board of Education.¹⁷²

Although contributors to the publications supported many other political causes, temperance remained a Primitive shibboleth. By way of example, a *Christian Messenger* editorial of 1900 suggested that any future Liberal government must promote temperance legislation as its priority.¹⁷³ Drink was an evil as it affected the health, income, and domestic harmony of working-class homes.¹⁷⁴ *Primitive Methodist World*, which had a regular 'Temperance World' section, habitually carried stories of domestic abuse and penury resulting from the craving for liquor.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, in 1904, an editorial in *Aldersgate* linked the Tory government, landlords, and the clerics of the Established Church within a 'Church of Bacchus' that functioned at 'the expense of the masses'. To this iniquitous combination:

it is nothing that judges, statesmen and medical men say that the drink evil is the cause of more crime and misery than all other things, and that Judge Grantham has just told us that of four charges for murder and six or seven for attempted murder, drink was at the bottom of nearly all of them.¹⁷⁶

Solutions offered ranged from Local Options to nationalisation of the drinks trade or total prohibition. Some contributors also suggested that alternative, healthy entertainment was required to reduce the appeal of the public house.¹⁷⁷

However, devotion to the temperance cause was never total. In the years prior to the First World War, although 99 per cent of ministers and 90 per cent of local preachers were total abstainers, it has been estimated that a third of the general membership were not.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, some voices challenged the traditional understanding that temperance alone would remove all social evils. In 1905, Rev E.J. Kirtlan, a Wesleyan, accepted that liquor compounded poverty, but proposed to the London Primitive Methodist Council that insufficiency of income would remain even if everyone abstained from liquor. He argued that only a living wage for all wage-earners and significant income redistribution from the rich to the poor would result in the eradication of poverty. His comments initiated a lively debate that 'revealed a wide divergence of view, but was extremely helpful and stimulating'. The Primitive Methodist Chair concluded by suggesting that both temperance

¹⁷² *PMCM*, 1899, 170; 1900, 176; 1901, 156; 1902, 146; 1904, 208; 1905, 223; 1906, 202; 1907, 209; 1908, 215, 232; 1910, 217-8; 1911, 231; 1912, 214; 1913, 248.

¹⁷³ *CM*, 1900, 41-2.

¹⁷⁴ *PMQ*, 1908, 490-506; *HR*, 1911, 421-434, 1913, 26-70. *Aldersgate*, 1903, 250-1, 1002; 1907, 999; 1909, 80. *PML*, 19 Oct, 322, 1905. Minutes Gt Thornton Street, (C DCW/90), 02 Dec, 1907.

¹⁷⁵ *PMW*, 11 Jan, 23 and 29, 18 Jan, 45, 55, 1900.

¹⁷⁶ *Aldersgate*, 1904, 76-7. Also: *CM*, 1899, 10 and 100; 1900, 105-07.

¹⁷⁷ *PML*, 01 Jul, 431, 1909.

¹⁷⁸ C. Field, "'The Devil in Solution': How Temperate were the Methodists?", *Epworth Review*, 27, 3, 2000, 778-93.

and social reform were equally necessary.¹⁷⁹ In 1908, Hind echoed Kirtlan's views, proposing that temperance legislation would not eradicate all social evils: reform of the land laws and a fairer distribution of wealth were also crucial.¹⁸⁰ Kirtlan and Hind were not alone in their views – an increasing number of other social commentators paralleled the Primitive Methodists in accepting that environment, in addition to improvidence, contributed to poverty.¹⁸¹ As a ten year old in 1903, when visiting absent Sunday school scholars who were 'living in poverty and squalor', Jim Simmons, a lifelong teetotaler, also 'began to question the dictum of the time – that poverty was caused by drink'.¹⁸² Similarly, although George Edwards recognized that alcohol was a significant factor in the majority of the cases that he presided over as a magistrate, he acknowledged the comfort the public house afforded the hard-pressed agricultural labourer: a factor in rural deprivation and depravity, but not paramount.¹⁸³

Burt, Fenwick, Wilson, Harvey, Shackleton, and Arthur Richardson were energetic in their support for temperance legislation. Even Doughty sponsored one Private Members' Bill related to temperance soon after his move to the Liberal Unionists. However, it was his last action in support of temperance; henceforward he opposed any measures to restrict the drinks trade, casting one of his last parliamentary votes against a Local Option for Wales in 1914. For the most part the other MPs' proposals and votes supported the partial restriction of liquor sales on Sundays or election days and the introduction of a Local Veto.¹⁸⁴ Richardson, who was most active on this issue, asking questions or contributing to debates on temperance on nine separate occasions in 1908 alone, also proposed the abolition of tied houses. Although this was not a direct temperance measure, the Movement endorsed it, considering that the number of public houses would reduce in consequence.¹⁸⁵ Except for Doughty, the MPs' aversion to the drinks trade was only partly moral – they also objected on class grounds. A manifesto of the Trade Union and Labour Leaders' Temperance Fellowship, signed by 22 Liberal and Labour MPs, including Burt, Johnson, Arthur Richardson, Shackleton, Taylor and Wilson, portrayed the trade as 'one of the greatest obstacles to the

¹⁷⁹ *PML*, 16 Nov, 389, 1905.

¹⁸⁰ *PMQ*, 1908, 302.

¹⁸¹ Finlayson, *Citizen*, 177-179.

¹⁸² Simmons, *Soapbox*, 5.

¹⁸³ P. Catterall, 'Labour and the Politics of Alcohol: The Decline of a Cause', 4, 5 and 9. An Institute of Alcohol Studies Report, September 2014. Available online: <http://www.ias.org.uk/uploads/pdf/IAS%20reports/Labour%20and%20the%20politics%20of%20alcohol%20-%20The%20decline%20of%20a%20cause.pdf> [Accessed 13/03/15].

¹⁸⁴ *JHC*, V154, 18, 19; V155, 13, 15; V156, 15, 54; V157, 17, 25; V158, 14; V159, 46; V160, 19; V161, 191; V162, 315; V163, 33; V164, 18; V165, 20; V166, 22; V167, 18; V168, 16. *Hansard*, 27 July 1899 vol 75 cc602, 28 April 1908 vol 187 cc1043-4, 02 November 1908 vol 195 cc796-907, 08 October 1912 vol 42 cc251-315, 09 October 1912 vol 42 cc473-92, 24 February 1914 vol 58 cc1614-9.

¹⁸⁵ *JHC*, V162, 315. *The Argus* (Melbourne), 23 Mar, 1904, 4. Also: <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-arthur-richardson/1908>.

progress and efficiency of the working class movements'. Liquor diminished wage-earners' 'effective power of combination and squanders the resources that might be better spent in securing the aims of Trade Unionism'. The manifesto condemned 'those who manufacture and sell liquor' as 'generally enemies of the progress of the working classes.'¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, Harvey claimed that mine owners 'preferred men who got drunk, flew pigeons and took dogs out on a string'; trade unions could help man achieve temporal salvation, but, in turn, they needed to be 'knowledgeable' and 'morally earnest'.¹⁸⁷

Conference also called for legislation to restrict gambling, although their emphasis was largely on educating children against the vice and reforming individual gamblers.¹⁸⁸ In 1905, the *Leader* offered a typical condemnation of the vice as 'a mad haste for money',¹⁸⁹ echoing a common Liberal view that a gambler's winnings were undeserved, an 'unearned increment'.¹⁹⁰ Typical of many Primitive Methodist converts, John Wilson, previously wedded to the vice, had repudiated gambling.¹⁹¹ Shackleton considered that there 'were no greater evils in this country than ... gambling and intemperance'. Gambling was 'fastening like a vampire' on to football and ruining the 'noble national game'.¹⁹² According to his daughter, his objection to the triple vices of drink, gambling and smoking, became 'a matter of principle' but originated in the unpretentious reason that he 'simply wanted the money for something else'.¹⁹³ His antipathy to gambling manifested itself in several Private Members' Bills and parliamentary speeches, as it did with Arthur Richardson and Mansfield. Shackleton and Arthur Richardson supported the introduction of a Street Betting Bill in 1906 but regretted that the final Act, which some regarded as discriminatory against working-class gamblers, only prohibited unregulated street bookmakers, leaving the racecourses of the wealthy untouched. However, unlike Shackleton, Fenwick, and Taylor, when the Bill was in committee, Richardson voted for the half measure offered; he believed that street betting wrought untold misery on working men and had to end.¹⁹⁴

The Church's attitude to smoking was ambivalent, although disapproval of the habit was increasing. Smoking was common enough among ministers and lay officials for Conference to provide a 'smokeroom' and gift cigars to prominent Connexional leaders.¹⁹⁵ In a letter to

¹⁸⁶ *Dundee Courier*, 01 Jan, 1908, 5. Also: Martin, *Lancashire Giant*, 186.

¹⁸⁷ Quoted in Goadby, *Prize Pair*, 16.

¹⁸⁸ *SDT*, 17 Jun, 1901, 6; *HDM*, 22 Oct, 1901, 4.

¹⁸⁹ *PML*, 06 Jul, 74, 1905.

¹⁹⁰ Packer, *Liberal Government*, 134.

¹⁹¹ Wilson, *Memories*, 200.

¹⁹² *MG*, 21 Jun, 1909, 9.

¹⁹³ Martin, *Lancashire Giant*, 144, 153-4.

¹⁹⁴ *JHC*, V161, 174; *Hansard*, 16 August 1901 vol 99 c1146, 28 April 1903 vol 121 cc647-8, 31 July 1906 vol 162 cc860-9, 01 August 1906 vol 162 cc1144-70; M. Huggins, *Flat Racing and British Society, 1790-1914 A Social and Economic History* (London: Routledge, 1999), 197-9.

¹⁹⁵ *MCLG*, 25 Jun, 1907, 17.

the *Leader*, G. Andrews expressed disapproval of Church leaders setting such a poor example to young people; he condemned smoking as a ‘pernicious habit’ that threatened the ‘health and morals’ of the younger generation and their ‘physical and moral purity’.¹⁹⁶ Andrews’ views – although not typical of a national ‘pro-smoking culture’ – were increasingly representative of Primitive Methodist opinion and those of contemporary social commentators concerned with ‘national racial degeneration’.¹⁹⁷ The Church’s training college for ministers shared Andrews’ views and prohibited smoking, with at least one trainee minister failing his probation due to his tobacco habit.¹⁹⁸ From 1906 the Church encouraged the establishment of Primitive Methodist branches of the Anti-Cigarette League – an organisation which promoted a voluntarist abstention from smoking until its members reached the age of majority.¹⁹⁹ The MPs were also less committed to prohibiting smoking, except for children. Burt even admitted to having a ‘twiff of a cigarette now and then’.²⁰⁰ They generally regarded smoking as a regrettable vice rather than a case for legislation where adults were concerned. Consequently, Shackleton endorsed a Private Member’s Bill to prohibit smoking for children: the unsuccessful Juvenile Smoking Bill in 1906.²⁰¹ Except for Doughty, all the MPs present voted for prohibition during the debates on those clauses of the 1908 Children’s Bill that proscribed the sale of cigarettes to minors. They disagreed with Sir Frederick Banbury, a Conservative MP, who argued that such ‘continual interference on the part of the State in the home life of the young was wrong’.²⁰²

3.3.3 Disestablishment and ecclesiastical matters

Conference persisted in its cries for disestablishment of the Established Church, re-invigorated by the furore over education. In addition, it condemned Anglicanism’s growing ‘ritualism’.²⁰³ Disestablishment was a necessary step towards ‘social reform, national education, and complete civil and religious liberty’.²⁰⁴ In 1912, when a Bill for Welsh disestablishment was before Parliament, Conference passed an almost unanimous resolution of support. Mr T. Kell, supported by one other delegate, objected to the discussion; he considered the matter to be party political rather than religious, and Conference an inappropriate arena for debate. However, neither protester disagreed with disestablishment

¹⁹⁶ *PML*, 08 Nov, 755, 1906.

¹⁹⁷ M. Hilton, *Smoking in Popular British Culture 1880-2000* (Manchester: MUP, 2000), 163.

¹⁹⁸ *MG*, 22 Jun, 1899, 11. Anonymous, *The Nonconformist Conscience Considered as a Social Evil and Mischief-Monger by One Who Has Had It* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1903), 30.

¹⁹⁹ *PML*, 08 Nov, 750, 1906; 24 Feb, 119, 1910. Minutes of Great Thornton Street Circuit Quarterly Meetings, (C DCW/90), 03 Dec, 1906. *PMCM*, 1909, 199; 1910, 216.

²⁰⁰ Watson, *Labour Leader*, 59.

²⁰¹ *DDT*, 14 Dec, 1908, 3; *JHC*, V161, 52.

²⁰² *Hansard*, 13 October 1908 vol 194 cc172-288.

²⁰³ *PMCM*, 1899, 171.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 1903, 201. Also: *Ibid.*, 1911, 234; *PML*, 29 Jun, 58, 1905; *Aberdeen Journal*, 25 Jun, 1905, 6.

itself, only with the context in which the debate occurred. The *Hull Daily Mail* described Kell's speech as 'totally unacceptable to the Conference and, at one time it was somewhat difficult for him to proceed ... [until] Appeals for fair play were made ... [and] respected'. Good humouredly, the President teased Kell for daring 'to be a Daniel'.²⁰⁵ Conference went further in 1913, and, without any dissent, delegates unanimously urged the use of the Parliament Act to overcome any opposition in the Lords to disestablishment or temperance Bills.²⁰⁶

Articles in the Primitive press demonstrate that the cry for disestablishment transcended issues of religious freedom. The Anglican Church's influence over schools and teacher training, its alliance with the landed interests in rural communities, its votes within the reactionary House of Lords and its association with the brewers, combined to brand the State Church anathema to Primitive Methodists.²⁰⁷ Essentially, as an *Aldersgate* editorial asserted in 1903, Anglican clergymen were 'all Tory Agents, and exceedingly active ones'.²⁰⁸ The religious and economic power of the parson in village societies rankled through generations of Primitive Methodists, even after they had moved to the city.²⁰⁹ The Established Church was considered a reactionary religious and social force. One example of its backwardness that irritated some Primitives was its opposition to cremation. Rev. John Day Thompson considered the Anglicans' objections inimical to the ordinary man and woman on the grounds of sanitation and, significantly, the sparing of valuable agricultural land. He insisted that 'The earth was made for the living, not the dead'.²¹⁰ Rev. Arthur Wilkes voiced the essential Primitive Methodist stance when he endorsed the 1912 Bill for Welsh Disestablishment as the first step towards the separation of the Established Church from the State: the Anglican Church would become a Free Church, on equal footing with all other denominations.²¹¹

None of the Primitive Methodist MPs attempted to introduce Private Members' Bills regarding disestablishment, although Burt continued to promote legislation permitting marriage to a dead wife's sister, eventually legalised in 1907.²¹² He made a significant number of written and verbal responses during the Established Church (Wales) Bill as Chair of the Public Petitions Committee, but confined his comments to factual statements on the

²⁰⁵ *HDM*, 26 Jun, 1912, 7. Also: *PMCM*, 1912, 226

²⁰⁶ *PMCM*, 1913, 248, 251-2; *DDT*, 19 Jun, 1913, 3.

²⁰⁷ *PML*, 03 Jan, 10, 1907 and 13 Feb, 109, 1913. *Aldersgate*, 1903, 47-9; 1907, 999-1000. *SDESG*, 22 Aug, 1899, 2.

²⁰⁸ *Aldersgate*, 1903, 1001-2.

²⁰⁹ Bebbington, *Conscience*, 65; see the case of William Windsor, Vice-President of Conference in 1899.

²¹⁰ *PMQ*, 1900, 82-98.

²¹¹ *HR*, 1912, 286-301. Also: *Aldersgate*, 1912, 503.

²¹² *JHC*, V160, 19; V161, 29; V162, 15; *Hansard*, 07 April 1905 vol 144 cc914-58.

number of petitions received either in support or against the Bill.²¹³ Otherwise, except for the debate on education, the Primitive Methodist MPs were customarily mute on matters regarding the Anglican Church. However, except for Doughty, all present at the Third Reading of the Established Church (Wales) Bill of 1913 voted in favour of severing the link between Church and State in that principality.²¹⁴

3.3.4 Education

Although education had long occupied an important place in the Church's political agenda, it was to assume a near paramount position during this period. In 1900, Conference was aggrieved that the Conservative Lord President of the Council had refused to receive the Church's Education Committee to discuss their long established grievances, such as religious tests for teachers.²¹⁵ Rev James Pickett, Connexional Education Committee Secretary, feared that a Conservative victory in the election of that year would have grave consequences for a working-class church: that the Tories would overturn the compromise solution of Forster's Education Act of 1870.²¹⁶ Indeed, Balfour's Bill and, subsequently, Act of 1902, brought educational issues sharply back into the foreground of Primitive Methodism's political priorities. The Bill proposed the abolition of School Boards, and replacement with Local Education Authorities – whereas Nonconformists wished to see them extended as an essential element of local democracy. It also recommended the incorporation of denominational schools into the state system with support from local rates. Such financial support would ensure their survival when they appeared to be on the verge of extinction. The Church regarded the Act of 1902 as not only exacerbating their religious grievances, but, in combination with the London Education Act of 1903, it also destroyed the possibility of a democratic and national school system.²¹⁷ The Sunderland and Newcastle District Meeting passed a resolution in May 1902 that captured the Connexion's concerns and grievances concerning the Bill. It:

sought to destroy the educational settlement of 1870 ... [and] will lower the standard of national efficiency by its ungenerous treatment of education, by its failure to co-ordinate elementary, secondary, and technical education, under the control of popularly elected authorities in suitable areas, such education being generously supported because under public control. Also we oppose this Bill because of its disturbance of religious concord. It perpetuates and aggravates the injustices now inflicted upon the Nonconformists of this land; closes the teaching profession in thousands of schools to the children of Dissenters; it also leaves the

²¹³ *Hansard*, 01 January 1913 vol 46 cc363-4.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 05 February 1913 vol 47 cc2231-337.

²¹⁵ *PMCM*, 1900, 164. Also: *SDESG*, 15 Feb, 1901, 2.

²¹⁶ *PM*, 27 Sep, 638-9, 1900.

²¹⁷ *PMCM*, 1900, 181; 1901, 194-5; 1903, 200-1. *MG*, 02, Apr, 1903, 8. Packer, *Liberal Government*, 100-1. According to Simon, the Anglican Church opposed School Boards as these elected bodies put secular educational interests first: B. Simon, *Education and the Labour Movement: 1870-1920* (London: Camelot Press, 1965), 215.

training colleges, which are maintained by public funds, under denominational control. We hold the Bill to involve the public endowment of religious dogma and sectarian institutions, and we call upon our people to oppose these proposals by every means in their power, for the sake of religious freedom, the future of our children, and the truest prosperity of our fatherland.²¹⁸

Arguably, Primitive Methodists opposed the Act with greater vigour than any other Free Church. In the immediate aftermath of the Act's passage, John Wilson presented a petition of Primitive Methodist grievances to Parliament, describing it as 'a disgraceful sectarian plot ... a most discreditable attack on the best part of our educational system'.²¹⁹ Dr. John Clifford, a leading Baptist, initiated a campaign of 'passive resistance' in opposition to the Act: a refusal to pay the school rates. Although Conference left it as a matter of individual conscience whether its members supported Clifford's campaign, it lauded and supported those who did. By 1907, 60 Primitive Methodists had been imprisoned for refusal to pay the education rates – more than any other denomination. A remarkable protest when compared to the 15 Wesleyans imprisoned, despite their membership being roughly double that of the Primitives. Primitives' largely rural base left them most aggrieved at the incorporation of denominational schools into the state system; in over 2,500 villages occupied by Primitive Methodists, there were only denominational schools. In 1905 alone, 30 Primitive Methodists were imprisoned for refusing to pay rates – among whom was Rev. George Bennett, the newly appointed editor of the *Leader*.²²⁰ It is hardly surprising that Clifford described the Primitive Methodists as the 'Ironsides' in this 'Holy War', holding 'the front position' against the Act.²²¹

Conference hoped that repeal would follow the Liberal election victory of 1906.²²² In practice, they were disappointed and irritated by the Liberals' inability to enact legislation that addressed their concerns and their failure tested Primitive Methodist allegiance to the Party. Expressing 'profound regret and irritation', even 'vehement indignation', the Conference of 1907 reminded the government that they had been brought to power with Nonconformist support and their failure to act on education was leading to 'an increasing apathy'. This was so 'paralysing some of the best fighting forces of the country as to augur ominously for the future of the Government itself'.²²³ Conference expressed some satisfaction when sectarian tests for those applying to teacher training colleges were

²¹⁸ *SDESG*, 05 May, 1902, 3.

²¹⁹ *PMCM*, 1903, 194-5.

²²⁰ Bebbington, *Conscience*, 141-147. *PMCM*, 1902, 174 and 181-2; 1903, 201, 222-3. *Newcastle Journal*, 18 Jun, 1898, 6. G.I.T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain: 1869-1921* (Oxford: OUP, 1987), 285. Minutes of Great Thornton Street Circuit Quarterly Meetings, C DCW/90. 24 Mar and 05 May, 1905.

²²¹ *PML*, 19 Oct, 313-4, 1905.

²²² *PMCM.*, 1904, 213; 1905, 210, 228; 1906, 191-2, 208-9, 219; 1912, 226.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 1907, 215. Also, see Koss, *Nonconformity*, 86-7 and 90.

abolished, one of the few concessions gained during this period. However, partly as a consequence of the House of Lords' resistance to any Liberal attempts at repealing or reforming the Balfour Act, Primitive 'irritation' increased and the passive resistance campaign continued.²²⁴ For example, Rev. Edwin Dalton, President of Conference in 1911, had a set of silver seized in 1912 because of his continued refusal to pay the whole of the education rate.²²⁵ Ritson was also fined for refusing to pay the education rate that year.²²⁶ Repeating its claim of 1912 that inaction was a 'peril to the government itself', the 1913 Conference expressed its increasing exasperation on this issue; they fretted that nothing had happened

despite assurances of certain Cabinet Minister ... some means should be found to give relief to passive resisters ... great numbers of our people are on the verge of revolt; and should apathy and abstention from the polls characterise their attitude at the next general election, the most disastrous consequences will follow.²²⁷

Tellingly, a Catholic critic of the Liberal Government's attempts to settle the education question cited the Primitive Methodists as exemplifying intransigent Nonconformist attitudes. He claimed that, for Primitives, 'no settlement will be acceptable which gives any foothold to sectarian privilege, and which indeed is not wholly unsectarian and absolutely civic and national'.²²⁸ Educational issues had dragged Primitive Methodists deeper into the political arena. In 1906, the Chair of the Hull Synod exulted in this as he declared that the Education Act of 1902 had resulted in Primitive Methodists being 'looked upon as political people', if they weren't already considered such.²²⁹

As the publications stressed, the 1902 Act and the remaining educational disabilities continued to be grievous concerns for Primitives. Rev. J. Dodd Jackson's short story, 'The Strange Case of W. Bates', offers a particularly clear indication that the uproar over education derived from and merged with wider political and social concerns – with issues of political power and party allegiance. Bates, a retiring and apolitical tradesman, was so aroused by the iniquity of the Education Act that he became a passive resister and, in the 1906 election, did more to save his village from 'Tory representation' than any other inhabitant. Intriguingly, the story concluded with Bates marrying a militant suffragette who had suffered imprisonment on three occasions for her own cause.²³⁰ As a Primitive Methodist circular of 1906 clarified, the Church sought reformation of the Act not only to diminish 'the power of the priest' but also 'the tyranny of reactionary politicians' over

²²⁴ *PMCM*, 1908, 206, 219 and 232; 1909, 191 and 203; 1910, 209, 221-2; Bebbington, *Conscience*, 140.

²²⁵ *HDM*, 21 Mar, 1912, 5.

²²⁶ *Luton Times and Advertiser*, 27 Sep, 1912, 6.

²²⁷ *PMCM*, 1912, 226; 1913, 237 and 250-1.

²²⁸ J. Thompson, *The Education Question: 1870 -1914* (London: Sherratt and Hughes, 1914), 26.

²²⁹ *HDM*, 01 May, 1906, 3.

²³⁰ *Aldersgate*, 1910, 459-463.

education.²³¹ The author of the *Leader's* 'Women's Work' column expressed this with even greater clarity in 1907 and added some practical concerns for the Church's aspirational members:

Politically the situation is of intense interest to the women of our church. So many of our young people are going into the teaching profession that the question of religious tests is an all-important one. Primitive Methodism is essentially the church of the rural districts, and the question of tests and creeds is vital. Those who live in towns have little conception of the petty tyranny of the villages—which must be broken.²³²

The writer was referring to 'young people' of either sex – Conference had noted teaching as a career path for Primitive Methodist women from the late 1870s.²³³

Despite their preoccupation with the denominational control of schools, the publications welcomed any improvements to elementary, secondary and higher education, including the provision of well-equipped schools in modern, sanitary buildings with equality of access for all – regardless of gender – up to the highest level.²³⁴ The only dissenting voice appears to have been Rev. G. Fawcett, who complained that the spread of council secondary schools threatened the existence of Elmfield College, the Primitive Methodist establishment in York for ministers' sons and prosperous laymen at which he was the Head teacher.²³⁵ However, Guttery's pronouncement that 'thoughtful men' saw an expansion of 'efficient secondary education' as a 'vital necessity for commercial and social progress' was more typical of the Connexion.²³⁶ Furthermore, for Guttery education was:

the secret of social emancipation; for that reason it is feared by those who would maintain the snobbery of suburban London and the oppression of rural England, and for that reason we must not allow it to be shadowed by clerical control and landed influence.²³⁷

The Church's official solution to denominational control was unsectarian religious education in schools although this was not the only Primitive view. Some contributors to the publications advocated a purely secular role for schools, claiming that non-denominational religious education was impracticable. The only way to end denominational control was to omit religious education from the school curriculum.²³⁸ Moreover, in a letter to the *Leader*,

²³¹ Machin, *Politics*, 275.

²³² *PML*, 03 Jan, 2, 1907.

²³³ *PMCM*, 1878, 89-91. Quoted in Graham, *Three Colleges*, 22.

²³⁴ *Aldersgate*, 1903, 47-49, 919-20, 1001; 1904, 75; 1905, 244. *PML*, 15 Jun, 9, 13 Jul, 91, 09 Nov, 362 and 372, 14 Dec, 442, 1905; 17 Jan, 36 and 41, 07 Feb, 87, 1907; 11 Feb, , 88, 1909; 16 Jun, 1911, 34 and 41.

²³⁵ *YPLI*, 22 Jun, 1905, 5. Graham, *Three Colleges*, 6-23.

²³⁶ *PML*, 21 Sep, 250, 1905.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 23 Jan, 50, 1913.

²³⁸ *Aldersgate*, 1904, 331; 1910, 833. *PML*, 20 Jul, 188 and 12 Oct, 313-4, 1905; 21 Feb, 123, 1907; 25 Feb, 123 and 18 Mar, 174, 1909. *NM*, 06 Sep, 1907, 6.

Samuel Parry asserted that most rank-and-file Nonconformists favoured a secular solution.²³⁹ Even some prominent ministers, such as John Day Thompson and George W. King supported a secular solution and served on the General Council of the Secular Education League.²⁴⁰ There were also differences of opinion regarding the provision of free school meals for underprivileged children. Some favoured voluntary efforts to provide them, while others advocated state funding: an expression of the continuing tension between individual and collectivist solutions to social problems. For example, in 1900 Thomas Jackson advocated free school meals for ‘necessitous children’, although provided by voluntary effort rather than state funds in order to counter ‘socialistic propaganda’.²⁴¹

Educational reform was an important issue for all of the MPs, both before and after their election. Many of them served on School Boards or education committees as local councillors. Horace Mansfield and, if Catholic claims were accurate, John Johnson were passive resisters. If Johnson himself was not a passive resister, his brother, a Primitive Methodist minister serving a Durham mining community at that time, was prosecuted as such. In the 1904 election some Catholics favoured Johnson’s candidacy as he supported Irish Home Rule. Yet, the Catholic Church itself was hostile to Johnson as he was opposed to the Education Act of 1902.²⁴² Education was of particular importance to Mansfield, who spoke more frequently than most MPs during the debates on the 1902 Bill.²⁴³ He was a vote-teller on several occasions and proposed an amendment to safeguard teachers’ liberty of worship and belief.²⁴⁴ David Shackleton made his maiden speech during the passage of the 1902 Act.²⁴⁵ Education (and the House of Lords) dominated William Harvey’s electoral campaign of 1907.²⁴⁶

However, despite their congruence of passionate support for educational reform, they differed in their solutions to the key matter of religious instruction in schools. Several of the MPs with a trade union background, favoured a secular solution – in line with TUC policy.²⁴⁷ H. Jeffs, writing in the *Quarterly Review* in 1906, suggested that this was a common feature

²³⁹ *PML*, 18 Mar, 174, 1909.

²⁴⁰ The Pamphlet Collection of Sir Robert Stout, Volume 9: The Secular Education League, 19 and Volume 3A [Appendix 3], Tract 13: The Secular Education League - An Appeal to Nonconformists, 24-6.

²⁴¹ *PMW*, 18 Jan, 46, 1900. Also: *Aldersgate*, 1905, 799; *PML*, 09 Nov, 372, 1905 and 07 Feb, 87, 1907.

²⁴² *Cornishman*, 15 Oct, 1903, 6. *The Tablet*, 16 Jan, 25 and 23 Jan, 14, 1904. *SDESG*, 16 Sep, 1904, 4.

²⁴³ <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-horace-mansfield/1902> for 14 speeches made or questions asked by Mansfield on education.

²⁴⁴ *JHC*, V157, 330, 341, 437, 483.

²⁴⁵ *Hansard*, 07 November 1902 vol 114 cc386-447.

²⁴⁶ *PML*, 31 Jan, 73-4, 1907.

²⁴⁷ *NM*, 06 Sep, 1907, 8.

of those in the Labour Movement who were influenced by continental views.²⁴⁸ It was certainly true of Shackleton, Burt, and Fenwick, who were leading members of organizations campaigning for secular education, and of J.W. Taylor.²⁴⁹ Horace Mansfield also appears to have favoured only secular education being compulsory.²⁵⁰ During the committee stage of Birrell's Bill – the Liberals' attempt to replace the 1902 Act – Burt, Fenwick, Taylor, Johnson, and Shackleton supported an amendment offering a purely secular education, which Doughty, Edwards, Haslam, Arthur Richardson, and Wilson opposed. Arthur Richardson favoured a purely secular education system but he voted for unsectarian religious education in line with what he believed to be his constituents' wishes. However, except for Doughty, who voted against, all others present ultimately supported Clause 6 of the Bill, a compromise solution. Clause 6 removed religious education from the compulsory curriculum, permitting its provision outside normal school hours. Thus Rev. Hind supported Clause 6 in the *Leader*, suggesting that it was an appropriate replacement for the Cowper-Temple dispensation of the 1870 Act.²⁵¹ There was also dissension over Clause 10, which granted voluntary schools a period of grace during which they could continue to offer denominational instruction and employ teachers willing to do so. Edwards, Fenwick, Haslam, Johnson and Wilson supported the proposal while Mansfield, Arthur Richardson, Shackleton and Taylor joined the small minority who opposed it.²⁵² Following the failure of Birrell's Bill – the result of both the Lord's opposition and divisions within Nonconformity – all the Primitive Methodist MPs present supported an unsuccessful attempt to support non-denominational religious instruction from the rates but deny funding to denominational teaching.²⁵³ Predictably, Doughty reneged on his early and unreserved support for the Connexion's position regarding education.²⁵⁴ He described the 1902 Education Act as 'the greatest Children's charter ever conferred upon the country'.²⁵⁵ Instead, his comments on education increasingly followed Conservative policy and focussed on the increasing costs of education for ratepayers.²⁵⁶

By contrast, the other MPs supported an expanded and accessible national school system. Fenwick, who had served on the Secondary Education Commission, was concerned

²⁴⁸ *PMQ*, 1906, 324.

²⁴⁹ Martin, *Lancashire Giant*, 66; The Pamphlet Collection of Sir Robert Stout, Volume 9: The Secular Education League, 19; Simon, *Education*, 273 ff. Marshall, *Militancy*, 157.

²⁵⁰ *DDT*, 29 Sep, 1902, 3.

²⁵¹ *Hansard*, 28 May 1906 vol 158 cc116-232, 02 July 1906 vol 159 cc1437-523; *PML*, 05 Jul, 469, 1906. *NEP*, 03 Sep, 1906, 5; Machin, *Politics*, 286.

²⁵² D. Bebbington, 'Free Church MPs of 1906' in S. Taylor and D.L. Wykes (ed.), *Parliament and Dissent* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 144-7.

²⁵³ N. Daglish, *Education Policy Making in England and Wales: The Crucible Years 1895-1911* (London: Woburn Press, 1996), 316 ff.; *Hansard*, 26 February 1907 vol 169 cc1453-61.

²⁵⁴ *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, 16 Nov, 1906, 6.

²⁵⁵ *YPLI*, 12 Jan, 1912, 4.

²⁵⁶ *Hansard*, 02 July 1902 vol 110 cc540-98, 16 May 1906 vol 157 cc458-9, 28 May 1906 vol 158 cc116-232.

that one effect of the 1902 Bill would be to ‘starve’ secondary education by making the new Local Education Authorities responsible for all phases of statutory schooling. He believed that the country’s educational priority should be to redress ‘the backward condition of secondary education in this country’.²⁵⁷ Burt and Fenwick were early supporters of the National Labour Education League, two out of the three Lib-Lab MPs who supported its foundation in 1901. The League aimed ‘to secure by legislation a three tier education system, reclassified as successive, age-defined stages, through which every child should proceed’.²⁵⁸ Again, in 1911, Burt and Harvey sponsored a Bill that proposed to make school attendance compulsory to the age of 14 – a reform not implemented until 1920.²⁵⁹ Fenwick, Shackleton, Taylor and Stanley also championed improved education for children with sensory impairments. Although not arguing for inclusion in the modern sense, they wanted education to be available to all, regardless of ability or disability.²⁶⁰

Edwards, Fenwick, Johnson, Shackleton, Taylor, and Wilson also promoted and supported state provision of free school meals for necessitous children.²⁶¹ Even the older generation of MPs rejected voluntarist solutions. Taylor, who spoke with great passion on this issue, claimed that his conversion to Primitive Methodism was the result of hearing a sermon on the Threes B’s: ‘be ambitious, be studious [my emphasis], be prayerful’, an exhortation that implied an embrace of educational opportunity.²⁶² He made his maiden speech on the issue of school meals, arguing that ‘half-fed’ children could not attempt to ‘be studious’ without adequate sustenance. Taylor rejected voluntary solutions, arguing that poor children should receive free school meals from the State on both humane and economic grounds:

You cannot have the highest education, you cannot have any education, unless you make those who are to receive it fit to receive it. You cannot save the soul unless you attend to the body ... education is a far bigger thing than mere learning, that it means attention to the physical conditions of life as well as the conditions which surround the mind, and unless the one is dealt with the other will fail ... a child should not be compelled to attend school unless they were satisfied that it was fit to undergo the strain required ... Every stunted child was a charge on the nation's resources; every well-developed child was a valuable addition to the nation's assets. Whatever might be the true definition of parental responsibility he and his friends said that every child [my emphasis] born into the nation imposed on the nation a responsibility, and that that responsibility should be duly regarded. A good deal had been said about charity, and he admitted that benevolent men and women in the country had done much to soften the hard circumstances under which these half-fed children had lived, but there was conclusive proof that the

²⁵⁷ *Hansard*, 09 July 1902 vol 110 cc1264-99.

²⁵⁸ Martin, *Politics of Schooling*, 141.

²⁵⁹ *JHC*, V166, 80; Simon, *Education*, 350-7.

²⁶⁰ *JHC*, V165, 76; 1911, 253; 1912, 53. *Hansard*, 04 July 1911 vol 27 c1100W.

²⁶¹ *JHC*, V160, 97; V161, 28; V162, 15; V163, 23. *Hansard*, 18 April 1905 vol 145 cc531-71, 02 March 1906 vol 152 cc1390-448, 07 December 1906 vol 166 cc1315-465, 02 June 1908 vol 189 c1714.

²⁶² Wearmouth, *Twentieth Century*, 134-5.

method of dealing with the feeding of school children by charitable organisations was almost absolutely unsatisfactory.²⁶³

3.3.5 Military matters

Public opposition to the war of 1899-1902 was confined to a sizable minority in which individual Dissenters were well represented, although, as Greg Cuthbertson has argued, most of their churches 'sanctified military involvement against the Boers.'²⁶⁴ Richard Price asserted that only the Baptists remained united against the war – a claim contradicted by Geoffrey Searle who awarded that distinction to the Primitive Methodists, partly basing his claim on Cuthbertson's research.²⁶⁵ Moreover, Hughes has emphasised that the Primitives exhibited 'sharp divisions' regarding the war and even some of those who were critical were not absolute pacifists or enemies of the Empire itself: their opposition focused on specific issues²⁶⁶

Indeed, Primitive Methodists expressed divergent views at Conference. Rev. G.E. Butt, one of the most vociferous supporters of the war, a missionary in South Africa and future President of Conference, addressed delegates in 1900. He asserted that he and his fellow missionaries abhorred war. However, the 'ambition' of Kruger and the Boers' determination to 'set up slavery through the length and breadth of South Africa' had dragged the Empire into the current conflict. Some delegates applauded his comments.²⁶⁷ Throughout the war and after, Butt continued to condemn Boer ill-treatment of natives and remained a 'strenuous supporter' of the war, as did Rev. E.W. Smith, a fellow missionary in South Africa.²⁶⁸ Another well-received speaker at the 1900 Conference suggested that the war was regrettable and unnecessary, although he commended the patriotic spirit of the times that had united 'the Anglo-Saxon race'.²⁶⁹ However, at a well-attended public meeting of the same Conference, Guttery attacked contemporary militarism. He warned that the 'khaki' spirit abroad would 'revolutionise' national life for the worse and insisted on obedience to the 'Prince of Peace'. An observer claimed that he earned unanimous support.²⁷⁰ Similarly, local meetings of the Church exhibited diverse reactions.²⁷¹

²⁶³ *Hansard*, 02 March 1906 vol 152 cc1390-448.

²⁶⁴ G. Cuthbertson, 'Religion Against the South African War' in D. Lowry (ed.), *The South African War Reappraised* (Manchester: MUP, 2000), 171. Also: Munson, *Lost Culture*, 234.

²⁶⁵ R. Price, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class* (London: Routledge, 1972) 12-13; G.R. Searle, *New England*, 287-9.

²⁶⁶ Hughes, *Conscience and Conflict*, 32-4 and 'Dilemmas', 90-92.

²⁶⁷ *WDP*, 21 Jun, 1900, 7.

²⁶⁸ *Tamworth Herald*, 17 Jun, 1905, 8. *SDT*, 11 Sep, 1900, 3. *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, 08 Nov, 1901, 6. *PM*, 19 Apr, 6, 1901.

²⁶⁹ *BM*, 13 Jun, 1900, 6.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 19 Jun, 1900, 2; Hughes, *Conscience*, 32.

²⁷¹ *NE*, 13 Oct, 1899, 4; Hughes, 'Dilemmas', 90.

The Primitive publications also articulated a range of views, although as Hughes suggested, the *Primitive Methodist World* took ‘a more critical line towards the Boer War’ than the *Primitive Methodist*.²⁷² For example, the *World* published a letter from Rev. John Smith, a former missionary in the Cape and former President of Conference, criticising the ‘jingoistic press’ for ‘blackening the character of the Boers, for the purpose of making them appear odious’. He argued that the war originated in Britain’s greedy desire for the gold of South African mines.²⁷³ Although the paper supported a War Relief Fund, the editor was at pains to emphasise that the fund’s aim was not to continue the war, acknowledging that thousands of Primitive Methodists would decline to donate if that were the case – on the contrary more of the paper’s readership would gladly support a ‘Stop the War Fund’. Furthermore, the monies collected were not intended to support ‘reckless imperialism, gold-grabbing or territorialism’, but to sustain widows, orphans and the wounded.²⁷⁴ The paper also drew its readers’ attention to organisations that were working towards ending the war, in case they wished to support their work.²⁷⁵ Editorial comments disapproved of jingoism, and the behaviour of the rowdy crowds who celebrated the relief of Mafeking.²⁷⁶ The *World’s* editorial sympathies are manifest in the publication of a letter written by a soldier who had seen action at the disastrous battle of Magersfontein to his sister:

I remember your words, ‘Don’t be a murderer.’ Cain’s stain will never enter my soul. I don’t forget to fire high. I will not be the tool of any nation. If I take a life when in England I will be hung for it; but if the Government orders me to kill it is all right.²⁷⁷

Although Hughes characterised some of the *Primitive Methodist’s* articles on the war as ‘mealy mouthed’, conciliatory may be a more appropriate epithet. This disposition was epitomised in a serial of 1900 called ‘The Boer’s Daughter’. The heroine sacrifices her own life to save that of an English soldier condemned to death as a spy.²⁷⁸

The other publications carried articles and letters concerning the war and imperial expansion. Although several commentators were critical of both sides to the dispute, most blame was directed at the Tory Government, Cecil Rhodes and capitalists. Articles published in the *Quarterly Review* by Revs. W. Spedding and John Forster expressed opposition to war in general and wished that more diplomatic efforts had been employed to avoid the conflict. Spedding’s article enunciated the ‘economic, physical, and moral evils’ of war and suggested that the suffering and misery experienced by all sides foretold how ‘disastrous in all ways’ a

²⁷² Hughes, *Conscience*, 32.

²⁷³ *PMW*, 11 Jan, 26, 1900; *Edinburgh Evening News*, 16 Dec, 1899, 4; Hughes, ‘Dilemmas’, 91.

²⁷⁴ *PMW*, 25 Jan, 63, 1900.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 65-6.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 14 Jun, 465, 1900.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 25 Jan, 66, 1900.

²⁷⁸ Hughes’, *Conscience*, 31. *PM*, Sep 6, 601-2, Sep 13, 617-8, Sep 20, 633-4, 1900.

European war would be.²⁷⁹ Forster condemned the war, denouncing British capitalists for their wish to annex the Transvaal as a source of cheap labour, diamonds, and gold – although he did not acquit the Boers from all blame.²⁸⁰ Similarly, although *The Messenger* printed an article by Butt supporting the war, it typically deplored war itself and regretted the conflict with the Christian Boer Republics while simultaneously extolling the patriotic spirit of those mobilised to fight against them. It commended the example of earlier soldier preachers who had used their position in the armed forces to spread the gospel.²⁸¹ Editorials and articles in *Aldersgate*, although sceptical of Tory motives in South Africa, condemned both Boer and Anglo-Saxon settlers' ill-treatment of natives. Some were also critical of Rhodes' policy of developing the country through chartered companies rather than through direct imperial rule. Disapproval of Rhodes did not necessarily entail criticism of Empire per se; imperial rule was sometimes defended as a means of protecting the indigenous population from exploitation and facilitating the propagation of Christian civilisation.²⁸² Primitives believed that Empire, however achieved, implied religious, moral and political responsibilities. The conclusion of an article on the war by 'Librarius' is instructive regarding Primitive attitudes to both the war itself and Empire:

England ... will cease to be England if it forgets that it is England not merely to pile up wealth for vulgar and ostentatious millionaires, but because God has given to it the mission of civilising and Christianising the world. British blood has flowed like water to build up our Empire. Let the daring of our soldiers inspire the soldiers of the Cross who, at home or abroad, shall dash themselves against the entrenchments of Satan.²⁸³

Similarly, Rev. John Watson, in a sermon preached at Openshaw, although judging the British Empire to be largely benign in its operation, mused that, 'it is a serious reflection that we have had to wade through rivers of blood to the position that we hold'.²⁸⁴ In 1912, perhaps with the example of the Boer War in mind, J. Dodd Jackson sounded an even more qualified note. He challenged the view that imperialism would save man 'from sordid conditions, from all temptation to make small personal ends the measure of his service'. On the contrary, imperial expansion had too often been a disreputable pursuit of 'dividends'.²⁸⁵

The evidence from Conference, local meetings and the publications confirms Hughes' view that there were significant differences of opinion on the Boer War within the Connexion. However, the balance of opinion was largely against the war. In late 1900, Rev. George Armstrong claimed that 90 per cent of his own congregation in Durham was

²⁷⁹ *PMQ*, 1900, 425-38

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 638-47.

²⁸¹ *CM*, 1899, 20, 152; 1900, 2, 4, 33, 112.

²⁸² *Aldersgate*, 1899, 399, 583-6, 719-20, 950, 954; 1900, 75-6, 147, 277, 475-6, 51; 1903, 782-7.

²⁸³ *Aldersgate*, 1900, 132. Also: *Ibid.*, 229, 317, 397.

²⁸⁴ *PMW*, 01 Feb, 79, 1900.

²⁸⁵ Jackson, *Hartley Lecture*, 44-5.

opposed to the war.²⁸⁶ Tellingly, in October 1901, 800 ministers out of 1099, just over 72 per cent of the Church's total, signed a 'Free Church Ministers' Manifesto on the War' desiring a negotiated peace – conceivably reflecting the majority of their membership. By contrast, 50 per cent of Baptist ministers, 33 per cent of Congregationalists, less than 33 per cent of Presbyterians and 20 per cent of Wesleyans endorsed the same manifesto.²⁸⁷ Furthermore, anti-war attitudes appear to have increased as the conflict progressed. For example, at an anti-war meeting in June 1901, Rev. Jabez Bell admitted that he had altered his earlier views and, consequently, attributed greater culpability for the conflict to Joseph Chamberlain than to Kruger.²⁸⁸ Criticism of the war intensified following revelations of the 'extermination' of Boer women and children in the concentration camps, an outrage against which the General Committee of the Church joined the 'great outcry', while accepting that conditions in the camps gradually improved.²⁸⁹ Also, as time passed, and the human and financial cost of the war became increasingly apparent, its cost diverting funds away from schemes for social reform, condemnation increased, exacerbated by the employment of Chinese labour in South Africa. Rev. George Armstrong's speech to Conference in 1905, when Rev. G.E. Butt was President, typifies much of the post-war comment from Primitive Methodists. British aims in the South African conflict, initially presented as establishing 'equal rights for all, for increased and remunerative employment for white men, for the breaking down of an intolerable oligarchy and the purification of a corrupt government', had proven to be a hypocritical sham. Instead, it had been nothing but 'a great and devastating war'.²⁹⁰ In 1907, with the South African War in mind, Rev. Charles Humble's *pacifist* sentiments would seem to have been typical of most Primitive Methodists at this time:

If England is true to her flag she will never undertake wars of aggression and oppression. Her battles will be not for millionaires, landlords, but in the cause of the oppressed, such as the Armenians. She will rejoice more in her missionaries, soldiers of the Cross ... than in her soldiers of the sword and cannon.²⁹¹

In later life, Humble would be active in the League of Nations movement.²⁹²

Except for Doughty, who consistently supported the government's conduct of the war, the Primitive MPs tended to be critical. Although Burt, Fenwick, Wilson and other opponents of the war were disparaged as 'pro-Boer', this was a misrepresentation of the Primitive Methodist MPs' more even-handed, pragmatic and moral objections. Their main

²⁸⁶ *British Weekly*, 20 Sep, 1900. Quoted in Cuthbertson, 'South African War', 177.

²⁸⁷ S. Koss, (ed.) *The Pro-Boers: The Anatomy of an Anti-War Movement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 230-1; *Grantham Journal*, 22 Jun, 1901, 8; Watts, *Dissenters III*, 348-9.

²⁸⁸ *NM*, 14 Jun, 1901, 6.

²⁸⁹ *Aldersgate*, 1902, 154.

²⁹⁰ *PML*, 22 Jun, 45, 1905. Also: *PML*, 22 Jun, 38, 1905; 21 Feb, 121, 1907; *Aldersgate*, 1903, 82, 198, 355 and 1003; *MG*, 25 Apr, 1905, 4.

²⁹¹ *PML*, 16 May, 326, 1907.

²⁹² *Aldersgate*, 1926, 372.

criticism was the Tory government's failure to settle their disagreement with the Boers through conciliation.²⁹³ Based on their votes in a number of debates up to July 1900, particularly those relating to whether the government had made sufficient attempts to avoid war by arbitration, *The Times* categorized Burt, Fenwick, and Wilson as against the war and Arch as uncommitted. The paper's interpretation of Arch's position was mistaken as, in late 1899, he signed a TUC manifesto criticising the war and, in June of 1901, he endorsed an anti-war candidate for the Stratford on Avon constituency. Furthermore, he was a council member of the International Arbitration League throughout the war, alongside Burt, Fenwick, and Wilson.²⁹⁴ Fenwick did not vote on some early government motions during the war requesting the provision of men and materiel. The *Morpeth Herald* reported a speech of October 1900 in which he justified his abstentions as the only course of action consistent with his views. According to the paper, he acknowledged that British annexation of all South Africa had been 'inevitable' but 'painful' to 'Liberal sensitivities' regarding the 'liberties of the Boer Republics'. The *Herald* did not elaborate on Fenwick's view that the incorporation of the Boers into the Empire was 'inevitable'. However, a few days later, Burt, who had been critical of Rhodes' complicity in the Jameson Raid, clarified the position in one of his own speeches. He considered that any permanent settlement between the British and the Boers would involve the incorporation of the Republics into the Empire but with self-government. Chastising the government for not having done enough to avoid war by arbitration, he described the war as unnecessary and 'the most disgraceful in our history.'²⁹⁵

In later life, Burt regretted that he had not done more to oppose the war. However, his biographer was quick to point out that he had 'never ceased to protest from beginning to end'.²⁹⁶ Indeed, before the war commenced, Burt had attempted to speak in the Commons to urge a negotiated settlement but 'was howled down'.²⁹⁷ Side by side with Fenwick, days after war commenced, he experienced a similar reaction at a public meeting in Newcastle. When either attempted to speak, a jingoistic crowd drowned out their voices by chanting: 'WE – WANT – WAR'. Despite the heckling, Burt and Fenwick persisted in their attempt to continue the meeting. Fenwick vainly tried to inform the audience that he was critical of the Boer refusal to enfranchise the Uitlanders (English settlers in the Transvaal), and attempted

²⁹³ *Western Gazette*, 21 Jun, 1901, 8. *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 22 Jun, 1901, 7. Also: Price, *Imperial War*, 250-1; Koss, *Pro-Boers*, xiv.

²⁹⁴ *The Times*, 31 Jul, 1900, 8 and 22 Jun, 1901, 13; H.B. Davies, *Nationalism and Socialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2009), 109; *MG*, 19 Jun, 1901, 7; Laity, *Peace*, 161; Price, *Imperial War*, 106 ; Koss, *Pro-Boers*, 32-48; *Hansard*, 17 October 1899 vol 77 cc60-160, 20 October 1899 vol 77 cc405-84, 25 October 1899 vol 77 cc600-97, 01 February 1900 vol 78 cc295-400, 06 February 1900 vol 78 cc731-828.

²⁹⁵ *MH*, 06 Oct, 1900, 3.

²⁹⁶ Watson, *Labour Leader*, 200-01. Also: Satre, 116-21.

²⁹⁷ *Hansard*, 02 May 1901 vol 93 cc526-7.

to move a motion regretting the Boer ultimatum that threatened war but reserved its greatest criticism for the British Government's failure to find a diplomatic alternative to war.²⁹⁸

The MPs also argued against the war on economic, social and humanitarian grounds. Burt objected to the war as its costs increased the tax burden – such as import tariffs imposed on sugar and bread to pay for the war – and yet channelled resources away from urgently needed social reforms; and all for an unnecessary conflict that was merely ‘a device on the part of despots to create foreign complications to divert attention from misgovernment and mismanagement at home’.²⁹⁹ Furthermore, even if the Boers were defeated, South Africa would be ungovernable without a permanent military occupation, which would require the exorbitantly expensive deployment of over 100,000 men.³⁰⁰ Both Fenwick and Parrott also complained that the working classes, rather than the wealthy, had shouldered the financial burden of the imperial adventure by paying the Coal Tax, an export duty on coal imposed for the first time in 1901 to fund the war. In addition to its effect on working-class budgets, the tax was an impediment on that industry. In Parrott's view, the wealthy, not the working classes, had supported the war and should pay for it.³⁰¹ While not sparing the Boers from criticism, Burt also deplored the British conduct of the war, particularly the ‘shame of the Concentration Camps’ and other acts of ‘atrocious inhumanity’. Although he acknowledged that the camps were not the result of deliberate cruelty by the British Government or its agents, they resulted from a ‘want of thought’ under ‘difficult circumstance’.³⁰² For Burt at least, his opposition to the war derived partly from his conception of patriotism as expressed on his gravestone: ‘The honour of my country has been the pole star of my political life’.³⁰³ Arthur Richardson, reflecting Burt's dictum, considered the Boer War simply ‘shameful’.³⁰⁴

Mansfield's position on the war is less clear. A speech by Earl Carrington, Mansfield's chief supporter during an election celebration of October 1900, and those parliamentary speeches in which Mansfield himself touched on military issues, suggest that he was not strongly opposed to the war. However, he may have shared the *pacifist* attitudes of his colleagues. He consistently argued against increased military expenditure yet, as the

²⁹⁸ Watson, *Labour Leader*, 196-200; *Newcastle Courant*, 14 Oct, 1899, 8.

²⁹⁹ *MH*, 21 Dec, 1901, 3. Also: *Hansard*, 02 May 1901 vol 93 cc526-7; T.L. Crosby, *Joseph Chamberlain: A Most Radical Imperialist* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 165; *MH*, 21 Dec, 1901, 3; *Hansard*, 02 May 1901 vol 93 cc526-7.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 04 Jun, 1902, 2.

³⁰¹ *Hansard*, 13 May 1902 vol 108 cc36-110, 29 May 1905 vol 147 cc100-53; Price, *Imperial War*, 215-6.

³⁰² *MH*, 18 Jan, 1902, 6.

³⁰³ *YPLI*, 02 Oct, 1926, 6.

³⁰⁴ *NEP*, 17 Jan, 19120, 5.

representative of an agricultural district, made a considerable number of speeches advocating the purchase of British, as opposed to foreign bred, horses for the campaign.³⁰⁵

Hughes is correct in emphasising the Church's *pacifism* and stressing that Primitive Methodist criticism of the Boer War focused on 'specific issues'. Yet the Church and the MPs were more vigorous and censorious in their opposition to the Boer War than that implies. Similarly, although Hughes has described Primitive Methodist objections to war, militarism, and expenditure on armaments as exhibiting a 'diffuse [my emphasis] *pacifism*', the Church's protestations should not be underestimated.³⁰⁶ Conference resolutions in favour of international arbitration and reduced spending on armaments increased in prominence from 1909 onwards. Entertainments disapproved of included Sunday rifle practice for the first time. In 1913, Conference welcomed the end of the Balkan Wars, denouncing the 'trivial pretexts' used to foment war with all its horrors and impediments to social progress. Delegates insisted that expenditure on armaments did not increase security, quite the opposite; it did little more than enrich arms' manufacturers. Additionally, it reduced the budget available for urgently needed social reforms. Furthermore, unnecessary for defence and likely to engender militarism and an aggressive spirit in international relations, conscription was fervently opposed.³⁰⁷

Similar sentiments appeared in the publications, summed up by Guttery's pious hope of 1911 that 'Britain should be a lighthouse of faith rather than a citadel of arms'.³⁰⁸ Perhaps most indicative of the Church's pacific, although not absolutist, spirit was its objection to the militarism and military drill of the Boys Brigade and its official embrace of the Boys' and Girls' Life Brigade. The Life Brigades' emphasis on first aid and 'life-saving' were consistent with the Church's principles.³⁰⁹ Ominously, in 1910, Ritson anticipated that the '*entente cordiale*' with France, requiring British support were France to be attacked by Germany, implied a 'very small chance of retrenchment' in military expenditure, and would almost certainly entail 'the miseries and disasters of conscription' at some future date.³¹⁰ The following year he argued against increased military expenditure and conscription. He proposed that the conscriptionists desired an aggressive foreign policy, which would be 'fatal' to Britain and its Empire whose 'true policy' should be 'defence'.³¹¹ His argument re-

³⁰⁵ *Sheffield Independent*, 14 Dec, 1900, 7. Examples only: *Hansard*, 10 March 1902 vol 104 cc953-4, 11 March 1902 vol 104 c1011. See <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-horace-mansfield/> for more.

³⁰⁶ Hughes, 'Dilemmas', 90.

³⁰⁷ *PMCM*, 1911, 12 and 233-4; 1913, 251-2.252. Also: *PML*, 01 Jul, 455, 1909 and *DDT*, 19 Jun, 1913, 3.

³⁰⁸ *PML*, 01 Jun, 354, 1911. Also: 19 Dec, 878, 1907; 06 Mar, 157 and 17 Jul, 517, 1913.

³⁰⁹ *PML*, 22 Jun, 27 and 38, 1905; 05 Jul, 464, 1906 ; 29 Sep 657 and 29 Oct, 707 and 711, 1910. Also: *PMCM*, 1921, 211.

³¹⁰ *PML*, 17, Mar, 169, 1910.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1911, 26 Jan, 57, 1911.

iterated Fenwick's of 1894, the motto of Arch's and other trade unions and, appropriately in the circumstances, for the English Volunteer forces: 'Defence, but not Defiance.'³¹²

The MPs, particularly Burt, Fenwick and Shackleton reflected the Church's commitment and attitudes by their prominent positions in Peace organisations.³¹³ However, their inclination to peaceful methods of solving international disputes, and attempts to limit military expenditure, did not imply either an absolute pacifism or an antagonism to military personnel. They exhibited a concern that soldiers and sailors were not subject to arbitrary justice or cruel punishments and that their dependants received support from the State when bereaved.³¹⁴ Also, Shackleton and Fenwick were particularly vocal in raising issues regarding wages and conditions of service, including the right to unionize, of civilian government employees engaged in supporting or supplying the military.³¹⁵ However, in harmony with the TUC, they were opposed to conscription.³¹⁶ They considered militarism and conscription a threat to organized Labour, as Shackleton revealed when he expressed concern at the use of soldiers to break strikes.³¹⁷ Arthur Richardson opposed conscription and favoured an army of volunteers as a 'standing army was always to be found on the side of property'.³¹⁸ Likewise, Robert Blatchford, editor of the Socialist newspaper *The Clarion* was an ardent advocate of conscription until 1912 when 'he came to fear that the propertied class might employ such an army against the masses'.³¹⁹ Except for Doughty, all the MPs supported Richard Haldane's voluntarist Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill of 1907. Arthur Richardson and Taylor went further in supporting unsuccessful amendments that would have granted volunteers the right to refuse service in any specific context – allowing them to exercise individual conscience.³²⁰ In 1908, again except for Doughty, who was absent from the debate and vote, they opposed attempts to introduce conscription.³²¹

³¹² *Hansard*, 12 March 1894 vol 22 cc37-75; *The Times*, 23 Jun, 1874, 10; C. W. Dilke and S. Wilkinson, *Imperial Defence* (Cambridge: CUP reprint in 2012 of 1892 original), 34.

³¹³ *The Seventeenth International Congress of Peace* (London: The National Council of Peace Societies, 1909), xii.

³¹⁴ *Hansard*, 01 March 1900 vol 79 cc1459-508, 26 March 1903 vol 120 cc376-404, 05 June 1907 vol 175 cc697-796, 24 November 1908 vol 197 cc92-3, 08 July 1909 vol 7 c1419.

³¹⁵ *MH*, 18 Jan, 1902, 6. *Hansard*, 23 March 1904 vol 132 cc553-80, 30 March 1905 vol 143 cc1810-43.

³¹⁶ *Hansard*, 04 June 1907 vol 175 cc503-605, 30 July 1907 vol 179 cc889-919. R.J.Q. Adams and P. Poirer, *The Conscription Controversy in Great Britain: 1900-18* (London: MacMillan: 1987), 20. Peter Gurney, *Co-operative Culture and the Politics of Consumption in England, 1870-1930* (Manchester: MUP, 1996), 91.

³¹⁷ *Hansard*, 01 July 1907 vol 177 cc373-4.

³¹⁸ *NEP*, 13 Jan, 1910, 2.

³¹⁹ Adams, *Conscription*, 20-2.

³²⁰ *Hansard*, 18 June 1907 vol 176 cc355-435.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 07 July 1908 vol 191 cc1481-9,

As the contemporary arms race initiated more numerous government requests for increased military expenditure, their opposition increased correspondingly. Only Mansfield joined a revolt of a minority of MPs who voted against increased military expenditure in 1908. The other MPs present voted with the government.³²² However, in 1909 Burt questioned the necessity of the Conservatives' plea for four more dreadnoughts, suggesting that the demand was 'scare-mongering', accompanied by the concern that, if heeded, the expense would 'retard social reforms'.³²³ Later in 1909, welcoming Lloyd George's Budget, Arthur Richardson illustrated the co-existence of Primitive Methodist populism, craving for social reconstruction, aversion to tariff reform and distaste for militarism:

Now that we have a rumour of war and we have to start building these "Dreadnoughts,"...I am glad that he, seeing this country has to find large sums of money for these "Dreadnoughts," is placing the burden upon the shoulders of the propertied classes of this country, whose property these "Dreadnoughts" will have to protect. I am glad this Budget is one which makes for social reform based on Free Trade, and is not one based upon Protection and militarism.³²⁴

Similarly, in a speech of 1911 at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, John Wilson fumed at how the arms race had swallowed up £44 million a year on naval expenditure; funds that could have been used for social amelioration.³²⁵ Only Doughty appears to have expressed concern that war with Germany was a very real and imminent threat that Britain needed to prepare for, specifically by proposing the strengthening of East Coast defences and making provision to repair warships at Immingham. However, it is not too cynical to suggest that his business interests in that region – he was a director of the newly built Humber Commercial Dock at Immingham – may have been as major a consideration as his patriotism.³²⁶

3.3.6 Ireland

Primitive Methodist politicians, such as Johnson, Haslam and the future MP Cairns, consistently voiced their support for Irish Home Rule during election campaigns. All Primitives present in the chamber – with the predictable exception of Doughty – voted in support of the cautious Irish Council Bill of 1907 and Asquith's 1912 Third Home Rule Bill. The unsuccessful Bill of 1907 only offered a limited devolution of powers to the Irish and the 1912 Bill stalled after its serial rejection by the House of Lords.³²⁷ Except for these

³²² *Hansard*, 02 March 1908 vol 185 cc355-472.

³²³ *MH*, 10 Apr, 1909, 2.

³²⁴ *Hansard*, 29 April 1909 vol 4 cc549-611.

³²⁵ *PML*, 11 May, 327, 1911.

³²⁶ *Hansard*, 02 April 1909 vol 3 c695W, 26 April 1909 vol 4 cc18-9, 12 May 1909 vol 4 c1805, 01 July 1909 vol 7 cc613-76. *HDM*, 27 Apr, 1914, 5.

³²⁷ *PMQ*, 1906, 324. *PML*, 07 Jun, 382, 1906; 09 May, 311, 1912. *Hansard*, 07 May 1907 vol 174 cc78-195, 09 May 1912 vol 38 cc593-712, 16 October 1912 vol 42 cc1257-367, 28 October 1912 vol 43 cc76-191. *The Derry Journal*, 01 Jan, 1906, 8. *Derbyshire Courier*, 03 Dec, 1910, 3. R. Fanning,

two measures, solutions to the Irish problem were absent from the parliamentary menu. Indeed, the general public was largely ‘apathetic’³²⁸ and the Liberal Party itself ‘unenthusiastic’ regarding Irish Home Rule.³²⁹ Peter Joyce has argued that this lack of enthusiasm – partly a result of division in the Liberal ranks – allowed Asquith’s government to focus more on social reform. By contrast, Nonconformist antipathy to the Education Act of 1902 and widespread fears of tariff reform united its supporters.³³⁰

3.3.7 Free Trade and Protection

The considerable costs incurred by the Boer War and the arms race in the years preceding 1914 resulted in ‘renewed interest among Tories in tariffs on foreign imports as a source of revenue’. However, many Nonconformists still considered Free Trade as upholding international peace.³³¹ In his Presidential Address to the Conference of 1903, Rev. T.H. Hunt attacked Joseph Chamberlain’s recently unveiled plans for tariff reform, alleging that Chamberlain’s promise of old age pensions funded by Protection was ‘pretence’.³³² In his inimitable style, Guttery summarized the reasons for Primitive Methodist objections to tariff reform in a *Leader* article, demonstrating Nonconformity’s ability to turn economic and political issues into a ‘high moral crusade’:³³³

Toryism has again and again shielded scoundrelism in high places, while at the same time it has attacked the breakfast table of the poor. It is this trail of finance that has made Protection to stink in the land ... What does Protection do anywhere but feed unscrupulous monopolies and enrich swollen trusts? and all the while it impoverishes the toiler, and dares to do it in the name of a prostituted patriotism. This is the ugliest manifestation of materialism and greed that England has ever seen. We fight it not only on economic grounds, but on the highest moral grounds. We resent the domination of the millionaire in the domain of government.³³⁴

In 1905, the *Leader* welcomed the National Liberal Federation’s ‘manifesto’ for putting ‘Free Trade, Education and Licensing Acts in the forefront of the Party’s programme’.³³⁵ Reciprocally, in 1909, the North Essex Liberal Monthly published an interview with Arthur Wombwell, a Connexional local preacher, presenting an attachment to Free Trade, social progress, the Liberal Party and Primitive Methodism as

Fatal Path: British Government and Irish Revolution 1910-1922, Kindle version (Faber, 2013), location 627.

³²⁸ M. Bentley, *The Liberal Mind: 1014-29* (Cambridge: CUP, 1977), 10.

³²⁹ Packer, *Liberal Government*, 60.

³³⁰ Peter Joyce, *Realignment of the Left? A History of the Relationship between the Liberal Democratic and Labour Parties* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 36.

³³¹ Packer, *Liberal Government*, 122-4.

³³² *SDG*, 11 Jun, 1903, 3. Also Sydney H. Zebel, ‘Joseph Chamberlain and the Genesis of Tariff Reform’, *Journal of British Studies*, 7, 1 (1967), 131-157.

³³³ W.C.R Hancock, ‘No Compromise: Nonconformity and Politics 1893 – 1914’ *Baptist Quarterly*, 36, 2 (1995), 58.

³³⁴ *PML*, 04 Jan, 7, 1906.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 19 Oct, 322, 1905.

unquestionable corollaries.³³⁶ Hostility to tariff reform was unchallenged within the Connexion and continued beyond the period of this thesis.³³⁷ As ‘Honora’ reminded her readers in her *Leader* column of 1923:

Our fathers taught the narrative from pitiful experience, of going dinnerless to work because the cupboard was bare before the week-end wages were due; they saw Tariff Reform in their empty larders, they felt it in the gnawing pains of hunger; it was imprinted on their pale, pinched faces and their stunted bodies.³³⁸

Except for Doughty, tariff reform was anathema to all the MPs. Wilson had delivered several sermons against Protection as a local preacher.³³⁹ He, like many Primitives, still remembered the effect of the Corn Laws and ‘those dark days of poverty and dear, poor food.’³⁴⁰ Several, such as Shackleton, spoke on Free Trade platforms.³⁴¹ During his election campaign of 1907, Albert Stanley ‘bravely defended his Free Trade ... principles’.³⁴² In January 1910, William Carter, not yet an MP, described Protection as a ‘curse’ and those who advocated it as ‘the greatest criminals on earth’.³⁴³ Haslam argued that, far from reducing the cost of food and curing unemployment, tariff reform was unworkable: the colonies would simply not accept any scheme of imperial preference.³⁴⁴ Rather dramatically, he suggested that ‘any intelligent working man who voted for tariff reform ought to be horse-whipped’.³⁴⁵ Arthur Richardson was also an ardent advocate of Free Trade, as any tax on imported goods placed ‘burdens grievous to be borne upon the very poor.’³⁴⁶ Yet Doughty had travelled so far from that of his former co-religionists’ position on Free Trade that he came to be regarded as ‘the Demosthenes of Tariff Reform’.³⁴⁷ It was his panacea for all things, for example, ‘the only’ solution for the Miners’ Strike of 1912 – called in pursuit of a minimum wage – as, according to Doughty, tariff reform would inevitably lead to higher wages.³⁴⁸ Despite Doughty’s oratory, tariff reform proved unpopular with the Labour Movement and the electorate, playing a significant role in the Liberal victory of 1906.³⁴⁹

³³⁶ Available online: http://www.myprimitivemethodists.org.uk/page_id_19_path_0p4p33.aspx. [Accessed 18/11/14.]

³³⁷ *Aldersgate*, 1903, 1002; 1905, 244; 1910, 833-4.

³³⁸ *PML*, 29 Nov, 770, 1923.

³³⁹ Biagini, *Liberty*, 99-100; *PM*, 18 May, 314, 28 Sep, 643, 1893.

³⁴⁰ Wilson, *Memories*, 40-3. Also: *PMQ*, 1893, 244-54.

³⁴¹ A. Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England : 1846-1946* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 265; *YPLI*, 09 Feb, 1905, 8; *Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald*, 24 July, 1909, 7;

³⁴² *PML*, 08 Aug, 540, 1907.

³⁴³ *NEP*, 24 Jan, 1910, 2.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 27 Nov, 1910, 3.

³⁴⁵ *Derbyshire Courier*, 03 Dec, 1910, 3.

³⁴⁶ *Hansard*, 09 July 1907 vol 177 cc1510.

³⁴⁷ *HDM*, 27 Apr, 1914, 5.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 23 May, 1912, 3.

³⁴⁹ Howe, *Free Trade*, 230-273.



An election cartoon of 1904 depicting John Johnson trouncing Lord Morpeth and dismissing Tariff Reform.³⁵⁰

3.3.8 Old age pensions and related matters

The Church shifted rapidly from attempting to establish its own old age pension scheme in the final years of the nineteenth century to a wholehearted campaign for state pensions. This is a notable example of their increasing endorsement of collectivism. In 1898, the Church, which already provided for its superannuated ministers and needy Aged Local Preachers over the age of 75, established a committee to investigate the possibility of creating a broader old age pension and sickness insurance scheme. It was hoped, at minimum, that the system would include its members who acted as local preachers, class leaders, officials, and Sunday School teachers – a constituency of almost 90,000. Philanthropic intentions and antagonism to the common practice of Friendly Societies holding meetings in public houses instigated the inquiry. The committee proposed a scheme that was in harmony with the Church’s ideals, one based on a combination of self-help, chapel collections, and donations from its wealthier members.³⁵¹ In 1900, a Staffordshire newspaper described it as ‘a tentative proposal by a working class church’ motivated by its resilient associations with members drawn from ‘agricultural localities’.³⁵² However, as Conference minutes make no reference to the proposal, the scheme appears to have been stillborn. Although some Primitives continued to advocate self-help schemes through Friendly Societies, the Church ultimately recognized the limitations of voluntarism

³⁵⁰ *SDG*, 23 Jan, 1904, 2.

³⁵¹ Kendall, *Origins*, Vol 1, 377 and Vol 2, 72; *Spectator*, 28 Jan, 1899, 134; *Liverpool Mercury*, 29 May, 1899, 9; *SDESG*, 21 Jun, 1899, 3; *PMCM*, 1899, 163-5 and 172; *Aldersgate*, 1899, 394; 1900, 157-8.

³⁵² *Staffordshire Sentinel*, 12 Jun, 1900, 4.

and campaigned vigorously in favour of state provision. In 1907, it established a parliamentary committee to progress the issue: an acceptance that self-help and philanthropy alone could not cope with the attendant complexities.³⁵³

A series of articles by Rev. R. Hind are indicative of the priority the Church gave to the campaign. In 1906, he insisted that the newly elected Liberal government prioritise the introduction of pensions. He regretted that increased taxation was being diverted from social welfare schemes to pay for the Boer War. Hind calculated that, if pensions were provided for over sixties, 95 per cent of paupers would be 'taken off the Poor Law'.³⁵⁴ He also contended that everyone over 65 years of age should receive a pension without means-testing.³⁵⁵ As Packer has suggested, unlike Poor Law relief, state pensions were sought as 'a right, rather than ... a grudging and humiliating relief to paupers'.³⁵⁶ Thus, in 1907 Hind applauded the earlier introduction of old age pensions in Germany – accepting that such an innovation 'was unquestionably Socialism', but a variety of Socialism that he was 'inclined eagerly to welcome'.³⁵⁷ In 1909, the year pensions were introduced in England, he suggested that 'the surest way of checking extreme socialism is the passing of such measures of social reform as will make life bearable for the poor'.³⁵⁸ He welcomed their introduction as 'nothing less than the opening of a new era', although he hoped to see 'the scope of the boon widened'.³⁵⁹ The National Insurance Act of 1911, which established sickness benefits for wage earners, also instigated debate within the Connexion. During 1912, motivated by a combination of social and temperance concerns, the Church considered whether it should create a registered Friendly Society to administer sickness funds itself. After lengthy discussion, it decided that existing societies, particularly those within the temperance movement, were better equipped to do so.³⁶⁰

Unsurprisingly, the Connexion supported Lloyd George's People's Budget of 1909/1910, introduced to fund the Liberal's welfare reforms and opposed by the House of Lords.³⁶¹ In April 1910, Guttery went so far as to suggest that, if Edward VII failed to support the government in its attempt to reform the Lords' veto and recognize that 'the

³⁵³ *PMW*, 18 Jan, 43, 1900. *PML*, 09 Nov, 370, 1905; 21 Feb, 114 and 121, 1907; 07 Jan, 12 and 14 Jan, 24, 1909; *Aldersgate*, 1907, 754 and 967; 1909, 79 and 163. *MG*, 20 Jun, 1907, 8. Many of the Dissenting Churches and their MPs supported the introduction of state provided old age pensions at this time: Watts, *Dissenters III*, 316-19.

³⁵⁴ *PML*, 08 Mar, 154, 1906. Also *Aldersgate*, 1902, 796; 1903, 417

³⁵⁵ *Aldersgate*, 1900, 320; 1902, 229.

³⁵⁶ Packer, *Liberal Government*, 146.

³⁵⁷ *Aldersgate*, 1907, 921.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1909, 80.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*; 1909, 163.

³⁶⁰ *PML*, 01 Feb, 68, 21 Mar, 188 and 193, 04 Apr, 224, 06 Jun, 379 and 381, 1912.

³⁶¹ *Aldersgate*, 1909, 917-8; 1910, pp78, and 161. *PML*, 06 May, 287, 27 May, 332, 08 Jul, 469, 23 Sep, 646, 1909.

people are the final arbiters, coming events will swiftly teach him his lesson'.³⁶² The Nottingham District Synod, representing 290 churches, assured the government of its support in its attempts to end the Lords veto: 'real reform' being 'absolutely dependent' on its removal.³⁶³ The Synod echoed the views of one of its prominent members, Arthur Richardson MP, who considered the Lords 'the hereditary enemies of the working classes'.³⁶⁴ 'The Battle is the Lord's', declared Rev. William Welford. Describing a speech of Lloyd George in Edinburgh, he associated the Chancellor with the Biblical David, combatting the Goliath of the Lords, and his congenial message with the Sermon on the Mount.³⁶⁵

Ritson, impeccably encapsulating Primitive Methodism's blend of religious and political sentiment and its broad parliamentary agenda, believed that the ultimate success of the Budget was 'a magnificent victory', presaging 'a new era for Nonconformity'. Not only had it introduced much-needed welfare reform, it implied other changes were imminent: legislation that would diminish the power of the House of Lords in the form of the Parliament Act of 1911. Moreover, Dissenters and Anglicans would soon enjoy 'perfect religious equality' and 'stand side by side against the great foes of drink, gambling, and monopolies and in the fight against sin, tyranny and injustices'.³⁶⁶ For Ritson, as for many Liberals who regarded the Lords as the power base of the Bishops, Brewers and Landowners, the passage of the 'Budget Bill' of 1910 marked the 'death-knell of feudalism' and the coming of a fairer society.³⁶⁷ Except for Doughty, all the MPs supported the principle of increased land taxes and voted for those that were included in the 1909 budget. They were not only a source of pension funding, but a means to progress land reform and reduce the wealth and power of the landowners. However, although pensions were established, Ritson's expectations regarding the budget's long-term effects were unduly optimistic.³⁶⁸ Just over a decade later, Lloyd George successfully repealed his own land taxes – all eight of the Primitives present voted with the minority opposition of 68 MPs.³⁶⁹

³⁶² *PML*, 07 Apr, 216, 1910.

³⁶³ *NEP*, 02 May, 1910, 2.

³⁶⁴ *SDT*, 18 May, 1910, 4.

³⁶⁵ *PML*, 12 Aug, 542, 1909.

³⁶⁶ *Beds Advertiser and Luton Times*, 06 May, 1910, 6.

³⁶⁷ *Aldersgate*, 1910, 78. Also Ritson in *PML*, 22 Dec, 881, 1910. Packer, *Liberal Government*, 78 and 176.

³⁶⁸ I. Packer, *Lloyd George, Liberalism and the Land: The Land Issue and Party Politics in England, 1906-14* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2001), 54-75; Tanner, *Labour Party*, 28, 64-5; *JHC*, V155, 193; *Hansard*, 01 May 1900 vol 82 cc433-88, 02 December 1909 vol 13 cc546-81, 14 July 1920 vol 131 cc2421-527.

³⁶⁹ *Hansard*, 14 July 1920 vol 131 cc2421-527; M. Cowling, *The Impact of Labour: The Beginning of Modern British Politics* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 101.

Enoch Edwards, Thomas Burt, Charles Fenwick, John Johnson, David Shackleton, and John Wilson were active in the National Committee of Organized Labour for Old Age Pensions which was founded in 1899 – Burt serving on the organisation’s National Committee.³⁷⁰ Edwards made his maiden speech on pensions. He proposed that:

all agreed that it was not creditable to a great civilised nation—a nation that all should be proud of—that so many old men, in the evening of their lives, were found without means of subsistence in a country so wealthy. He would urge on the Government that the question was one which should be taken up, even if some other matters before the country were postponed. It was a question which appealed to everyone on the highest grounds, and should be dealt with all possible dispatch. As for the necessary funds, he only hoped the nation would be as ready to find them as it was to find the money needed for the [Boer] war.³⁷¹

As Burt highlighted in one of his monthly circulars to his union members, old age pensions, funded by the People’s Budget, and the related issue of Poor Law reform, was a high priority for several of the MPs – and for the Labour Movement as a whole.³⁷² In 1906, he led a deputation of between 70 and 80 Liberal and Labour MPs to meet the newly elected Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer (Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith). Burt, who spoke first, explained that the deputation’s object was ‘to impress the urgency and importance of the question of old age pensions and to ask that the subject should be placed in the front of the legislative programme of the Government’. Burt and Edwards were two of the deputation’s four spokespeople.³⁷³ For seven consecutive years, beginning in 1901, Burt and Wilson sponsored Private Members’ Bills aimed at establishing pensions for those aged over 65.³⁷⁴ Similarly, Burt, Edwards, Fenwick, Harvey, Haslam, Johnson, Morse, Arthur and Thomas Richardson, Shackleton, Stanley, Taylor and Wilson supported the Pension Act of 1908.³⁷⁵

However, although expressing ‘wholehearted appreciation’ of the 1908 Act, which introduced pensions for those over 70, Fenwick regarded the measure as ‘imperfect’ and ‘not a final one’.³⁷⁶ Burt declared that the 1908 Act had given him more pleasure than any other legislation with which he had been involved. However, it was merely a temporary measure and ‘a complete reform of the poor law system and administration’ must follow³⁷⁷

³⁷⁰ F.H. Stead, *How Old Age Pensions Came To Be* (London: Methuen, 1909), 28, 45, 63, 106, 120, 121, 152, 171, 190, 198, 208, 209, 212, and 213.

³⁷¹ *Hansard*, 14 March 1906 vol 153 cc1352-4.

³⁷² *MH*, 10 Aug, 1907, 3; John Macnicol, *The Politics of Retirement in Britain, 1878-1948* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 153-4.

³⁷³ *NEP*, 21 Nov, 1906, 3.

³⁷⁴ *JHC*, V156, 18; V157, 16; V158, 14; V159, 25; V160, 132; V161, 31; V162, 15.

³⁷⁵ *Hansard*, 29 June 1908 vol 191 cc381-491, 01 July 1908 vol 191 cc780-899 and 09 July 1908 vol 192 cc106-204.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 09 July 1908 vol 192 cc171-5.

³⁷⁷ *MH*, 06 Feb, 1909, 5.

– sentiments which Haslam and Thomas Richardson echoed in Parliament.³⁷⁸ Mansfield, who had raised issues regarding hardships caused by implementation of the Poor Law early in his parliamentary career, appears to have been absent from the Commons during much of 1908 and announced his retirement from politics early in 1909. However, he was firm in his support of the People’s Budget during his final months in office.³⁷⁹ Doughty was absent from the House or abstained during debates on the 1908 Bill, yet he spoke in favour of a 1911 Bill, supported by Labour Party members such as Arthur Henderson, and which amended the 1908 Act to remove hardship anomalies identified since its implementation.³⁸⁰

Perhaps it is a reflection on the class background of many Primitive Methodists and its importance to the Church that *Punch*’s satirical comment on the introduction of old age pensions in 1909, entitled *OAP*, depicted an impoverished and aged Primitive Methodist couple. Portrayed in a simple and barely furnished cottage, the husband pauses while filling in the couple’s pension application:

He (filling in claims for himself and wife): “QUESTION FOWER – ‘SEX’. WOT DO OI PUT THERE, MISSUS?”

She: “I DUNNO WOT YER CONSCIENCE’LL ALLOW YOU TO PUT; BUT YE PUTS ME DOWN A PRIMITIVE METHODY.”³⁸¹



³⁷⁸ *Hansard*, 25 May 1909 vol 5 cc1150-1W, 27 April 1911 vol 24 cc2050-8, 11 March 1912 vol 35 cc823-90.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 25 February 1902 vol 103 cc1023-4; *DDT*, 08 Apr, 1909, 2; *MCLGA*, 02 Jul, 1909, 8.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 19 May 1911 vol 25 cc2284-354.

³⁸¹ *Punch*, 13 Jan, 1909, 35.

3.3.9 Women's suffrage and related issues

In 1902-03 females comprised 74 per cent of London's Primitive Methodist congregations.³⁸² Yet only a small number of women delegates attended Conference. In 1907, the President rejoiced that women were now taking positions of 'rank among the leaders and legislators' of Primitive Methodism and praised its 'democratic government'.³⁸³ However, it was not until 1924 that a woman was nominated, though unsuccessfully, for the post of Vice-President and another granted permanent membership of Conference, an honour long enjoyed by male Primitives.³⁸⁴

From its commencement, the *Leader* hosted an occasional women's column: 'Women's Work'. Its original author, 'Ignota', welcomed the increasing role of women in the Church's ministry and governance. Acknowledging that it was not true of all districts, she claimed that the men in her own Circuit welcomed her attendance at Quarterly Meetings.³⁸⁵ However, when 'Frances' took over the column, she sounded a more strident note. In 1907, echoing H.B. Kendall's call for 'a special recrudescence of women's work in the Church' during its centenary year, she complained that young Primitive Methodist women were leaving the Connexion for other organisations, such as the Salvation Army, as they were afforded a wider role there – not relegated to arranging weekly teas and bazaars.³⁸⁶ Months later, after H. Jeffs used the front page of the *Leader* to support Kendall's call to arms, the paper published six letters of endorsement from women Primitive Methodists.³⁸⁷ One, a local preacher, complained that, 'Many churches that will allow a coloured man or a converted clown to occupy the pulpit without a question, shut the door against a woman.'³⁸⁸ Ironically, H.J. Taylor regarded Islam, in contrast to Christianity, as a religion without 'humanitarianism because it degrades women'.³⁸⁹

However, both male and female contributors to Connexional publications recognised their own Church's inadequacies in this regard and continued to advocate a greater role for women within the Church and wider society. For example, the General Committee of the Church, when pleading for the retention of School Boards in London, insisted that men and women be 'equally eligible for election' to education authorities.³⁹⁰ Their advocacy was particularly evident regarding the granting of the suffrage; there was no evident opposition

³⁸² Callum G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Twentieth Century Britain* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2006), 30.

³⁸³ *PMCM*, 1907, 219; *PML*, 13 Jul, 101, 1905.

³⁸⁴ *WDP*, 13 Jun, 1924, 10; *WMN*, 14 Jun, 1924, 6.

³⁸⁵ *PML*, 13 Jul, 101, 14 Sep, 245, 1905.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 14 Feb, 98, 1907.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 28 Feb, 129, 07 Mar, 147, 1907.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 07 Mar, 147, 1907.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 06 Feb, 83, 1913.

³⁹⁰ *MG*, 02 Apr, 1903, 8.

to women receiving the vote. Thus, in 1911, the moderate National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) celebrated the hosting of one of the first meetings of the Free Church Women's Suffrage League in Penge's Primitive Methodist schoolroom, chaired by the minister.³⁹¹ Connexional support for female suffrage derived in part from the belief that women would bring a distinctive contribution to the country's political culture. For example, during the Boer War, 'Aunt Jane' suggested that, although women had 'no voice in the making of war', they could instil in their children 'a universal hatred of war' and 'help in softening down its ravages' through philanthropic endeavours and nursing.³⁹² Similarly, J.M. Davies proposed that 'jingoism would be checked ... physical degeneracy and infant mortality ... arrested', once women received the vote.³⁹³

Although, on occasion, some commentators supported extending the vote to women householders as an initial stage in the campaign, most preferred that women received the vote within the context of universal adult suffrage. The WSPU's (Women's Social and Political Union) violent tactics were condemned as they alienated potential sympathisers, although one lone female voice submitted, with regret, that their actions were advancing the cause.³⁹⁴ Despite the official denunciations, she may have not been alone. There appears to have been a significant Primitive Methodist presence in male ILP members who supported the WSPU in Manchester.³⁹⁵ Indeed, Emily Jones Davies reminded her readers that the suffragettes' belligerency resulted from their passionate belief in a righteous cause, and its violent expression did 'not affect the justice of the women's claim.'³⁹⁶ Yet Ritson, a firm advocate for universal adult suffrage, was not only sceptical of the WSPU's tactics but of its aims. He feared that:

the more militant section of the Suffragettes had no concern for working class women. We have suspected all along that the real object of these ladies is the enfranchisement merely of women who have property, and we shall be surprised if their attitude towards a measure that gives votes to working women and perhaps factory girls, should not prove to be distinctly lukewarm, if not hostile.³⁹⁷

His concerns may have been justified regarding the WSPU, whereas the NUWSS embraced working-class women and constitutional reform.³⁹⁸

³⁹¹ *The Common Cause*, 16 Mar, 1911, 17: the NUWSS's newspaper.

³⁹² *Aldersgate*, 1900, 224-6.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 1907, 403.

³⁹⁴ *PML*, 05 Aug, 527, 1909; 10 Feb, 82, 1910; 11 Mar, 309, 24 Aug, 585, 30 Nov, 815, 1911; 07 Mar, 155, 1912; 30 Jan, 75, 27 Feb, 141, 13 Mar, 175, 24 Jul, 526, 1913. *Aldersgate*, 1907, 309 and 403; 1910, 687; 07 Aug, 1913, 558.

³⁹⁵ Andrew Rosen, *Rise Up Women! The Militant campaign of the Women's Social; and Political Union: 1903-14* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1974), 46.

³⁹⁶ *PML*, 21 Mar, 186, 1912.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 04 Mar, 141, 1909.

³⁹⁸ Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *One Hand Tied Behind Us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: River Oram Press, 2000, 2nd edition), 235-8.

Connexional authors supported equal access to education for women and largely accepted their involvement in most sectors of the workforce, at least for unmarried women and those whose families were grown up.³⁹⁹ Thus, in 1900, ‘Aunt Jane’ welcomed women’s new found capability ‘to knock at the doors of the professions, and very long and loudly’. She approved of the improved educational opportunities available to women of all classes. Although, in her opinion, ‘the most important result’ of the previous century had been The Married Women’s Property Act of 1882, there were ‘still wrongs to be righted and much to be done’.⁴⁰⁰ The prime injustice that required redress was a mother’s ‘right to equal management, with the father, of her children’.⁴⁰¹ However, she also argued that legislative control was required to protect women from unsuitable employment, such as coal mining, and excessive working hours.⁴⁰² Similarly, ‘Frances’ lamented the appalling working conditions and low pay of many women and advocated the appointment of more female factory inspectors to protect their interests.⁴⁰³

Despite advocacy of greater educational and opportunities for women, the core role perceived for women was domestic. For example, Mrs Joseph Johnson proposed that the ‘real task of the feminist is to devise an education for girls so that they shall be capable of earning their living and sharing in the world’s work and yet remain fit for future wifehood and motherhood’.⁴⁰⁴ However, as Sandra Holton has suggested, women’s domestic role was expanding and ‘the home was conceived as a social agency’, fostering a more scientific approach to child rearing and household management.⁴⁰⁵ ‘Ignota’ exemplified this in 1905 when she summarised Primitive Methodism’s core tenets concerning women’s education:

I am not one of those who would limit the sphere of our girls’ activities to the home, rather would I widen it until every door open to our boys is equally open to them. But whatever our girls may do in the outside world, whatever high distinctions they may gain, the fact remains that it is the lot of most of them to be happy wives and mothers, and for this, as much as for the other, a careful training is required.⁴⁰⁶

Female suffrage was only one aspect of constitutional reform to engage the MPs, one element in their efforts to enhance democratic government. They campaigned to extend the adult electorate, augment local government powers and – with the exception of Doughty –

³⁹⁹ *Aldersgate*, 1899, 590-3; 1904, 184-6; 1905, 797-800. *PML*, 09 Nov, 1905, 372; 10 May, 1906, 317; 10 Nov, 1910, 755.

⁴⁰⁰ *Aldersgate*, 1900, 933-5. Also *Ibid.*, 386-7 and 686-7.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 687.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.*, 1900, 686-7 and 934.

⁴⁰³ *PML*, 08 Mar, 154, 1906.

⁴⁰⁴ *PML*, 30 Nov, 815, 1911.

⁴⁰⁵ S.S. Holton, *Feminism and Democracy: Women’s Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain 1900-1917* (Cambridge: CUP, 1986), 14. *PML*, 24 May, 352, 1906; 04 Jun, 362, 1908; 04 Apr, 222, 1912.

⁴⁰⁶ *PML*, 07 Sep, 229, 1905.

implement electoral reform. For example, Wilson, Johnson, and Fenwick were concerned that those in receipt of Poor Law Relief were disenfranchised and Burt was a strong advocate for the introduction of proportional representation in local elections.⁴⁰⁷ Except for Doughty, the MPs supported the 1906 Abolition of Plural Voting Bill which would have abolished university constituencies and multiple votes for property owners.⁴⁰⁸ The Bill was opposed by Doughty's party, partly because the practice was considered to 'work strongly in their favour' and, consequently, was blocked by the Conservative dominated House of Lords.⁴⁰⁹ However, Doughty continued to press for facilities enabling fishermen and sailors at sea to vote in elections.⁴¹⁰ He also co-sponsored a Bill to allow Scunthorpe Urban District Council to establish municipal control of its gas and water supply – although this, like his support for temperance measures, was soon after he had changed political horses.⁴¹¹

The MPs all supported franchise extension to women, only differing in regard to the extent and context in which it was granted. Doughty supported franchise extension in local and national elections to women but only to those who paid rates and taxes, although he appears to have objected to the WSPU's militant tactics.⁴¹² Fenwick certainly 'disapproved of [the WSPU's] militant methods' as he considered their belligerence harmed their cause 'considerably'.⁴¹³ Recently, a number of historians have even argued that the suffragettes' 'outrages' could be perceived as terrorism, particularly as their 'Deeds, not Words' campaign became increasingly violent after the failure of the Franchise Bill in January 1913.⁴¹⁴ Yet, undaunted and unprejudiced by the actions of the WSPU, Fenwick, Burt, Edwards, and Shackleton supported the introduction of numerous Private Members' Bills aimed at extending the franchise to women, although primarily within the context of universal adult suffrage.⁴¹⁵ The Primitive Methodist MPs demonstrated more consistent support for female suffrage than either the Liberal Government or Asquith, who was opposed.⁴¹⁶ Although, preferring universal adult suffrage to granting the vote to women householders, Shackleton considered that even such a limited extension would 'get in the

⁴⁰⁷ *JHC*, V154, 30-1V159, 174; V160, 112; V161, 29; V162, 109, 300; V163, 27; V164, 88; V165, 100; V166, 105, 176; V167, 103, 232; V168, 330.

⁴⁰⁸ *Hansard*, 25 October 1906 vol 163 cc432-512

⁴⁰⁹ D. Brooks, *The Age of Upheaval: Edwardian Politics 1899-1914* (Manchester: MUP, 1995), 100.

⁴¹⁰ *JHC*, V166, 105.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, V154, 30-1.

⁴¹² *Hansard*, 23 May 1900 vol 83 cc1034-83, 30 October 1906 vol 163 c873. *YPLI*, 01 Feb, 1913, 10.

⁴¹³ *MH*, 11 Oct, 1912, 4.

⁴¹⁴ C.J Bearman, 'An Examination of Suffragette Violence', *English Historical Review*, 120 (2005), 365-97; Fern Riddell, 'The Weaker Sex? Violence and the Suffragette Movement', *History Today*, 63, 3 (2015).

⁴¹⁵ *JHC*, V161, 437; 1908, 22; 1909, 19 and 99; 1910, 172; 1911, 131 and 176; 1912, 17 and 80; 1913, 51. *Hansard*, 28 February 1908 vol 185 cc212 -87; 12 July 1910 vol 19 cc207-333; 06 May 1913 vol 52 cc1887-2005. *Satre, Conciliator*, 136. *MH*, 29 Sep, 1911, 5.

⁴¹⁶ S.A. van Wingerden, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain: 1866-1928* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 118-22

thin end of the wedge'.⁴¹⁷ Although Doughty's position is unknown as he was absent, only Haslam voted against the immediate implementation of Shackleton's Conciliation Bill of 1910, which would have included women householders in the electorate. He supported an amendment promoting a fuller debate of the issues in committee, suggesting that he may have objected to the limited nature of Shackleton's proposal rather than the issue of women's suffrage itself.⁴¹⁸ In addition to those named above, Harvey, Johnson, Arthur and Thomas Richardson, Stanley, Taylor, and Wilson supported all legislation aimed at suffrage extension to women. Stanley's support was regardless of WSPU endorsement of the unsuccessful Tory candidate during his own election campaign of 1907.⁴¹⁹ Vernon Hartshorn endorsed the women's suffrage movement within the miners' union and, in his late teens, Jim Simmons was a platform speaker at women's suffrage rallies.⁴²⁰

Yet, despite his support for women's suffrage and improved educational opportunities, Shackleton, who represented many women trade unionists, did not believe that married women should work. Their employment depressed men's wages. Unsurprisingly his views antagonized many feminists.⁴²¹ Haslam expressed the persistent view of the mining MPs that women should not work at collieries: neither underground or at pit banks.⁴²² However, Primitive Methodist trade unionists, even if sharing Shackleton and Haslam's views on the employment of married women, could demonstrate a practical sensitivity to the reality of working-class women's lives and labour. Due to a mishmash of superstition, cost to themselves, and a rational concern about walking home wet, some miners opposed the construction of pithead baths. However, William Straker, the Primitive Methodist Northumbrian miners' leader, was a firm advocate of their benefits, 'not merely to the miners but to the miners' wives'. Pitmens' wives testified that, in what was a slavish existence, a communal bath reduced a woman's workload considerably and improved domestic privacy: the women no longer endured the hard labour of hand filling a tin bath with hot water for the collier to wash in or removing the coal dust he brought home from the pit. The Mines Act of 1911, which Fenwick and Edwards spoke on behalf of, legislated for the building of pithead baths by employers where a two-thirds majority of miners

⁴¹⁷ Martin, *Lancashire Giant*, 100,167. Also: *Hansard*, 11 July 1910 vol 19 cc41-48.

⁴¹⁸ *Hansard*, 11 July 1910 vol 19 cc41-48, 12 July 1910 vol 19 cc207-333.

⁴¹⁹ *PML*, 08 Aug, 540, 1907.

⁴²⁰ Holton, *Feminism and Democracy*, 94; Simmons, *Soapbox*, 12.

⁴²¹ Martin, *Lancashire Giant*, 176-8; Liddington and Norris, *One Hand*, 249-50.

⁴²² *Sheffield Independent*, 20 Jul, 1908, 5.

insisted.⁴²³ Burt also supported legislation designed to clarify the grounds of divorce for men and women, equalising gender disparities.⁴²⁴

3.4 'God save the People'

Andrew Pratt has proposed that Primitive Methodism, with its democratic government, 'anti-sacerdotal stance', and 'almost Pentecostal' style of worship was 'characterised by a theology that went hand in hand with radical politics'.⁴²⁵ Community singing helped transmit and embed the denomination's beliefs and traditions; Primitives also employed song in their trade union activity.⁴²⁶ The 1933 hymn book, created for the newly re-united Methodist Church and largely Wesleyan inspired, disappointed some former Primitive Methodists as it 'diluted' the social element of their own hymnbooks.⁴²⁷ One of the titles omitted from modern Methodist hymnals had a particular resonance for the followers of Bourne and Clowes. Even though they were not the first denomination to include it in their hymn books, it was closely associated with the Church and its political traditions: When wilt thou save the people?⁴²⁸

O God of Mercy! When?
The people, Lord! The people!
Not thrones and crowns, but men!
God save the people! Thine they are;
Thy children, as thy angels fair:
Save them from bondage and despair!
God save the people!⁴²⁹

The hymn is a musical setting of a poem by Ebenezer Elliott, the anti-Corn-Law poet; it carries an overtly political message and was a favourite of the Chartists.⁴³⁰ Offering a succinct summation of Primitive Methodism's synthesis of religion and politics, it first appeared in its *Primitive Methodist Sunday School Hymnal* of 1899 and, later, in *The Primitive Methodist Hymnal Supplement* of 1912. Rev. F.J. Saintry quoted it as the conclusion to an *Aldersgate* article of 1911 in which he insisted that the churches should 'lay

⁴²³ *The Science and Art of Mining*, 18 Mar, 1933, 273. Available online: <http://www.dmm.org.uk/news19/9330318d.htm>. [Accessed: 09/06/15]. Also: Griselda Carr, *Pit Women: Coal Communities in Northern England in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Merlin Press, 2001), 55-57; *Hansard*, 17 March 1911 vol 22 cc2646-74.

⁴²⁴ *JHC*, V169, 51.

⁴²⁵ Andrew Pratt, *O for a thousand tongues: The 1932 Methodist Hymn Book in Context* (Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2004), 20.

⁴²⁶ Colls, *Collier's Rant*, 80-81; Lysons, *Little Primitive*, 201-6; Hoggart, *Literacy*, 119-120; Russell, *Lincolnshire Labourer's*, 104-5; Milburn, *Primitive Methodism*, 63-70.

⁴²⁷ Pratt, *O For*, 199-200.

⁴²⁸ Lysons, *Little Primitive*, 156; H. Miller, *Growing Up with Primitive Methodism* (Sheffield: Methodist Chapel Aid Lecture, No. 5, 1995), 41.

⁴²⁹ Ebenezer Elliott, (Author), Mark Storey, (Editor), *Selected Poetry of Ebenezer Elliott* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2008), 207.

⁴³⁰ Edith Fowke and Joe Glazer, *Songs of Work and Protest* (USA: Dover, 2012), 180-1.

emphasis of respect and welcome upon the common people rather than upon the uncommon rich'. He emphasised that the Church could not remain neutral 'to evil social conditions'.⁴³¹

In the *Supplement*, the National Anthem immediately preceded Edward Carpenter's *England Arise*: the Socialist marching song that was once popular in the Labour Party and usually found only in the pages of Socialist songbooks. Neither this nor 'When Wilt Thou Save the People' was ever in *Hymns Ancient or Modern*, although Carpenter's verses were included in *Songs of Praise* in 1931; both were among a minority of Victorian compositions that promoted egalitarian and collectivist sentiments against the majority, which endorsed the established order. The *Primitive Methodist Supplement* appears to have been the second hymnbook to include Carpenter's lyrics, the Brotherhood Movement's *Fellowship Hymn-Book*, which began with 'When Wilt thou Save the People', the first.⁴³² Furthermore, Carpenter's writings on ethical Socialism certainly influenced some Primitive local preachers and ministers.⁴³³

These hymns reflected the political outlook and aspirations of Primitive Methodists by the end of the period under consideration. Speaking at the 1913 Conference, H.J. Taylor articulated the reformist politics and aspirations of so many Primitive Methodists. He lauded the 'six years of the most brilliant reform the land had ever known'. Although he welcomed the introduction of Old Age Pensions, he considered the most significant development had been the Parliament Act of 1911. That Act had broken 'through the stone walls of the ages and make the right of way for the great things coming on – political freedom for Ireland, ecclesiastic freedom for Wales, educational freedom for England, and the hour when this land should smite effectively the tyranny of liquorism and also break up the monopoly of the land'. Claiming considerable influence for Primitive Methodism, Taylor declared that the 'seed sown in the Church had been gathered into the life of the State' and urged his co-religionists to continue their engagement with 'organised democracy'. He concluded, to

⁴³¹ *Aldersgate*, 1911, 475-6. As recently as 2011, Lord Clark of Windermere (who is not a Methodist) suggested that peers should 'bear in mind the sentiments best reflected in Hymn 279 in the *Primitive Methodist Hymn Book*, which begins: When wilt thou save the people?': *Hansard*, Lords, 31 March 2011, c134

⁴³² *The Hymnal Supplement with Tunes* (London: A. Hammond, 1912), 344-6, 356; *Primitive Methodist Sunday School Hymnal* (London: John Swinden, 1899), 648-9; G. Elton, 'England, arise!' *A study of the pioneering days of the labour movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1931), 10; D. Clark, *Voices from Labour's Past: Ordinary People Extraordinary Lives* (Kendal: Lensden, 2015), 83-85; I. Bradley, *Abide With Me: The World of Victorian Hymns* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 126-8; *Fellowship Hymn-Book* (London: Brotherhood Publishing, 1909), 13. During the Edwardian period, the Brotherhood was a means 'of reaching out to the anticlerical and irreligious masses ... and demonstrating the compatibility between religion and labour': Catterall, *Radicalism, Righteousness*, 116-7.

⁴³³ *HR*, 1920, 477-88; *PML*, 05 Apr, 211, 1923; Moore, *Pit-men*, 171, 198, 225;

applause, with a demand for a fairer distribution of the national wealth and voiced the perpetual necessity of the wage-earner: 'Men must have a living wage'.⁴³⁴

⁴³⁴ *DDT*, 17 Jun, 1913, 2.

Chapter Four: 'All political colours are among us': 1914-1922

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins as the Church faced the challenges of the First World War, an even greater test of its commitment to peace than the Boer War. It charts the continuing erosion of the Church's fidelity to the Liberal Party, a partial drift to Labour and, to a lesser extent, the Conservatives – a process that was unmistakable by 1922. The leadership recognised that this political divergence, partly a consequence of greater social diversity within its membership, threatened its institutional harmony. The drift towards the Labour Party created internal friction largely due to that Party's uncertain attachment to temperance and its practice of holding meetings on Sundays. These, even when conducted like Camp meetings, were offences to Sabbatarianism and offered a tempting alternative to chapel – effectively a rival religion that seduced some Primitive congregations. The Church's relationship to the Labour Movement also suffered stresses and strains during the Coal Crises of 1919-21; the increasing militancy of both Labour and Capital deviated from the Church's recipes for industrial harmony and the brand of trade unionism that it endorsed.

Similarly, although there were pacifists within the Church, its institutional response to the Great War highlighted its overriding *pacifism* and, consequently, increased Primitive Methodism's accommodation with broader culture and values. This was apparent in the Connexion's increasing ecumenicalism and rapprochement with the Established Church. Although Primitive Methodism remained committed to its traditional shibboleths, such as temperance, the War aggravated a pre-existent loosening of some individual members' adherence to this principle – although antagonism to gambling increased. While the Church never achieved gender equality within its own governance, it maintained its firm advocacy of women's suffrage and rights to education.

The chapter follows a similar organisation and approach to its predecessors. It discusses the Church's preoccupations, reactions and responses to the war under several of its headings. These included the introduction of conscription, the effects of war on their social and political priorities and the shape of the society that they hoped would emerge in the aftermath of victory. It ends by briefly considering some political trends that were emerging by 1922, but achieved prominence in the decade prior to the Methodist Union of 1932. The crisis engendered by the General Strike of 1926 revealed that progressive politics and the Church's association with the Labour Movement could no longer be assumed as issues that united its membership. The President's uncompromising Address to that year's Conference expressed the Church's recognition of this.

Primitive Methodist MPs referred to in this chapter

Those who served during 1914-22:

Joseph Batey: 1922-42, Durham, Labour*
Thomas Burt: 1874-1918, Northumberland, Liberal*
John Cairns: 1918-23, Northumberland, Labour*
Thomas Cape: 1918-45, Cumberland, Labour *
William Carter: 1918-22, Nottinghamshire, Labour*
Thomas W. Casey: 1918-22, Yorkshire, Liberal*
George Doughty: 1895-1914, Lincolnshire, Liberal to Liberal Unionist
George Edwards: 1920-24, Norfolk, Labour#
Charles Fenwick: 1885-1918, Northumberland, Liberal*
Samuel Finney: 1916-22, Staffordshire, Labour*
Vernon Hartshorn: 1918-31, Glamorgan, Labour*
William E. Harvey: 1907-14, Derbyshire, Liberal to Labour*
Alfred Hill: 1922-23, Leicester/Leicestershire, Labour#
Barnet Kenyon: 1913-29, Derbyshire, Liberal*
Frederick Linfield: 1922-24, Bedfordshire, Liberal
William Lunn: 1918-42, Yorkshire, Labour*
Arthur Richardson: 1906-10, Nottingham/Nottinghamshire and 1917-18, Yorkshire, Liberal#
Thomas Richardson: 1910-18, Cumberland, Labour*
Ben Spoor: 1918-28, Durham, Labour
Albert Stanley: 1907-16, Staffordshire, Liberal to Labour*
John W. Taylor: 1906-19, Durham, Labour*
Alfred Waterson 1918-1922, Northamptonshire, Co-op/Labour#
John Wilson: 1885-6 and 1890-1915, Durham, Liberal*

Others who served at a later date:

Thomas Fenby: 1924-9, Yorkshire, Liberal
Frank Hodges: 1923-24, Staffordshire, Labour*
Joseph Gibbins: 1924-1931 and 1935-1950, Liverpool/Lancashire, Labour#
Edwin Gooch: 1945-64, Norfolk, Labour#
William McKeag: 1931-35, Durham, Liberal
Jim Simmons: 1929-31 and 1945-59, Birmingham/Warwickshire, Labour
Sir Walter Womersley: 1924-45, Lincolnshire, Conservative.

* indicates a significant involvement with a trade union in the coal industry; # represents involvement in any other union.

4.2 The political allegiances and agendas of Primitive Methodism

4.2.1 The institutional response

During this period contemporaries regarded Primitive Methodism as an exceptionally political denomination. For example, in 1914, the Anglican Rev. G.A. Guest complained that:

Primitive Methodist ministers are mostly intensely political. I have examined a volume of their minutes, and in the obituary notices find such sentences as these: 'he was a keen politician', 'he was a capable politician and prominently employed on the National Liberal Association'. One such obituary describes the Anglican clergy as 'fawning and creed-bound' and says of its subject that he regarded Mr. Lloyd George as a second Moses leading the people from the wilderness into

Canaan. A while ago I chanced to meet the brother of a well-known Primitive Methodist ex-president. He himself was formerly a local preacher with them. He has now become Anglican and assured me that he had been driven out by the political propoganda of Primitive Methodism, by the political spirit and the political sermons.¹

Rev. Aquila Barber responded to Guest's accusation by claiming that, in his last church, the Conservative and Liberal Party agents and the Labour candidate were all regular worshippers.² Inadvertently, Barber's reply confirmed the accusation that many Primitives were politically active, although it revealed a wider spectrum of political allegiances than Guest implied. As will be discussed at the end of this chapter, the Church leadership later recognised and addressed this divergence at the 1923 Conference.

Certainly, the Church's political agenda during this period was notable – the Conference minutes of 1914 acknowledged that 'social questions kept well to the fore' of discussions – although Primitive piety and politics were indistinguishable.³ The 'social questions' debated and solutions offered at Conferences and Districts between 1914 and 1922 encompassed: temperance, gambling, education, disestablishment, government expenditure on armaments, housing, land reform, a living wage for agricultural workers, Sabbath observance, women's rights, Ireland, labour disputes, unemployment, divorce, the age of sexual consent and prostitution. The war added new preoccupations: the treatment of conscientious objectors, the need for a League of Nations and post-war reconstruction. These political campaigns were perceived and presented as moral crusades; they also demonstrate the Church's increasing acceptance that social progress required a harmonious and balanced combination of both individualism and collectivism.⁴

At the Darlington and Stockton Synod of 1914, Rev. C. Humble captured the Church's own perception of its political motivation, agenda and influence; although it had never advocated any 'one school of economics', the denomination had contributed to 'social advancement' for the last hundred years by enunciating the Christian 'principles of justice, mercy and love'.⁵ Similarly, in the formal Address of that year, Conference was proudly reminded that the Church had 'instinctively ... been on the side of all righteous progressive movements [my emphasis].' Acknowledging Primitive Methodism's own increasing

¹ *Luton Times and Advertiser*, 07 Aug, 1914, 6.

² *PML*, 06 Aug, 559, 1914.

³ *PMCM*, 1914, 9.

⁴ *PMCM*, 1914, 243-7; 1915, 254; 1916, 7, 220, 22-4; 1917, 7, 204-6; 1918, 201-7; 1919, 3-4, 6, 213-217; 1920, 7, 201-13; 1921, 205-211; 1922, 6, 202-19. *Newcastle Journal*, 05 May, 1914, 10; 01 May, 1915, 5 and 03 May, 1915, 8. *DGM*, 05 May, 1914, 3. *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 08 May, 1914, 3. *Gloucester Journal*, 09 May, 1914, 5. *Chester Chronicle*, 06 May, 1916, 6; *HDM*, 15 Dec, 1917, 3. *Western Times*, 01 May, 1916, 3. *SDESG*, 30 Apr, 1918, 4. *Lancashire Evening Post*, 01 May, 1920, 2 and 02 May, 1921, 4. *Western Gazette*, 07 May, 1920, 3. *YPLI*, 21 Jun, 1920, 10. *Bury Free Press*, 07 May, 1921, 2. *Burnley News*, 07 May, 1921, 5. *WMN*, 01 May, 1922, 3.

⁵ *DGM*, 02 May, 1914, 6.

acceptance of collectivism, the Address also implied the denomination's influence on national life: 'We have reversed the Pagan motto, "Every man for himself", and substituted what is of the very essence of Christianity, "Every man for the other man".⁶ However, the Church never abandoned its affirmation of both individual responsibilities and rights. John Day Thompson illustrated this when he tutored the Conference of 1916 on the moral necessity of involving itself even more in 'social reconstruction' and welcomed the 'ever enlarging elaboration of common action' necessitated by the war effort. Yet, although Thompson approved of how the war had increased the national 'solidarity', it had also restricted 'individualism', primarily by the imposition of conscription, and that imbalance needed to be 'reconciled' after the war.⁷

However, debates on international affairs are most indicative of the Church's moralising politics. In 1921, when the League of Nations and Ireland were on the agenda and Lloyd George had warned the Church to 'mind its own business' regarding Irish matters, a small number of delegates aligned themselves with the Prime Minister and objected to the Church 'entering the political arena'. However, only one dissident ultimately voted against the Church passing any 'political' resolutions: most delegates regarded both the League and Ireland as moral issues.⁸ During the debate, H.J. Taylor – who had been elected President-designate for the 1922 Conference – reminded Lloyd George that the Church's 'job is to demand that the Premier should practise religion in the laws of the land.'⁹ He continued:

While we have neither the desire nor the power as a Church to identify ourselves with any political party, we cannot be deprived of the right of speaking out on moral questions ... we all have the right to say something about the principles upon which these affairs are conducted [my emphasis].¹⁰

4.2.2 The wider debate

Victor Murray, a future Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, stressed the same principles in an article of 1914: 'the welfare of the people is the highest law' and transcended party and mode of government, although democracy best allowed the expression of the wider community's needs.¹¹ Several series of articles that appeared in *Aldersgate* illustrate that the Church was committed to 'the welfare of the people' and post-war social reconstruction through the democratic process and increased State intervention: 'When Peace Comes', 'Our Parliament', 'The Church in the Nation', and 'What I would Do

⁶ *PMCM*, 1914, 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1916, 7.

⁸ *WMN*, 21 Jun, 1921, 6.

⁹ *Dundee Courier*, 18 Jun, 1921, 3.

¹⁰ *PMCM*, 1921, 4.

¹¹ *HR*, 1914, 13-33.

if I were Minister for...'.¹² One writer, summarising the Church's political agenda and its view of the requisites for the people's welfare, praised New Zealand's 'absence of poverty' except where 'drinking, gambling and vice' ruled. These evils had been mitigated there by the early introduction of 'Old Age Pensions, Workmen's Compensation, the Eight Hours' Day, Minimum Wage and Arbitration for trade disputes'. This portfolio of reforms presented an aspiration for the British legislature, although considered harder to attain in the United Kingdom, as 'the Dominions are farther on the road to a complete Democracy than ... here'.¹³ Rev. E.B. Storr, describing the features of 'A Christian State', concurred: a democratic state was a prerequisite for the 'will of the people' to be realised and, despite some inherent dangers, 'democracy is the ideal form of government'. Although Storr applauded the Commonwealth of 1649-1660 as 'the nearest approach to a Christian Government that has been seen anywhere, the Cromwellians went too far along the line of coercion', an undemocratic trait that resulted in a popular backlash and the Commonwealth's downfall. For Storr, even the abolition of the 'Drink Traffic' would only be achievable if 'the will of the people demanded it'. However, a Christian State would be 'largely communistic ... Human needs, and not the power of exploitation ... will be the basis for economic distribution.' Such a State would 'care to the uttermost for its weak and unfortunate members' and it would abolish 'class distinctions'; in regard to 'dependent nations ... it will consider no questions at all but that of the people it governs'. To pursue such goals Storr argued that 'the Church ought not to be political in a narrow party sense' but ally itself to 'those forces' in harmony with 'national righteousness'.¹⁴

Although notionally baulking at narrowly partisan politics, the publications encouraged political engagement and remained overwhelmingly anti-Tory. As Mrs Lloyd Pack declared, 'Let us by all means eschew party politics if you will, but if Christian people refrain from concerning themselves with national affairs, then indeed our destinies are in the hand of the Evil One.'¹⁵ In reality, although the Church formally promoted a non-partisan approach to politics, most Primitives still regarded the Conservatives as enemies of reform. As an *Aldersgate* editorial of 1918 opined, Conservatives were still unlikely 'to meet the progressive views of the people'.¹⁶ Rev. Arthur Wilkes' article of 1921 on 'The Methodist in the Nation', a celebration of Methodist MPs, primarily Liberal and Labour,

¹² *Aldersgate*, 1917, 18-21, 175-8, 246-249, 468-71, 710-712; 1918, 26-8, 85-7, 163-5, 233-5, 308-11, 392-5, 530-3, 636-9, 678-80, 752-54; 1919, 112-3, 682-5; 1922, 139, 271-3, 458-60, 614-7.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1915, 609.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1915, 530-33.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1922, 636.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1918, 263.

expressed surprise that three Methodist MPs who supported Wilberforce's campaign to abolish slavery 'were Tories'.¹⁷

Tellingly for the future, an article of 1916, in the form of a letter addressed to 'a smart young fellow', voiced the Church's long-held fear that the social mobility of its members could lead to religious and political apostasy. The 'smart young fellow', whose father was a 'Radical and a Nonconformist', has risen in the world and was a committee member of the local Conservative Party. Furthermore, he was part of a coterie that exhibited 'social snobbery ... [and] laugh at religion and think a Nonconformist Chapel beneath them'.¹⁸ The same fear that socially aspirant members would desert the Church surfaced at the Conference of 1917 when delegates discussed their concern apropos four out of five of its ministers who had left the Connexion during the previous year to seek ordination in the Anglican Church. To Guttery 'that was a very ominous fact, and [he] thought that steps should be taken to impress upon their young ministers the splendour and dignity of the Free Church ministry'.¹⁹ The Church was beginning to recognize that the growing social and political diversity of its congregations threatened its internal harmony.

However, obituaries and articles in the Church's publications at this time primarily referred positively only to those Christian politicians with a Liberal or Labour allegiance. Only rarely did a Conservative politician merit approbation. One notable exception was Lord Robert Cecil, a Free Trader and advocate for the League of Nations.²⁰ Obituaries of Primitive Methodist Conservatives were uncommon and, where they exist, muted. For example, an obituary of a Mr John Pitts, the only one discovered for this period, suggested that his 'politics were perhaps conservative', as if his political views were rarely revealed within the Church.²¹ Significantly, although he was robustly defended by Guttery, Lloyd George's status as the 'Moses' leading his people to the Promised Land was tarnished by the end of this period – at least in some Primitives' eyes – due to his adoption of policies that did not harmonise with those of the Church and his association with the Tories in the Coalition government.²²

Despite the increasing disillusionment with Lloyd-George, Liberalism and an ethical Socialism were still the primary contenders for the political soul of Primitive Methodists –

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1921, 252-6.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1916, 591-2.

¹⁹ *YPLI*, 14 Jun, 1917, 7.

²⁰ *Aldersgate*, 1914, 105-6; 1915, 779-81; 1916, 636; 1918, 56-7, 95, 480-1, 616-8; 1919, 853; 1920, 294; 1921, 642-5, 271-3, 518; 1922, 46, 131, 477, 612, 805, 849. *HR*, 1918, 181-91; 1920, 477-88. *PML*, 26 Aug, 508-9, 513, 1921.

²¹ *Aldersgate*, 1922, 367.

²² *PML*, 01 Mar, 131, 07 Jun, 330, 01 Nov, 674, 22 Nov, 714-5, 1917; 14 Mar, 170, 05 Dec, 636, 1918; 17 Apr and 18 Dec, 762, 1919; 25 Mar, 193, 08 Apr, 225, and 233, 1920; 16 Mar, 163, 1922.

which either the Liberal or Labour Party could contain. The case of Rev. Tom Sykes, a Primitive minister and General Secretary of the Brotherhood Movement from 1917, symbolises the fluidity of allegiance. Although he supported the Labour Party in 1918, and remained a long-term ally of Arthur Henderson, the Labour Party Leader, the Liberals also courted him as a parliamentary candidate.²³ The main Primitive objection to the Labour Party was that competing Liberal and Labour candidates split the ‘progressive vote’, permitting unwelcome Tory victories. The author of the *Leader’s* ‘Notes’ column of May 1914 blamed a ‘reckless Socialist’ for one such Tory by-election gain. In relation to another constituency, he complained that Liberal and Labour splits were ‘crass stupidity ... almost a crime’.²⁴ Yet, a comment in the same column later that year, possibly by the same writer, welcomed the successful election of a Labour candidate. Significantly, the Labourite in question was unopposed by a Liberal.²⁵ Furthermore, at least one Primitive Methodist Circuit Steward, Liberal Party Chairman and candidate for Oswestry, T. Ward Green²⁶, stood down in 1918 ‘so that the progressive vote may be given to the Labour candidate’.²⁷

There were other signs of the Church reaching an increasing accommodation with the Labour Party. One such was Rev. Joseph Maland’s favourable report of a 1917 Conference between an ILP branch and representatives of the Church. He described the ILP members, some of whom were Methodist local preachers, in glowing terms: ‘They were a body of men under the sovereignty of high and holy ideals, striving after justice and fairness, with an open-mindedness to new knowledge, and even ideas hostile to their own, that was very delightful.’²⁸ Likewise, in 1918 Rev. W. Younger considered that some ‘of the old Liberal ties [had] also been severed’ and welcomed the way in which the Labour Party was changing: adopting candidates from a ‘wider constituency’ – no longer predominately trade unionists – and often associated with the co-operative movement.²⁹ Guttery expressed comparable sentiments in 1919, describing the post-war Labour Party as ‘strengthened in

²³ *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 29 Nov, 1918, 3; Catterall, *Free Churches*, 257; *North Devon Journal*, 05 Nov, 1936, 2; *Driffild Times*, 10 Apr, 1920, 3. Sykes was nicknamed ‘the ploughboy preacher’ after his previous occupation.

²⁴ *PML*, 28 May, 359, 1914.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10 Sept, 635, 1914.

²⁶ *Aldersgate*, 1911, 182.

²⁷ *PML*, 05 Dec, 635, 1918.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 10 May, 269, 1917.

²⁹ *Aldersgate*, 1918, 28. Also *PML*, 24 Nov, 748, 1921, for an interview with the former leader of the Labour Party but later a minister in Lloyd George’s Coalition Government, G.N Barnes, in which he concurred that ‘the extreme militant section of labour is now discredited’ and the Party now ‘mainstream’. After the war Labour moved to the right and recruited from a much wider constituency, not only incorporating former Liberals but even some former Conservative MPs: M. Pugh, *Speak for Britain: A New History of the Labour Party*, (London: Bodley Head, 2010), Kindle version, location 292 and 2589.

Parliament' and 'purged of violent and intractable leaders'.³⁰ In the *Review* of 1919, a Congregationalist minister, Rev. H.D. Rees, although defending some of Labour's programme, attacked the Party for its affinity to Bolshevism; a riposte, elicited at the editor's request, came from the Primitive Methodist minister Rev. Arthur Banham – an active Labour Party member.³¹ In 1920, although the author of the *Leader's* 'Topics of the Day' expressed a hope that 'independent Liberalism' would survive, he believed that most Free Churchmen would support the Labour Party if the alternative implied a continuation of the Coalition government. He had 'far more confidence in the party which includes almost every Primitive Methodist MP than in any combination of which Unionists must be the predominant partners.'³² However, the following month he was concerned that, unless the two 'parties of progress' fused, 'each may have to wander in the wilderness for a long time to come. Only co-operation will defeat the strategy of those at present in power.'³³ During this period both pragmatism and principle prompted influential figures in the Church towards a greater acceptance of the Labour Party and a loosening of the Liberal Party's hold, even if it was regretted.

One noteworthy indication of the Church's allegiance is the number of candidates standing for each political party at elections. In 1918, the Church acknowledged five Liberal, one Coalition Liberal and 16 Labour candidates; in 1922 there were 11 Liberal, two National Liberals and 23 Labour candidates.³⁴ These figures prove the collapse of Liberal hegemony in the Church. On the basis of articles in the non-denominational Free Church newspaper, *British Weekly*, Michael Bentley has described how a number of denominations exhibited a tendency to 'wander' from the Liberals after the war: the Unitarians to the Conservatives and Labour, while the Primitives and Quakers generally drifted towards Labour and the Congregationalists remained largely committed to the Liberal Party.³⁵ One illustration of this, an article of 1922 in which Rev. P.S. Carden imagined what he might do if he were a Minister of State, assumed that a Labour Government was in power during his reverie. Tellingly, Carden's new Labour Prime Minister began his first Cabinet meeting asserting that he and his colleagues had a mandate to 'build a new and better world'. To illustrate what that meant he read from his favourite book; inevitably, the book was the New Testament and the passage that of the 'wise man,

³⁰ *PML*, 30 Jan, 55, 1919.

³¹ *HR*, 1919, 56-65, 253-5; *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 29 Nov 1918, 3; *Essex Newsman*, 30 Aug 1919, 2.

³² *PML*, 25 Mar, 193, 1920.

³³ *Ibid.*, 22 Apr, 257, 1920.

³⁴ Catterall, *Righteousness*, 222-3. Also: *PML*, Nov 23, 753, 1922; Lysons, *Little Primitive*, 93. The figures quoted are derived from Catterall's *Righteousness*. However, historians vary in the number of Primitive Methodist candidates claimed, although all acknowledge a shift from Liberal to Labour.

³⁵ Bentley, *Liberal Mind*, 192-3

which built his house upon the rock'.³⁶ Similarly, a *Leader* columnist, whose pseudonym was 'Vigilant', was 'glad' that all the Primitive Methodist candidates in the forthcoming election of 1923 were Liberal or Labour Party members. He 'hoped that they would all succeed' as 'the principles of Toryism and those of our Church are so incongruous that whenever I have come across a Tory in our communion I have regarded him as an anomaly'. However, he did not believe that Labour was ready for office and, although he hoped to see a Labour government in the future, he believed that 'Liberalism should have another chance'.³⁷ Significantly, when a Labour government that included several Primitive MPs achieved power in 1924, the Church entertained members of that government to dinner in London, demonstrating the national leadership's willing acceptance of or acquiescence in the Labour Party's victory.³⁸

One of the Primitive Methodist parliamentary candidates referred to in Church publications was the Rev. Fred J. Hopkins. His case reveals much about the Church's widespread anti-Tory sentiment and preference for politicians and politics that combined progressive politics with faith. Hopkins first stood as a Labour Party candidate in 1918 and advertised in the *Leader*, seeking funds from his co-religionists. His opponent was General Page Croft MP, a former Conservative and leader of the National Party; created in 1917, the Party sought severe reparations from Germany and had little time for conscientious objectors. Hopkins was certain that 'my friends in our Church will be grateful that a Primitive Methodist had been chosen to oppose him'.³⁹ However, he lost the election and resigned his ministry in 1919 to focus on Labour Party work.⁴⁰ Some years later, when scurrilous rumours spread that Hopkins had been 'kicked out of the ministry', and that he had been a conscientious objector during the War, he was defended by a number of his co-religionists, including Rev. A.E. Reavley, the Superintendent Minister of the Circuit in which Hopkins still acted as a local preacher. Reavley explained that 'although few of my officials share the politics of Mr Hopkins', yet, such was Hopkins 'honour and integrity', he was certain that they would vote for him if he were standing in their home constituencies.⁴¹ However, as will be discussed below regarding George Edwards and Edwin Gooch, acceptance of Labour Party activists was never universal. Some Primitives were not

³⁶ *Aldersgate*, 1922, 614-5.

³⁷ *PML*, 29 Nov, 771-2, 1923.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 17 Apr, 246, 1924

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 28 Nov, 621-2 and 6244, 1918. Andrew S. Thompson, 'Croft, Henry Page, first Baron Croft (1881-1947)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32633>, accessed 28 Oct 2015].

⁴⁰ *WDP*, 13 Jun, 1919, 4.

⁴¹ *Cornishman*, 14 Mar, 1928, 4.

antagonistic to Labour's social policies but, concerned at the Party (and trade unions) holding political meetings on Sunday, feared that it might be insufficiently 'religious'.⁴²

Regardless of party allegiance, and although it protected and preserved many aspects of individualism, the Church's increased promotion of collectivism was noteworthy. The increased powers and extent of state intervention during the war, such as government restrictions on the hours when public houses opened, were positive developments. However, Primitives also recognised the dangers of extreme state control, particularly as demonstrated by military conscription and militarism. Contributors to Connexional papers concurred that both individualism and collectivism offered benefits but needed to be in balance. For example, Rev. H.J. Pickett approved of Mrs Phillip Snowden's suggestion 'that every form of social, political and religious life showed to-day a concern not only for individual salvation, but for co-operative or social salvation.'⁴³ Similarly, Rev. William Younger argued that although the law existed for 'the self-realisation of the individual', this could only be achieved within a context that furnished the needs of the whole community.⁴⁴ Robert Christie proposed that the 'most ideal form of social union, whether you consider the marriage bond or the civil state, is one whose members possess not merely unanimity of spirit but the highest degree of individuality.'⁴⁵ W. Ernest Clegg, a local preacher, in an article entitled 'The Changing Ideal', approved of how the war had 'blunted' individualism; man had learnt that 'many disagreeable things have to be done for the benefit of the State. Individual preferences have to be sacrificed in favour of uniformity, else chaos prevails.'⁴⁶ Moreover, in 1918, Younger concluded that the War had demonstrated the ability of the State to expand its role and implement the sort of social reform the Church supported, such as restricting pub opening hours so that post-war politicians would be compelled 'to alter their view-point of the function of the State'.⁴⁷ Rev. W. Potter conveyed the Church's sentiment clearly in an article of 1923. He praised the spirit of individualism for achieving religious freedom, political liberties and franchise extension, but suggested that its gains had been 'assimilated' – that it was merely 'a stage on the road to something better':

[The] modern emphasis is on the principle of equality; the equitable distribution of life's boons and opportunities. More and more will the self-seeking instincts of men be curbed, more and more will healthy and happy communal life command the thought and effort of the State.⁴⁸

⁴² *PML*, 01 Apr, 210, 1920.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 19 Mar, 186, 1914.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 28 May, 360, 1914.

⁴⁵ *HR*, 1917, 261-7.

⁴⁶ *PML*, 09 Aug, 481, 1917.

⁴⁷ *Aldersgate*, 1918, 28.

⁴⁸ *Aldersgate*, 1923, 721-2.

4.2.3 The background, political allegiances and proclivities of Primitive Methodist MPs

Burt, Doughty, Fenwick, Harvey, Kenyon, Arthur and Thomas Richardson, Stanley, Taylor and Wilson held parliamentary seats for part of this period. Joseph Batey, John Cairns, Thomas Cape, William Carter, Thomas Casey, George Edwards, Samuel Finney, Vernon Hartshorn, Alfred Hill, Frederick Linfield, William Lunn, Ben Spoor, and Alfred Waterson joined them. Of those 23 MPs, six were Liberal, one a Coalition Liberal, 15 Labour, and one, Doughty who died in 1914, a Unionist. As in earlier periods, a significant proportion was native to Durham or Northumberland; 19 were active in their trade union at local, regional, or national level – 17 within the mining industry. Another, Spoor, represented a mining constituency. Waterson was the first Co-operative Party MP – appropriately for a Church that had nurtured many Co-operative Society activists – although he took the Labour Whip.⁴⁹ There is little evidence, other than that given in the previous chapter, for the motives of those who transferred their allegiance from Liberal to Labour during this period. However, the Co-op Movement's grievance that its stores had not received a fair share of rationed goods during the war, resulted in them sponsoring MPs. The future MP Jimmy Moses appears to have been jaundiced by this inequity, which, compounded by poor housing conditions in Plymouth, may have influenced his transfer of allegiance from Liberal to Labour in 1918.⁵⁰

However, despite the significant and increasing Labour Party allegiance of Primitive Methodist candidates and MPs, particularly from 1918 onwards, and the Church's official welcome of those individuals, the relationship was more complex than it had been for an earlier generation of Liberal MPs. The nexus of the problem related to the question asked above: was the Labour Party sufficiently religious? The case of George Edwards and Edwin Gooch highlights this. George Edwards joined the Labour Party consequent on the affiliation of his union, the National Union of Agricultural Allied Workers. Although he explained that it was a 'wrench' to separate from 'old political associates lightly', he no longer had any hope that the Liberals 'would ever advance in political thought sufficiently to meet the need of the growing aspirations of the new democracy.'⁵¹ He famously declared that from his youth, 'the Labour Movement was a most sacred thing, and, try how one may, one cannot divorce Labour from religion'.⁵² Consequently, Edwards' union and political meetings had a religious element and character; despite this, during the 1918 election, many of his 'bitterest opponents' were members of his Church.⁵³ Although this was partly due to his desertion of the Liberals in favour of Labour, there was a religious

⁴⁹ See Appendix.

⁵⁰ L. Stephens, *The Life and Times of Jimmy Moses* (Old Plymouth Society, 2010), 8-17; M. Hilson, *Political Change and the Rise of Labour in Comparative Perspective* (Lund, Sweden: Nordic Academic Press, 2006), 136-144, 161-5

⁵¹ Edwards, *Crow-Scaring*, 201

⁵² *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 208.

background to the antagonism. Some Primitives objected to him holding union and election meetings on a Sunday.

The issue was significant enough for Conference to consider it in 1919. Delegates passed a motion deploring not only entertainment on Sundays, which now included cinema performances, but also the holding of union or political meetings on the Sabbath as it would ‘mean a working day for an increasing number, and ... tend to challenge the right of a restful Lord’s Day.’⁵⁴ Despite severe censure from the Church for doing so, Edwards was convinced that Sunday Labour meetings were as religious an event as chapel attendance because the unequal ‘distribution of wealth [was] contrary to the Divine wish, and that the benevolent intentions of God were not being carried out’. He insisted that his meetings were religious in character; advertised as Camp Meetings (a century after Bourne’s first Mow Cop meeting), they followed a similar format with prayers and hymns. Edwards (and Gooch, his election agent and later an MP) received both criticism and approbation for this.⁵⁵

Eventually, in 1924, the *Leader* debated the issue. Initially, ‘Vigilant’ criticised Edwards for his support and participation in ‘Sunday Labour Demonstrations’ despite his being a co-religionist for whom he had a ‘high regard’. ‘Vigilant’ insisted that Primitive Methodist Churches stood both for the ‘sanctity of the Sabbath’ and were ‘centres of social improvement’. He fretted that some Primitives were deserting chapel services for Labour meetings.⁵⁶ The following week, Rev. P.S. Carden and Charles H. Ruse, respectively a Norwich minister and Circuit Steward, vigorously supported Edwards’ stance as implementing the spirit of Christ and the traditions of Primitive Methodism.⁵⁷ A week later Edwards presented his own defence in the letters’ page, essentially arguing that his text at a recent Labour meeting, the story of the Good Samaritan, was identical to one he would have delivered from the pulpit and the meeting incorporated prayers and hymns. ‘Vigilant’ re-iterated his personal regard for Edwards while regretting his Sabbath breaking. He ‘warmly’ approved of Edwards’ ‘desire to improve social conditions’ and ‘champion[ing] the cause of the poor.’⁵⁸ The letters’ page contained five other unanimous condemnations of the Sabbath-breaking element of the meetings. However, they were not antagonistic to Edwards’ desire for social reform: several shared his concern for the agricultural labourers’ low wages and long hours. Another related how, lacking a Liberal candidate, he had voted Labour at the last election – however, he would not do so again in the light of the meetings

⁵⁴ *PMCM*, 1919, 213. Also: 1914, 246-7.

⁵⁵ Edwards, *Crow-Scaring*, 82, 116-121.

⁵⁶ *PML*, 07 Aug, 515, 1924.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 14 Aug, 535, 1924.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 21 Aug, 547, 1924.

being held not only on Sunday but also at the time appointed for ‘divine worship’. To these correspondents, the Labour Party was competing directly with their Little Bethels and, unlike the Liberals, proving insufficiently religious.⁵⁹ Similarly, the Methodist minister John Banks related that his grandfather – a Primitive, a checkweighman, local councillor, and co-operator – agreed with many Labour Party policies. However, he declined an invitation to stand as a Labour Party parliamentary candidate because their meetings took place on Sundays in a public house.⁶⁰ Gooch faced so much opposition from within his own Circuit for holding Labour meetings on the Sabbath, particularly from one prominent individual, that he resigned as a local preacher and member in 1920 – although, as he returned to the fold as early as 1922, his disconnection from the Connexion was temporary, perhaps indicating a change of heart by one or both parties.⁶¹

In June 1919, as it would for the Labour Government of 1924, the Church General Committee of the Church held a celebration for its sons returned to Parliament in the recent election. Guttery welcomed them all, regardless of their ‘political complexion’. He credited their fitness and ability to perform their parliamentary duties in a democracy to their apprenticeship in the Church and its ‘evangel’. ‘Yet’, he added:

we remind them of immediate issues of great importance—freedom from educational disabilities which still remain; deliverance from the cruellest social foe, the drink trade; freedom from militarism as a permanent factor in national life; the alleviation of social misery, and the application of equity and right to every domain of life.⁶²

There follows an analysis of the MPs’ application of their Church’s script.

4.3 Political issues

4.3.1 Labour and Capital

Primitives still clothed themselves in their traditional garb as the champion of the wage-earner’s right to just and fair treatment but without the rancour of class warfare. The sentiment was expressed unambiguously in the *Aldersgate* short story entitled ‘Soldiers of Freedom’, in which Primitive Methodism was portrayed as the:

Church of the labourer [that] emphasised the MAN as against wealth, the nation’s righteousness as against the power of any section, the human factor as against the merely economic. It kept fresh in the minds of its people the Christ of the Beatitudes and the Cross, and mediated the vision of a KINGDOM of His rule.⁶³

⁵⁹ Ibid., 21 Aug, 551, 1924.

⁶⁰ J. Banks, *A Primitive Cradling* (The Seventh Chapel Aid Lecture: 1997, Englesea Brook), 5-6.

⁶¹ Catterall, *Free Churches*, 261-2; *PML*, 28 Sep, 626, 1922; Methodist Times ‘Who’s Who of Methodism, 1933’. Available online: <https://www.british-genealogy.com/archive/index.php/t-22047.html> [Accessed 4/12/15].

⁶² Ibid., 12 Jun, 327, 1919.

⁶³ *Aldersgate*, 1920, 523.

Likewise, the Conference of 1914 emphasised the ‘need for brotherhood’ in industrial relations, and the Church’s ‘conviction that the adequate supply of the physical needs of the workers must be the first charge on industry’. Workers were entitled to a ‘living wage’ and ‘decent housing’ at a ‘fair and reasonable rent’.⁶⁴

Although Conference was mostly silent on Labour issues during the war, it returned to them in 1919 with identical sentiments. In his Address of 1919 as retiring President, Rev. W.A. Hammond insisted that the Church’s role was not to act as ‘an arbiter in industrial strife, or commercial disputes’ but ‘to raise up men to be suffused with Christian principles’ and insist that they be applied to the relations between Labour and Capital.⁶⁵ Once Capital and Labour understood ‘that they were both the same fraternity, and the spirit of Brotherhood ... [operated] in industry, they would give the death-blow to strikes.’⁶⁶ The creed was evident in the Conference motion on the coal lockout of 1921. The mines had reverted to private ownership after wartime control by the government and the coalowners had offered the pitmen reduced wages and increased hours. When the miners rejected the new conditions, the owners locked them out of the pits. Conference delegates called for ‘a just and equitable settlement’ for both sides; however, they proposed that ‘no settlement can be just which does not secure a reasonable standard of material well-being and comfort to workers’.⁶⁷

The Church’s inclination to emphasise the workers’ basic needs was not only a reflection of its membership’s social position; their Christian sympathies favoured the weaker party. As Rev. E.B. Storr expressed it, ‘the strong should help the weak’.⁶⁸ The *Leader’s* obituary for John Cairns mirrored this, praising his Christian commitment and public service on behalf of the ‘humblest and poorest of the people.’⁶⁹ Storr promoted and Cairns embodied the essence of the Sermon on the Mount, Isaiah 1:17: ‘Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow’, or Proverbs 31:8-9: ‘Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.’⁷⁰ During the postwar slump, Conference delegates expressed concerns about one particular weaker party: the unemployed. They regretted government inaction on their behalf, proposing that State funds subsidise ‘useful work’ for the unwaged.⁷¹

⁶⁴ *PMCM*, 1914, 246.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 1914, 4.

⁶⁶ *PML*, 19 Jun, 350, 1919.

⁶⁷ *PMCM*, 1921, 211; A. Perkins, *A Very British Strike: 3 May-12 May, 1926* (London: Macmillan, 2006), 17-20.

⁶⁸ *PML*, 02 Jun, 311, 1921.

⁶⁹ *PML*, 31 May, 338, 1923.

⁷⁰ King James Bible.

⁷¹ *PMCM*, 1922, 211-12.

Articles in the publications reinforced the Church's support for what they considered the just claims of the subaltern forces in the industrial and agricultural armies. Primitives championed the rights of wage-earners to fair wages, decent conditions of work and housing, regardless of age or gender. Although Connexional commentators understood why workers sometimes adopted bellicose tactics in a bitter industrial dispute, they did not condone militancy by either Labour or Capital. A *Leader* editorial of January 1914 underlined this sentiment. It discussed the dispute between the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, led by James Larkin, a syndicalist, and the obdurate employers' champion, W.B. Murphy, which resulted in a lock-out from August 1913 to February 1914. The author described both sides in that dispute as adopting approaches that were 'a long way off from any Christian, and therefore righteous, solution of our social and economic problems'. Furthermore, praising the 'saner spirit' exhibited by the likes of John Wilson in trade union leadership, they opined that 'so long as the Murphys in the one camp, and the Larkins in the other, are allowed to usurp and abuse positions of leadership', industrial conflict would injure all parties.⁷² Only a month later, Younger, a former miner, warned young Methodists against leaders such as Larkin and the politics of syndicalism. He expressed Primitive Methodism's deepest held convictions regarding how Labour should relate to Capital:

Part of the danger to-day is a natural impatience with the rate of progress. Men have seen in bare outline the golden future, and are inclined to think that it can be realised easily and swiftly. A rough sense of justice creates the feeling or impatience with the movements which exist to bring in the new social order. One element of danger is the passion for leadership by those who lack the training and grasp and statesmanship necessary to influence rightly large masses of men. They do not perceive ... the extraordinary complexity of the problems which must be dealt with. These upstarts do not lack sympathy with men; they are prepared to suffer much for their ill-informed faith. Now this constitutes a serious menace to a democracy struggling for expression and justice. For the masses of men do not themselves see that the leaders who command the attention of thoughtful persons are aware of the interests, prejudices, creeds and ignorance which must be fought if an inch of the economic and intellectual territory is to be gained. The advocates of Syndicalism are a good example of the danger to wise leadership. The leaders of the sympathetic strike betray the same perilous incapacity. These heralds of the short cut to communal salvation must be avoided at all costs.⁷³

The ideal trade union leader was someone in the mould of Burt, Fenwick or Wilson. One such was William McKee, scion of a Primitive Methodist family in Hull and leader of the Hull Seamen's Union. McKee reminded his members in 1914 that, 'There is one fact which members must not lose sight of: Our aim is Defence, not Defiance.'⁷⁴ Thomas

⁷² *PML*, 01 Jan, 3, 1914.

⁷³ *PML*, 19 Feb, 121, 1914. Also: *HR*, 1917, 276-80.

⁷⁴ *DLB*, 5, 147-9; Hull History Centre: Collection of Papers on George William McKee, 1865-1949, U DLB/5/53.

Hepburn's advocacy of 'Union, perseverance and order'⁷⁵ or Arch's dictum of 'United to protect, but not combined to injure'⁷⁶ prevailed among Primitive Methodism's opinion leaders.⁷⁷ It continued to do so for the rest of the Church's separate existence. The pre-war syndicalists and the post-war shop stewards' movement were in direct contradiction to the type of Labour Movement that the Church endorsed.⁷⁸

The war created new injustices that Primitives deplored, such as wartime profiteering by capitalists and landowners. However, they welcomed increased state intervention in industrial relations and legislation that made arbitration compulsory for unresolved industrial disputes. One such was the Trade Boards Act of 1918, which had been recommended by the Whitley Report of 1917. The 1918 Act permitted the Minister of Labour to create Trade Boards anywhere there was insufficient 'machinery ... for the effective regulation of wages' – an extension of state power that, although ultimately a disappointment, appeared to offer the prospect of workers achieving a minimum or living wage and maintaining industrial harmony. Rev. B. Haddon applauded this legislation as it offered justice to the wage-earner and reduced the danger of irresponsible Labour leaders. He argued that, 'Labour is one of the mightiest forces in the national situation, but unless it can be rightly controlled and directed it may become a most dangerous and destructive force. May God send us men who, with an understanding of the times, will deal wisely and courageously with these great industrial problems.'⁷⁹ Rev. J.C. Mantripp expressed similar sentiments during the war. He condemned militarism, whether exhibited by the Germans or Britain in their war of guns and bullets or by Labour or Capital in 'the war upon wrong at home'. Mantripp insisted, that only a 'righteous war', such as one for a living wage, and only if fought without hate, was acceptable to Christians.⁸⁰ The Church's later support for and involvement in the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship (COPEC), exhibited the same spirit of industrial conciliation. COPEC was an initiative of William Temple, future Archbishop of Canterbury, and incorporated much of the Church's long-standing traditions of Christian inspired social reform.⁸¹ Primitive endorsement of this Anglican inspired organisation was also indicative of an increasing entente with the Established Church, an issue discussed below.

⁷⁵ *Fraser's Magazine*, 9, 1834, 68-70.

⁷⁶ Arch, *Ploughtail*, 131.

⁷⁷ *The Times*, 23 Jun, 1874, 10.

⁷⁸ *PML*, 08 Apr, 225, 1920. One influential figure in the shop stewards movement was the former Primitive Methodist local preacher, J. T. Murphy: Darlington, *J. T. Murphy*, 23-53. His trajectory was unusual for a Primitive. Also: Wearmouth, *Trade Unions*, 69-71.

⁷⁹ *HR*, 1921, 231-7. Also *Ibid.*, 1919, 55-65. J.L. Waltman, *Minimum Wage Policy in Great Britain and the United States* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2008), 66-8.

⁸⁰ *HR*, 1917, 19-30.

⁸¹ *PMCM*, 1924, 231-2; 1926, 246; 1928, 250. John Kent, *William Temple*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), 115-134.

However, Primitive concerns grew in the later years of the war and its immediate aftermath as co-operation between Labour and Capital dissolved.⁸² The various industrial crises that emerged immediately after the Great War tested the Church's hopes for industrial goodwill and their model of trade unionism: a presentiment of the tensions that the General Strike would bring. Even before hostilities against Germany ceased, Rev. E.B. Storr expressed fears that trade unions were 'crippled' and would have 'a long and severe battle before they regain the liberty and power they voluntarily surrendered in the national interest' during the war.⁸³ Conversely, in 1919, Dr A. Irvine, worried that to regain its position or to enhance it, Labour might take a 'path to ruin', losing all its gains of recent decades. He feared that the trade unions might adopt direct action as a political tool, and that the Triple Alliance – a combination of the MFGB, the National Union of Railwaymen and the National Transport Workers' Federation (primarily transport workers and associated trades) – could wield its might to the nation's detriment in such causes.⁸⁴ Also in July of 1919 Guttery, without specifying the particular grounds for his criticism, except the constant 'internal strife' that pervaded that year, declared that:

Capital is uniting its forces for a final struggle; Labour is wielding its tremendous powers to win political supremacy, and, if that fails, to use industrial weapons for political ends. That is an end to all democratic government ... Strikes on the most trivial grounds fill the air with clamour just when we need every ounce of strength and resource to meet our urgent needs.⁸⁵

Guttery's remarks were contextualised in a *Leader* editorial of the following week that criticised the Alliance for considering direct action in pursuit of 'the abolition of Conscription, the withdrawal of our troops from Russia, and their non-intervention in trade disputes.' These were all issues with which the Church sympathised but it disapproved of the destabilization of democracy inherent in political strikes – however enlightened the cause.⁸⁶

The Church's opposition to political strikes and embrace of parliamentary politics was typical of many working-class activists – a return to the politics of riot must not jeopardise the hard-won privilege of the ballot box.⁸⁷ The short story of 1920 entitled 'Soldiers of Freedom', although a celebration of Primitive Methodism's long advocacy of the wage earner, allowed one character to fret that the previous 'despotism of wealth' could be replaced by the 'despotism of labour' unless the latter was 'Christianised'.⁸⁸ Guttery uttered similar sentiments in that same year, when the Triple Alliance considered co-operating in a strike

⁸² *PML*, 28 May, 359, 20 Aug, 589, 03 Sep, 623, 08 Oct, 699, 1914; 11 Mar, 146, 1915; 07 Jun, 330-1, 1917. C. Wrigley, 'Labour and the Trade Unions in Great Britain, 1880-1939', *Refresh*, 13, 1991.

⁸³ *Aldersgate*, 1917, 711.

⁸⁴ *Aldersgate*, 1919, 853-855.

⁸⁵ *PML*, 24 Jul, 445, 1919.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 31 Jul, 454, 1919.

⁸⁷ McKibbin, 'Marxism', 313-4.

⁸⁸ *Aldersgate*, 1920, 746-7.

aimed at forcing the government to nationalise the coalmines. He distinguished between a strike in pursuit of nationalisation, a tactic of which he strongly disapproved as disruptive of parliamentary government, while accepting its legitimate use as a last resort in pursuit of improved pay and conditions.⁸⁹ Guttery also suggested that miners might be more deserving of improved pay if they 'increased output for greater reward', triggering an irate response from a Primitive Methodist pitman who lectured him on the failings of the coalowners. The collier concluded by informing Guttery that miners knew from 'bitter experience the cost of strikes', unlike those who abused them, such as 'some ministers of religion'.⁹⁰

However, when the miners presented a case for a wage increase in 1920 or the coalowners locked the miners out when they refused to work at lower rates of pay, most Connexional articles were sympathetic, if not unconditionally supportive.⁹¹ For example, a *Leader* editorial of March 1920, commenting on Frank Hodges' presentation of the miners' case for a wage increase argued: 'If the contention of Mr. Hodges can be sustained, it appears to me that the men have a claim to some increase. We say "if," and on that the justice of the case hinges.'⁹² In that spirit, in September of that year, the General Committee of the Church called upon the government 'to submit the miners' demand for an increased wage to independent and impartial tribunals.'⁹³ However, the following April, another editorial, although generally appreciative of the miners' case, considered that there was a danger of 'Prussianism' if the full artillery of the Triple Alliance were brought to bear on the pitmen's side.⁹⁴ In such a case the unions would be the strong, not the weak under-dogs of society.

Undoubtedly, in the interests of promoting harmony between the Church's different constituencies during this series of coal disputes, the Connexion's official position was more ambivalent than during the strikes of 1893 and 1912. However, the *Leader* reported that Holborn Hall, the Church's headquarters, hosted 'several important meetings of the Miners' Conference and Triple Alliance'. Primitive Ministers who worked in the building heard the assembled delegates singing hymns 'with considerable feeling and power' before their meetings began. The clergymen concluded correctly that 'quite a number of loyal "Prims" were among those who gathered to deliberate on the grave situation in the industrial world'.⁹⁵ Indeed, many of them were present and future Primitive Methodist MPs.

⁸⁹ *PML*, 16 Sep, 542, 1920.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 30 Sep, 569, 1920.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 07 Apr, 212, 14 Apr, 235, 02 Jun, 311, 344, 1921.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 25 Mar, 193, 1920.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 16 Sep, 542, 1920.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 07 Apr, 216, 1921.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 30 Sep, 574, 1920.

Several crucial parliamentary debates during the coal crises of 1919-21 exemplify the core Labour issues engaging the Primitive MPs and the approaches they adopted. In 1919, Lloyd George proposed the establishment of a Commission under Sir John Sankey to consider the miners' demands for nationalisation, in addition to improved wages and working hours – essentially, a strategy to delay the activation of an MFGB ballot in favour of strike action. Cairns, Cape, Carter, Hartshorn, and Waterson argued against the scheme. In their view, the owners and the government already had sufficient notice of their demands, were in receipt of all the facts needed for decision, and they had no faith in the impartiality of such a Commission. Consequently, in addition to Finney, Kenyon, and Spoor, they all voted with the small minority who opposed the establishment of the Sankey Commission. The following day, in a further vote, Lunn and Spoor joined the debate, arguing that private management and ownership of the coal industry had failed to be either efficient or fair to its workers. Waterson made the additional point that profiteering by the coalowners and other employers during the war had created greater inequality in the distribution of the nation's wealth. According to Waterson, two per cent of the population had owned two thirds of the country's resources before the war and three quarters at its conclusion.⁹⁶

Only Casey was absent from the debates, although it is likely that, as a Coalition Liberal, he would have voted with the government, as he did during a crucial division of 1920. In that instance, when the miners again argued for nationalisation, all the Primitive Methodist MPs voted with the minority in favour, except for Casey – although he often voted with his co-religionists on other Labour issues, such as working hours. Lunn dominated much of that discussion and, although he declared his own commitment to a democratic resolution and his abhorrence of strikes for the suffering they caused to all concerned, he also expressed his frustration at all previous attempts, such as Trade Boards, to establish justice for the pitman. He concluded by quoting Shelley, that, in their determination to achieve nationalisation, the miners were 'rising like lions after their long slumber in unvanquishable number, and moreover they are realising that "we are many and ye are few"'. Lloyd George pounced on Lunn's passionate outburst to claim that he was promoting violence. Hartshorn, a member of the MFGB's executive, unlike Lunn who, until recently, had been a checkweighman, intervened to express the miners' case in temperate language.⁹⁷ Outside the House, Hartshorn admitted that Lunn 'had given the Premier a splendid opportunity to ride the high horse and talk about threats to the whole community', allowing the Welsh Wizard to evade the pertinent issues. However, Hartshorn argued that the miners had a 'perfect right not to work for private owners' and that the

⁹⁶ *Hansard*, 24 February 1919 vol 112 cc1474-545, 25 February 1919 vol 112 cc1635-91.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 11 February 1920 vol 125 cc73-191.

proposed strike was no more political than any other. Although he supported nationalisation, Hodges, Secretary of the MFGB, added that he would not sanction any unconstitutional means to achieve it.⁹⁸ Conversely, Cape voiced concerns in the House of Commons that Earl Haig's appeal for ex-servicemen to 'stand united' against the threatened strike opened up the possibility of industrial war.⁹⁹

However, the crisis of 1920 was defused with a temporary increase in pay and promises that machinery would be established to 'regulate' miners' wages. Subsequently, the *Leader* commended Hartshorn's parliamentary contributions that had helped to bring about a peaceful settlement, emphasising that masters and men must 'recognise their mutual dependence'.¹⁰⁰ Certainly, although government representatives questioned their genuineness, during the lockout of 1921, Finney and Hodge, both MFGB Executive members, supported by Lunn, expressed their desire for an open conference without conditions between the union, the owners, and the government to end the dispute.¹⁰¹

George Edwards also attempted to protect his members while avoiding friction with the farmers. He attempted to ensure a continuation of the government's wartime commitment to guaranteed prices for cereals and minimum wages for labourers as established by the Corn Production Act of 1917. He spoke in several debates during the passage of the Agriculture Act of 1920, which extended these mechanisms, arguing for increased state control of agriculture. All his co-religionists present during debates voted for the extension.¹⁰²

Edwards also voted in favour of a Labour censure motion of 1920, criticising the government for its inaction concerning unemployment, particularly its failure to provide work for ex-servicemen.¹⁰³ He spoke in favour of state aid for unemployment relief schemes, supported by all his co-religionists present except for T.W. Casey, although he was insistent that such work received agreed rates of pay so that the unemployed did not undercut the employed.¹⁰⁴ After the war, unemployment in their own industry also engaged the attention of mining MPs, such as Batey. He argued that inefficient management by the private owners, who only worked the most profitable seams and ignored the marginal strata

⁹⁸ *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 13 Feb, 1920, 1. This was a more moderate stance than he had expressed in a speech to the TUC in 1919, when he declared – to great applause – that he preferred constitutional means to achieve nationalisation but if that failed he could envisage the miners taking action that would 'threaten the very existence of every capitalist institution in the country'.⁹⁸

⁹⁹ *Hansard*, 25 October 1920 vol 133 c1307; *Grey River Argus*, 19 October, 1920, 3.

¹⁰⁰ *PML*, 04 Nov, 630, 1920.

¹⁰¹ *Hansard*, 07 April 1921 vol 140 cc501-65.

¹⁰² Howkins and Verdon, 'The state and the farm worker', 267-269. *Hansard*, 15 November 1920 vol 134 cc1602-64, 22 November 1920 vol 135 cc133-74, 25 November 1920 vol 135 cc693-803.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 21 October 1920 vol 133, cc1115-221;

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 07 November 1921 vol 148 cc101-55, 08 November 1921 vol 148 cc274-346, 04 April 1922 vol 152 c2055W.

that a nationalised industry could exploit, reduced employment opportunities for pitmen.¹⁰⁵ Although all the Primitive MPs contributed to debates on unemployment, including those considering the rate of and qualifications for receiving unemployment benefit, Casey was the only Primitive MP present who voted against another unsuccessful censure motion of 1922, which criticised the government for its inadequate response to the problem.¹⁰⁶ Linfield, an employer himself, made his two most powerful speeches in support of the unemployed, during the Debate on the Address of 1922, and on the minimum wage. In the first speech, he compared the government's attitudes towards the working classes during and after the war:

In those days nothing was too good for the men who were fighting for their country. These men came home. What did they find? On the one hand, they found more millionaires than ever before: on the other hand, they find some 1,500,000 men out of work.¹⁰⁷

In the second, he contrasted the positive treatment of the working classes during the war in terms of wages and the unwillingness of the government to offer the same in peacetime. Supported by all the Primitive members present, he voted for the principle that 'a living wage for all workers should be the first charge on industry'. He urged other members to vote in favour with an argument that would have appealed to his Church's Conference, whose Vice-Presidency he had held in 1902: 'The great British Empire does not depend on armies and navies or vast possessions. The greatness of an empire depends on a contented peasantry and contented workers.'¹⁰⁸

4.3.2 Temperance, gambling and smoking

Conferences and Districts welcomed governmental action that restricted the sale of alcohol or offered that possibility. Support for nationalising the drink traffic, or total prohibition on the American model, increased. Delegates decried the rationing of food as a wartime measure while the production of alcoholic drink continued and, consequently, brewers profited and profiteered. Although Conference considered wartime restrictions on production and drinking hours as promising developments, and did not wish to see these improvements relaxed after hostilities ended, they were never enough.¹⁰⁹ Conferences also feared that changing gender roles and the loosening of morals created by war conditions,

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 11 December 1922 vol 159 cc2342-3, 13 December 1922 vol 159 cc2993-3099.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 07 August 1919 vol 119 cc556, 09 July 1920 vol 131 cc1835-68, 09 February 1922 vol 150 cc345-457, 16 February 1921 vol 138 cc103-230, 27 June 1921 vol 143 cc1917-51.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 23 November 1922 vol 159 cc44-166.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 07 March 1923 vol 161 cc627-75.

¹⁰⁹ *PMCM*, 1914, 243; 1915, 254; 1917, 204; 1918, 207; 1919, 212; 1920, 7, 201ff; 1921, 205; 1922, 208, 219. *Dundee Courier*, 22 Jun, 1915, 6. *Western Gazette*, 25 Jun, 1915, 4. *Western Times*, 01 May, 1916, 3. *Edinburgh Evening News*, 28 Apr, 1920, 6. *Burnley News*, 07 May, 1921, 5.

had led to an increase in women drinking.¹¹⁰ Unaware that it was never implemented, they welcomed the King's pledge to abstain from drink during the war and regretted that the House of Commons had not done the same.¹¹¹

Connexional authors shared their concerns, including the greater consumption of alcohol by women and soldiers, and, with only a few exceptions, increasingly embraced state ownership of the drink trade or prohibition.¹¹² However, there was an intensified recognition that drink was an aggravating factor rather than the sole cause of poverty. Furthermore, it was still a Labour issue. For example, T.S. Ball, in a letter to the *Leader*, denounced both low wages and the 'drink bill' as contributing to poverty, insisting that, 'If our working men were sober they would be in a far better position to deal with the monopoly of capital, and in many instances would be able even to dictate terms.'¹¹³

Drink, particularly the Labour Party's attitude to temperance, also became an issue for the Free Churches in the 1918 election and beyond. As a Party with progressive policies on social issues, it was attracting support from some Primitives and, consequently, its stance on temperance became increasingly important to the Church.¹¹⁴ Whereas, according to Rev. W.E. Goodreid, the Liberal Party had 'nailed its colours to the mast on the question of temperance' in its manifesto of 1922, Labour's attitude to the drink trade was ambiguous, despite the existence of temperance supporters in its ranks and its 'many noble vindications of its attitude to the drink trade'. There were even opponents of the trade in the upper reaches of the Conservative Party. Consequently, Goodreid encouraged his co-religionists to vote for candidates who were firm on temperance, irrespective of party.¹¹⁵ However, many Primitives still regarded the Tory Party and the House of Lords as the brewer's allies and friends: the 'beerage and the peerage'.¹¹⁶ After the Conservative victory in the 1924 general election, as 'Vigilant' noted, 'A House of Commons with a majority of two hundred Tory members will never give us either local option or Sunday closing.'¹¹⁷

In actuality, it was unlikely that any party would. Even Primitives were less wedded to temperance following the war. Though he warned against exaggerating the effect of the

¹¹⁰ *PMCM*, 1915, 254; 1916, 220; 1917, 204; 1918, 207. This may have been another sentiment with which the Church was in accord with public opinion: C. Pennell., *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 80-3.

¹¹¹ *PMCM*, 1915, 254.

¹¹² *PMCM*, 1916, 220. *HR*, 1916, 98-113, 204-17. *PML*, 19 Feb, 115, 1914; 12 Nov, 777, 779, 1914; 11 Mar, 146, 1915; 01 Mar, 130-1, 1917; 10 May, 266, 1917; 14 Mar, 169, 1918; 21 Mar, 180, 1918; 11 May, 290, 1922. *Aldersgate*, 1916, 252; 1918, 148.

¹¹³ *PML*, 08 Oct, 703, 1914.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 05 Dec, 634, 1918; 09 Nov, 723, 1922. Catterall, *Free Churches*, 357. Also Catterall, 'Politics of Alcohol' for a detailed account of how temperance gradually slid down the Labour Party's agenda between the wars.

¹¹⁵ *PML*, 09 Dec, 723, 1922.

¹¹⁶ *PML*, 19 Feb, 115, 1914; *Aldersgate*, 1918, 765.

¹¹⁷ *PML*, 06 Nov, 723, 1924.

war, John Day Thompson argued in 1916, that social mores were changing, even those of Primitive Methodists.¹¹⁸ Rev. W.R. Wilkinson, the Connexional Temperance Secretary, also admitted during the war that politicians of all parties were reluctant to ‘outstrip public consent’, which was largely lukewarm on the temperance issue, and certainly not likely to support prohibition. Moreover, he acknowledged that many Primitives shared this tepid approach to temperance.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, Conference also appreciated that, despite the leadership’s consistent support for temperance measures, its membership were less zealous and, in 1920, called on all its members and adherents ‘to regard as a Christian duty total abstinence from all intoxicating liquors as beverages.’¹²⁰ Samuel Horton, in his Presidential Address to the Conference of 1921, declared that between the Church and the drink trade ‘it must be war to the knife’ with ‘no compromise’. However, his diatribe against the ‘slump in national purity’ and his co-religionists’ lackadaisical appetite for converting the impure, also suggests the general membership’s increasing accommodation with contemporary mores.¹²¹ The wider constituency of members and hearers, never completely won over to temperance, was increasingly adapting to societal norms on drinking during and after the Great War. The ‘war to the knife’ against the brewers never ceased but its Primitive Methodist battalions suffered desertions.¹²² An incident at the 1922 Falmouth Synod revealed that a small minority of Primitives disagreed with the disproportionate priority awarded to temperance. During a debate on the evils of strong drink, a Mr Culpin proposed that, rather than emphasising the wickedness of the drink trade, morality ‘ought to be kept to the fore [of the Church’s] agenda] at the expense of the almost worn-out cause of temperance’. Although the meeting did not endorse Culpin’s view, his opinion suggests that the temperance agenda was disputed.¹²³

Significantly, only Fenwick and Wilson, the old school Liberals, attempted to introduce a Private Members’ Bill on temperance during this period, one aimed at restricting the sale of intoxicating liquors on Sunday.¹²⁴ However, Arthur Richardson and Samuel Finney continued to speak vociferously in favour of temperance measures. Richardson was concerned at the increased wartime propensity of women to drink alcohol, and Finney advocated absolute prohibition on the French and Russian model, pleading wartime shortages of foodstuff as a justification for such an unpopular move.¹²⁵ In

¹¹⁸ *PMCM*, 1916, p.10.

¹¹⁹ *Aldersgate*, 1917, 411; 1918, 125,765.

¹²⁰ *PMCM*, 1920, 206.

¹²¹ *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 05 Sep, 1921, 12.

¹²² Field, ‘The Devil’, 78-93.

¹²³ *WMN*, 04 May, 1922, 3.

¹²⁴ *JHC*, V169, 26.

¹²⁵ *Hansard*, 21 March 1918 vol 104 cc1137-8, 22 March 1917 vol 91 c2052, 05 June 1917 vol 94 c32W, 27 June 1917 vol 95 cc368-9 and 28 June 1917 vol 95 cc501-2, 21 March 1918 vol 104 cc1137-8, 09 April 1918 vol 104 c1323, 25 October 1920 vol 133 cc1383-4W.

addition, without commenting on the merits or demerits of the drink trade, Lunn proposed the taxing of brewers' 'gross' wartime profits as profiteering.¹²⁶

In contrast to their Liberal co-religionists, Waterson and Cairns expressed concern at the reduction of beer supplies. Waterson asked his first parliamentary question on the issue, articulating 'the indignation and unrest to which the continuance of a reduced supply is everywhere giving rise'.¹²⁷ A few days later, Cairns repeated the question verbatim.¹²⁸ Joined by Spoor, Waterson and Cairns also raised concerns regarding the limited supply of spirits for those with medical prescriptions.¹²⁹ This questioning, at odds with their Church's stance, may have been an indication of the changing mores and agenda of some Primitive Methodists. Indeed, Spoor himself suffered from alcoholism, which resulted in his prosecution for drunk driving and, ultimately, his death from an alcohol-related illness.¹³⁰ Additionally, their stance undoubtedly reflected the pressures on Labour politicians from their working-class and working-men's clubs constituency – ultimately obliging the Party to adopt a position where it 'would no longer touch temperance reform' by the end of the 1930s.¹³¹

Although devotion to temperance was weakening, Gambling assumed an even greater significance for the Church and its MPs – fuelled by the increased popularity of football pools and the government's use of lotteries to raise money for the war effort. Due to increased expenditure on gambling as that on drink reduced, this trend persisted until Methodist Union. There were calls for prohibition in all contexts and, at minimum, requests that the Board of Education introduce a school syllabus to discourage gambling's growth.¹³² In 1922, Conference explained its disapproval: 'We deplore the grave menace to the welfare of the nation which the gambling mania carries with it. It has lowered the standard of sport and has infected our commercial system, and has not only ruined individuals but seriously reduced the comfort and well-being of many homes.'¹³³ Concerned that gambling was becoming a national obsession and legitimacy given to it by government regulation and taxation, one female Connexional writer placed gambling

¹²⁶ *Hansard*, 26 March 1919 vol 114 c421W.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 14 February 1919 vol 112 c443.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 20 February 1919 vol 112 cc1148-9W.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 14 February 1919 vol 112 c444W, 20 February 1919 vol 112 c1148W, 13 March 1919 vol 113 cc1447-8.

¹³⁰ *MG*, 05 Aug, 1927, 3; *The Times*, 27 Dec, 1928, 8.

¹³¹ Catterall, 'Politics of Alcohol', 36.

¹³² *PMCM*, 1914, 245-6; 1920, 201ff; 1921, 206; 1922, 208; 1923, 218-20; 1924, 231; 1925, 242; 1927, 242; 1928, 250; 1929, 248; 1930, 264; 1932, 269. *PML*, 19 Feb, 121, 1914; 06 May, 1920, 296; 09 Nov, 717, 724, 1922; 21 Jun, 388, 392, 1923. *WDP*, 04 May, 1917, 5. Catterall, *Righteousness*, 70-1.

¹³³ *PMCM*, 1922, 208.

‘emphatically in the list of major sins’.¹³⁴ She was not alone in her judgement.¹³⁵ In 1923, Primitive Methodist Churches bombarded the House of Common Select Committee on Betting Duty with 365 resolutions against gambling on horses, 54 more than any other denomination.¹³⁶

Correspondingly, during a 1918 debate on the Lotteries (War Charities) Bill, which aimed to raise money for the war effort, Arthur Richardson re-iterated his abhorrence of all gambling – detestation he claimed for the Free Churches and Labour Movement. He considered those bodies’ antagonism to gambling so strong that he warned the government:

should the Bill pass, you are going to cause dissension and division of opinion and feeling in the country that will not help the government, and if it were possible to lose the War—and I do not think it is whatever blunders the government may make—the passing of this Bill is one of the things that would help in that direction.’

Richardson and the other MPs present at that time were in the majority who voted against the Bill’s second reading.¹³⁷ Similarly, in 1919, eight out of the nine Primitive Methodist MPs voted against the introduction of Premium Bonds – undoubtedly only lacking unanimity due to Finney’s absence from the House.¹³⁸

Indulgence in tobacco did not have as high a profile or sin quotient as alcohol or gambling; it could even be the subject of a well-received Conference joke. In 1914, ‘amid laughter’, Alderman Rawlings teased J. Dodd Jackson that ‘he worked well [as Connexional editor] when not playing golf’. Jackson quipped back that he had funded his golf habit by ‘surrendering’ his tobacco habit. To ‘loud laughter’, the President added that Jackson’s ‘language’ had improved since he forsook smoking for golf.¹³⁹ However, one *Leader* editorial of 1914 considered an increased expenditure on tobacco, particularly among juveniles, ‘disquieting’. Significantly, the author did not advocate prohibition for adults but asked ‘Christian men’ to consider whether ‘personal freedom and liberty ought to be limited in the interests of the rest.’¹⁴⁰ However, the *Leader* welcomed increased wartime taxation on tobacco, considered a luxury rather than an essential.¹⁴¹

¹³⁴ *PML*, 12 Feb, 99, 1925.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 01 Mar, 130, 1923; 24 May, 323, 1923;

¹³⁶ M. Huggins, *Horse Racing and the British 1919-39* (Manchester: MUP, 2003), 104.

¹³⁷ *Hansard*, 06 August 1918 vol 109 cc1236-81.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 01 December 1919 vol 122 cc73-183.

¹³⁹ *WDP*, 23 Jun, 1914, 7.

¹⁴⁰ *PML*, 19 Mar, 185, 1914.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 10 May, 266, 1917.

4.3.3 Disestablishment and ecclesiastical matters

Although disestablishment was still a shibboleth at the war's commencement, it had faded by the end of this period. In 1914, a *Leader* columnist employed well-worn arguments in support of Welsh disestablishment and disendowment:

Nor is the disestablished Church likely to suffer in the least; rather will it, in the long run, be enormously helped, the history of the liberated Irish Church shows that [and] for the Episcopalians of Wales to have to find the money for their Church as Free Churchmen do will be for their health and the well-being of their churches.¹⁴²

The same commentator, decried later attempts to overturn or modify the Welsh Church Act of 1914 by a Trinity of the House of Lords, Tory politicians and Anglican bishops – Primitive Methodism's customary Aunt Sallies of reaction – as them trying to extract 'their pound of flesh'.¹⁴³ Similarly, the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act of 1919, enabling legislation that allowed the Anglican Church a greater degree of self-government and freedom from parliamentary interference, except from a small committee of representatives of both Houses of Parliament, irritated the Church and brought ecclesiastic issues briefly to the fore. However, Primitives' objections to the Act were focused on 'the relations of Church and State ... being entrusted to a small committee' rather than Parliament as a whole. If the Anglican Church remained endowed and umbilically attached to the State, they considered that Parliamentary scrutiny should remain.¹⁴⁴ Partly complaining at the muffled opposition of his own Church to the Act, one Primitive wrote to the *Leader* in April 1920, emotively signing his letter 'Chapelite'; he fretted that Nonconformity had lost its passion regarding the power and privilege of the Established Church, becoming too conciliatory towards its privileged 'rivals', imperilling the very existence of the Free Churches.¹⁴⁵ In the same issue, Rev. Percy M. Hoyle repeated the same concerns, particularly disturbed by the increasing influence of the Anglicans in rural East Anglia.¹⁴⁶

However, although disestablishment remained an emotive issue for some – including George Edwards – a lack of passion regarding disestablishment prevailed throughout the last decade of the Primitives' existence.¹⁴⁷ In 1926 the author of the *Leader's* 'Notes' column indicated that the issue of disestablishment had been dormant for some years; he explained that the debate aroused less ardour among Free Churchmen, who were increasingly divided on the issue, and the Liberation Society, the sole survivor of organisations that promoted

¹⁴² *PML*, 28 May, 359, 1914. Also *PML*, 10 May, 266, 1917; 08 Apr, 229, 1920; *Cambridge Independent Press*, 15 Jan, 1915, 4; *DGM*, 05 May, 1914, 3.

¹⁴³ *PML*, 11 Mar, 147, 1915.

¹⁴⁴ *PMCM*, 1919, 217; *Aberdeen Journal*, 17 Jun, 1919, 6; Machin, *Politics*, 319-21.

¹⁴⁵ *PML*, 08 Apr, 235, 1920.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 229.

¹⁴⁷ Catterall, *Righteousness*, 176.

disestablishment, was 'none too vigorous'.¹⁴⁸ This apathy (or amity) concerning the Anglican Church's relationship to the State was partly due to convergent thinking or, at minimum, compromise on issues such as temperance. For example, Rev. W.R. Wilkinson welcomed the establishment of an inter-denominational Temperance Council of Christians Churches in 1918, which agreed a number of 'united demands' regarding the control of the drink trade.¹⁴⁹

Encouraged by the erosion of nonconformist disabilities and the growth of Biblical criticism which 'undermined Protestant illusions that any particular church order or practice was uniquely sanctioned by the New Testament', a more ecumenical temper prevailed after the war.¹⁵⁰ Methodist Union, partly promoted as a means of arresting declining membership, became a regular topic at Conferences from 1914 onwards and, by 1922, there was little opposition to it within the body of delegates.¹⁵¹ Similarly, the Lambeth Conference's suggestion of a wider Church union was welcomed in spirit even if it was rejected by the Primitive Methodists' own Conference of 1921 due to the Anglican's insistence that ordination of ministers be conducted by their bishops.¹⁵² The increasingly ecumenical stance and decline in hostility to the Established Church are apparent in a number of *Aldersgate* articles, both by omissions and inclusions. For example, Rev. J.C. Mantripp's article of 1918 on 'The Nation and Its Villages', omitted the habitual Primitive rant of former times against the power of the parson and squire in village life.¹⁵³ Rev. Joseph Rutherford's contribution of the same year, on 'The Church and People', welcomed the lack of fervour 'in men's thoughts' regarding denominational and sacramental issues, matters that had previously created division and dissension among Christians. He concluded with a plea for the achievable 'dream' of a 'World-Church'.¹⁵⁴ Also in 1918, Rev. E.B. Storrs' proposals for the essential features of a Christian State, omitted any appeal for a disendowed Church.¹⁵⁵ A year later, William Ernest Clegg, Vice-President of Conference in 1928, argued for greater co-operation between the Churches now that the causes of division had 'largely passed away, and time, kindly time, has healed most of the wounds, so that scarcely a scar remains'.¹⁵⁶

Within such a context of growing concord with the Established Church, it is not surprising that, after voting for the Welsh Disestablishment Act in 1913, the Church's MPs

¹⁴⁸ *PML*, 12 Aug, 483, 1926.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 31 Oct, 573, 1918.

¹⁵⁰ Catterall, *Righteousness*, 20.

¹⁵¹ *PMCM*, 1914, 247; 1918, 6; 1919, 6; 1921, 4, 207; 1922, 5. However, it should be noted that, as Currie suggested, the Union of 1932 was 'traumatic' for many Methodists and not always welcomed by the wider constituency of members and hearers: Currie, *Methodism Divided*, 303-6. Also Clark, 66ff.

¹⁵² *PMCM*, 1921, 207; *WDP*, 14 Aug, 1920, 8; *DDT*, 22 Mar, 1921, 5.

¹⁵³ *Aldersgate*, 1918, 636-9.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 752-4.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 530-33

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1919, 112-3.

do not appear to have registered any calls for English disestablishment either in or out of Parliament. Although Waterson intervened in the debate on the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act of 1919, he did not call for disestablishment, only registering that the legislation would ‘deprive the greater part of the people of England from effective influence in the affairs of the National Church.’ He and the other Primitive Methodist MPs were among a tiny minority who voted for further debate in a committee of the whole House before the Bill was sent to a standing committee.¹⁵⁷

4.3.4 Education

Education retained its high priority for Primitive Methodists, although here too denominational issues became less contentious after the war. The Conference of 1914 reiterated its customary frustration at the government’s failure to address their grievances in relation to the 1902 Education Act. Delegates desired a well-funded educational system that was ‘thoroughly civic and national, and subject to democratic control’, which afforded ‘entire relief from payment for denominational teaching’ and secured ‘for all teachers absolute freedom from all sectarian tests.’¹⁵⁸ They welcomed improvements in educational administration but feared that the government had endangered the principle of free education in its recent Finance Act. However, a vote in favour of secular education was defeated, as was a motion censuring the government for its tardiness in repealing the 1902 Act.¹⁵⁹ Similarly the *Leader* began 1914 with an editorial warning that many Primitives had ‘reached almost the verge of revolt’ on education.¹⁶⁰ However, attitudes were changing. A letter from ‘Historicus’ in the same edition expressed a very different sentiment, which he claimed was shared by many other Primitives. ‘Historicus’ was concerned that his Church’s intransigence could force the State into establishing an entirely secular educational system. While he had no appetite for sectarian religious teaching, he believed that all the Churches could work in ‘communionship’ to deliver a consensual syllabus. He submitted that many of his co-religionists were ‘worn down’ and ‘weary’ of passive resistance; he insisted that the time and cause required ‘statesmen’, not ‘agitators’.¹⁶¹

Educational issues remained dormant for most of the war. However, the Church’s approval of H.A.L. Fisher’s appointment as Minister of Education and their almost unequivocal support for his Education Act of 1918, demonstrated that statesmen had eclipsed agitators. During the Act’s passage, denominational issues remained suspended so that educational reforms could progress, even though Primitive Methodists were ultimately

¹⁵⁷ *Hansard*, 07 November 1919 vol 120 cc1817-97.

¹⁵⁸ *PMCM*, 1914, 244-5.

¹⁵⁹ *WDP*, 26 Jun, 1914, 5.

¹⁶⁰ *PML*, 01 Jan, 3, 1914.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 7, 1914.

disappointed with most outcomes and continued to express their complaints and concerns.¹⁶² Early hopes for Fisher and his Bill of 1917-18 were particularly prominent in articles written by Guttery and A.L. Shires, a teacher and member of the Church's Education Committee. Guttery argued for a suspension of former 'jealousies ... prejudices, sectarian and social' when welcoming Fisher to his ministerial post and the exposition of educational principles he intended to enact – essentially promises of a well-resourced national system of education, the extension of compulsory schooling at nursery and secondary ages, greater access to tertiary opportunities and improved conditions for teachers. Significantly, Guttery claimed that 'Labour ... Capital [and] the State' now recognized the need for a well-educated population; educational reform on the lines promised by Fisher would obtain 'our redemption as a Commonwealth' and was necessary for future 'democratic and imperial tasks'.¹⁶³ Shires concurred with Guttery's approval of Fisher's intentions, promoting the prospect of a 'liberal' school system that encompassed the physical, mental and spiritual needs of the child and that prepared him or her for all aspects of life, including 'social and industrial relations'. Significantly, he warned Primitive Methodists that they must 'never acquiesce in the production of mere hands in a mechanical world'.¹⁶⁴ Despite their general compliance during the Bill's passage, one proposal raised their ire: unsuccessful proposals to include military drill or training in the school curriculum. They would not brook militarism in any form.¹⁶⁵ Guttery praised the resultant Act primarily as it ensured that children could not be employed under the age of 12. In addition, it extended compulsory education up to the age of 14, with the possibility of 'the blessings of education' continuing until the age of 18 – arguably the Act's only significant achievement.¹⁶⁶

Due to Fenwick's death and Burt's inactivity during his final months in Parliament, only Finney, Kenyon, Arthur and Thomas Richardson and Taylor took part in any divisions on the Bill. Although none of them contributed to debate, all voted in line with their Church's policies. Finney, Arthur and Thomas Richardson, and Taylor cast votes in favour of clauses or amendments defending a free national education system, available to all and devoid of military drill or training.¹⁶⁷ Kenyon was absent for those debates, although he and Thomas Richardson were present for committee discussions regarding an amendment

¹⁶² *HDM*, 20 Feb, 1919, 5. *YPLI*, 16 Jun, 1922, 7. *Lancashire Evening Post*, 18 Jun, 1924, 3. *PMCM*, 1922, 6, 213; 1923, 223-4; 1924, 230; 1925, 242; 1929, 246; 1930, 261-2; 1932, 269-70. *PML*, 27 Dec 1917, 8 Apr, 227, 1920; 29 Jun, 411, 1922. Machin, *Politics*, 322. Geoffrey Sherington, *English Education, Social Change and War: 1911-20* (Manchester: MUP, 1981), 117ff.

¹⁶³ *PML*, 26 Apr, 241, 1917. According to Simon, the Labour Movement held out almost millenarian hopes for the Bill: Simon, *Education*, 350-7.

¹⁶⁴ *Aldersgate*, 1918, 308-11.

¹⁶⁵ *PML*, 15 Aug, 19, 1915; 14 Jan, 241, 1917; 14 Mar, 163, 1918. *HDM*, 09 Mar, 1918, 1. *Aldersgate*, 1918, 309.

¹⁶⁶ *PML*, 15 Aug, 447, 1918. Also Simon, *Education*, 357-8.

¹⁶⁷ *Hansard*, 07 May 1918 vol 105 cc1995-2041-120, 08 May 1918 vol 105 cc2181-290,

that would have allowed denominational schools to charge for some activities; unsurprisingly, both voted against the proposal.¹⁶⁸ Only Kenyon was present for a debate on a Labour Party motion to introduce the payment of maintenance allowances to young people obliged to attend 'continuation schools' after the age of compulsory education. He voted with the minority who supported the amendment and, again, in favour of another that protected young people from working excessive hours when they were required to attend continuation schools.¹⁶⁹

After the Act's implementation, all questions, debating points or votes made by the MPs were consistent with the Church's policies of: a well-resourced and national educational system up to and including tertiary education, schools with manageable class sizes, pupils resourced and teachers paid well, regardless of gender.¹⁷⁰

In the mainly optimistic atmosphere engendered by Fisher's Bill, H.J. Taylor opined in 1918 that 'Government and administration in every part of the Empire will place education next to morality in all things essential'.¹⁷¹ The following year, Rev. W.A. Hammond, in his final month as President of Conference, saluted the country's 'greater stress upon the intellectual training of their children than ever before.' However, they must not forget morality and arming 'children [with] the power to withstand the devil'.¹⁷² The recipe was still the same as the sermon that had converted J.W. Taylor in 1874: 'be ambitious, be studious, be prayerful'.¹⁷³

4.3.5 Military matters

The outbreak of war precipitated a crisis of conscience for the Church. At the Conference of 1914, repeating their resolution of 1913, delegates condemned the arms race with Germany, insisting that social reform should be a higher priority for public funds.¹⁷⁴ Indeed, when the war began, some Primitive chapels and influential individuals, such as Guttery, urged the government to remain neutral. However, after the invasion of Belgium and reports of German atrocities, influential voices, such as Guttery, Henshaw, Ritson and

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 16 July 1918 vol 108 cc902-43.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 10 June 1918 vol 106 cc1895-2010.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 7 February 1919 vol 112 c1993W, 18 March 1919 vol 113 cc1893-4, 20 March 1919 vol 113 cc2275-6, 16 July 1919 vol 118 cc409-10W, 17 July 1919 vol 118 c617W, 14 August 1919 vol 119 c1654W and c1662W, 15 December 1919 vol 123 cc67-8W, 18 February 1920 vol 125 c901W, 25 March 1920 vol 127 c632W, 16 June 1920 vol 130 c1293W, 27 October 1920 vol 133 cc1739-40, 28 October 1920 vol 133 cc1961-2W, 28 February 1921 vol 138 c1458W, 04 April 1922 vol 152 cc2032-3, 16 May 1922 vol 154 cc263-327, 01 August 1922 vol 157 c1262.

¹⁷¹ *Aldersgate*, 1918, 235.

¹⁷² *Cornishman*, 21 May, 2, 1919.

¹⁷³ *Wearmouth, Twentieth Century*, 134-5.

¹⁷⁴ *PMCM*, 1914, 9, 245.

Younger, fell into step with public opinion, as did Conference.¹⁷⁵ As Kendall explained, feeling that ‘the situation was without precedent’ and as ‘they could find no flaw in their country’s case for war’, over 150,000 Primitive Methodists served in the armed forces during the First World War, including more than 4,000 local preachers, and 43 ordained ministers as army chaplains. Kendall praised his co-religionists’ service and sacrifice in a conflict that he compared to a ‘Crusade’.¹⁷⁶ In 1915, Rev. George Bennett, the retiring President, his views endorsed by the new President, John Day Thompson, reflected on how Primitive Methodists had ‘heard [and responded to] the call of the nation’ to fight in a just war. Their beliefs were ‘averse to war’ but its young men had enlisted to fight ‘for the right’ despite ‘hating war’. For the first time, Primitive Methodists served as army chaplains, an initiative welcomed by the Church. Bennett hoped that the present conflict would remind humanity of ‘the unrelieved evils of war’ and prevent repetition.¹⁷⁷ The ‘brutal arrogance and ambition of ... [German] military caste, and ... [its] materialistic philosophy’ left the British nation without any moral option except to fight. Delegates abhorred Germany’s violation of Belgium, the murder of civilians and the use of poison gas. The large number of Primitive Methodist volunteers, enlisting due to their devotion to the British Empire, demonstrated that there was no need for conscription.¹⁷⁸ However, resolutions did not express a jingoistic spirit. God was not on either side of the conflict, it was arrogant to suggest otherwise; God had no ‘darlings’. Britain’s geography, the fact that it was an island and had a strong fleet, rather than Providence, had saved the country from invasion and defeat.¹⁷⁹ Conference’s reaction to the invasion of Belgium and its lack of jingoism, appear to have been typical of public reaction and opinion.¹⁸⁰

Although generally avoiding condemnation of the German nation as a monolithic enemy, like other Nonconformists, Primitives censured their national culture and philosophy as militaristic.¹⁸¹ Rev. John Hodges even enlisted Cromwell’s ‘Old Testament warrior’ in the fight against ‘Kaiserism and Prussianism’, which he compared in terms of ‘Charles 1st re-

¹⁷⁵ *MCLGA*, 04 Aug, 1914, 6; *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 07 Aug, 1914, 8. *Burnley News*, 05 Aug, 1914, 5; *Motherwell Times*, 14 Aug, 1914, 5. *PML*, 06 Aug, 553, 555, 13 Aug, 572, 575, 577, 20 Aug, 591, 27 Aug, 604, 03 Sep, 619, 625, 1914. Bowran, *Guttery*, 145-52. For recent research on German atrocities in Belgium see J. Horne and A. Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2001) and for atrocity stories, both factual and exaggerated, that PM audiences heard: R. Sidebotham, *Hyde in Wartime 1914-16* (Hyde: Herald Press, 1916), 15-16.

¹⁷⁶ Kendall, *History*, 164-173. Kendall’s figures appear to have included members, hearers and Sunday School students.

¹⁷⁷ *PMCM*, 1915, 4-6. Also: *Yorkshire Post*, 17 Jun, 1915, 6.

¹⁷⁸ *PMCM*, 1915, 244 and 250.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 1916, 4.

¹⁸⁰ Pennell, *Kingdom United*, particularly 35, 557-67, 125.

¹⁸¹ *PML*, 08 Oct, 698, 1914; 14 Jan, 17, 1915; 17 Feb, 105, 1916; 14 Mar, 163, 1918. *HR*, 1915, 83-98, 114-8, 469-70; 1916, 537-51. P. Jenkins, *The Great and Holy War: How World War One Changed Religion For Ever* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2014), 96-100.

incarnated'.¹⁸² Militarism was anathema to the Church and military conscription its most obvious incarnation. After the introduction of conscription in 1916, which a *Leader* editorial suggested the Church 'reluctantly acquiesced in ... as a hateful necessity',¹⁸³ Conference unanimously supported the right of conscientious objection to military service and was 'disappointed' in the 'unsympathetic [and] vindictive' sentences of some tribunals, and the 'savage brutality with which some men have been treated'. Consequently, delegates confirmed the Church's support for the government's conduct of the war, but its abhorrence of the maltreatment of conscientious objectors.¹⁸⁴ However, support for conscientious objectors (COs) was not universal. When Guttery suggested that he was 'nauseated by the cant uttered in the name of conscience' to the Chester Synod in 1916, he met with some approval.¹⁸⁵ Although he moderated his attitude to COs in his Presidential address to the Conference of 1917, Guttery welcomed the 'growing unity between Church and Nation' that had been created by 'the atoning sacrifice' of its members. As a consequence of its support for the war, the Church was finally 'in touch with the heart of the nation.'¹⁸⁶

Despite their pleasure at being in the full flow of national life, the Church hoped that the war of 1914-19 would be the last. Conference prayed that their members' sacrifice would 'hasten the day when a defiant and Godless militarism shall have given place to wiser and more humane methods of settling international differences', to methods based on the precepts of Jesus.¹⁸⁷ Correspondingly, delegates supported the Society of Friends' attempt to convene an international Christian assembly to consider means of promoting a 'durable and righteous peace'.¹⁸⁸ In the final year of the conflict, delegates reaffirmed their support for a 'righteous' war, praised its members who were fighting for a just peace rather than 'national aggrandisement', repudiated militarism and hoped that a League of Nations would be established to prevent any recurrence of war after victory. They hoped that the government would look after the 'maimed and wounded' and pleaded for the just treatment of conscientious objectors.¹⁸⁹ They wished to see rapid demobilisation in 1919, an end to conscription and the application of fair principles, rather than vengeance, at the Versailles Conference.¹⁹⁰ The publications reflected the same sentiments of support for a League of Nations, and a peace lacking vindictiveness.¹⁹¹

¹⁸² *HR*, 1916, 178-191. Also

¹⁸³ *PML*, 18 Dec, 762, 1919.

¹⁸⁴ *PMCM*, 222-4; A.S. Peake, *Prisoners of Hope*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1918), 125-7.

¹⁸⁵ *Chester Chronicle*, 06 May, 1916, 6.

¹⁸⁶ *PMCM*, 1917, 3-6.

¹⁸⁷ *PMCM*, 1917, 195-200.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 205-6.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 1918, 3, 194, 201-4.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1919, 3, 7, 217.

¹⁹¹ *HR*, 1917, 426-34, 471-3; 1918, 157-69; 1919, 19-31. *Aldersgate*, 1917, 246-9; 1918, 147-8, 618; 1921, 590.

Support for the League persisted. In 1920, Conference asked its preachers to promote the establishment of local branches from every one of its pulpits.¹⁹² However, Primitives were not lacking in realism. Rev. James Harrison argued that the League could not ‘operate, without having behind it some force, with which, in the final issue, to compel would-be recalcitrants to accept its judgments’. He considered the Westminster Confession of 1648 ‘to wage war upon just and necessary occasions’ as ‘a balanced and accurate’ representation of Christ’s views.¹⁹³ Although there were more than 100 Primitive conscientious objectors, Conference debates and the publications confirm Hughes’ depiction of the Church as essentially *pacifist*, and Wilkinson’s assertion that the war was a significant turning point in the assimilation of Dissent into the national culture.¹⁹⁴

However, there were divergences of opinion and action, as the Church’s MPs demonstrated. Most followed the Church’s official stance. Consequently, some – such as Barnet Kenyon and Vernon Hartshorn – were called on by the government to help maintain harmonious relationships with and motivate the workforce or to encourage enlistment. Others, particularly the avowed Socialists – Spoor, Simmons, Hill, and Thomas Richardson – were opposed to the war. Antagonism to conscription ultimately added Fenby to that list. Their attitudes to the war offer an insight to how the Church’s membership responded to the war, how their religious and political stances influenced them.

Spoor’s response epitomised the conflict a Primitive piety, ethical politics, and desire to serve could elicit. In 1925 Spoor was described as ‘by conviction a Pacifist, but he was not so bound to the abstract idea of pacifism as to refuse his services when he could be devoted to the real service of his fellow men’.¹⁹⁵ Consequently, from May 1916, he gave succour to those in uniform by running the YMCA facilities for troops stationed in Salonika – a service for which he received an OBE in 1918. Page Croft questioned the appropriateness of this award in Parliament; his objection was that, in 1916, Spoor had spoken at a meeting of the Union of Democratic Control, an organization Croft considered disloyal.¹⁹⁶ Rather than encouraging outright objection to war, the Union believed the conflict resulted from the secret international diplomacy that had preceded it; its members promoted an honourable and negotiated peace without humiliation for any of the combatant

¹⁹² *PMCM*, 1919, 3, 216; 1920, 6, 209.

¹⁹³ *HR*, 1920, 25-37.

¹⁹⁴ Hughes, ‘Dilemmas’; Wilkinson, *Dissent*, 54-55. In July 1917, eight PMs were in prison for absolute refusal of military service, compared to 28 Congregationalist and 109 Friends: Mrs H. Hobhouse, *I Appeal Unto Caesar* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1917), 16-17.

¹⁹⁵ H. Tracey, (ed.), *The Book of the Labour Party: Its History, Growth, Policy, and Leaders*, III (London: Caxton, c.1925), 269.

¹⁹⁶ *Hansard*, 23 July 1918 vol 108 cc1660-1W.

nations. In 1920, Spoor unsuccessfully nominated the Union for the Nobel Peace Prize.¹⁹⁷ Croft was unaware that Spoor had also voiced his opposition to the war in September 1914. Responding to an article by Younger condemning German atrocities in Belgium and claiming that God was on the side of the British, Spoor criticised the assertion as blasphemous. In addition, admonishing Prussian and British militarism alike, he drew attention to comparable atrocities committed by Cossacks in the Russian armies, Britain's allies.¹⁹⁸ After the Armistice, Spoor argued for the establishment of a League of Nations and a fair peace with Germany, denouncing the Versailles Treaty as 'a breach of faith' with that nation.¹⁹⁹ He was an early supporter of the Save the Children charity: founded in April 1919 by Eglantyne Jebb as a response to German and Austrian children starving due to Britain's continuing post-armistice blockade.²⁰⁰ Spoor continued to support the peace movement, acting as the part-time secretary of the National Peace Council, and promoting the No More War Movement.²⁰¹

Only two future Primitive MPs served in uniform during the Great War: William McKeag and Jim Simmons. McKeag, who enlisted aged 17, spent six years in uniform, fighting alongside the White Russians after the defeat of the Central Powers. He served with distinction, becoming the youngest first-class warrant officer in the army during his Russian service.²⁰² While McKeag's military service was typical of many eligible Primitive Methodist young men of their generation, even exemplary, Simmons' service was not.

Simmons acquired a very different military distinction. He was one of a very small number of soldiers who protested publicly against the war while in uniform.²⁰³ His extreme reaction resulted from the interaction of his Primitive Methodism and Socialism. In January 1911, swayed by Robert Blatchford's exhortations to young Socialists to volunteer for military service, he enlisted in the army Reserves. He was on a training camp when war was declared. Despite his initial reservations about the justness of the war, he wanted to prove that he was no coward and volunteered for overseas service. In 1915, wounded and suffering from rheumatism, he was hospitalised. During his rehabilitation in Stacksteads, Lancashire, he preached in local chapels, speaking against the war and in favour of a

¹⁹⁷M. Swartz, *The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics During the First World War* (Oxford: OUP, 1971), 25, 66-82.

<http://www.nobelprize.org/nomination/peace/nomination.php?action=show&showid=1181>. [Accessed 12/04/14].

¹⁹⁸ *PML*, 17 Sep, 660, 1914.

¹⁹⁹ *The Times*, May 22, 1919, 14. Also: *Hansard*, 20 April 1921 vol 140 cc1907-71.

²⁰⁰ <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/about-us/history>; *The Times*, Dec 03, 1919, 4.

²⁰¹ Ceadel, *Idealists*, 249, 260; *Maoriland Worker*, 31 May, 1922, 6.

²⁰² *The Times*, 27 Aug, 1965, 10; 05 Oct, 1972, 19. Joseph Gibbins, who served in the naval reserve, was not a member of the Church until after the war.

²⁰³ Ceadel, *Semi-Detached*, 58-9.

negotiated peace. Nevertheless, he re-joined his unit to serve in Gallipoli and Egypt. In Suez, as organizer of rank-and-file discussion groups, author of an anti-conscription letter to a Birmingham Alderman and suspected ringleader of a collective refusal to obey an order, his officers considered him a threat to discipline and transferred him to France. In 1916, having been shot in the foot, complications with the wound required the amputation of the lower third of his leg. Back in Blighty, still in uniform, he was prominent in ILP agitation for a negotiated peace. Consequently, in September 1917, he was arrested, threatened with court-martial and imprisoned in Chester Castle. Released on bail due to Ramsay Macdonald's intercession, he was demobilised in November. Continuing his anti-war campaign as 'Ex-Private Simmons', he highlighted the cruelties of the army's Field Punishment No. 1: commonly referred to as 'crucifixion' as the victim was fixed in a similar position. Lois Bibbings has suggested that this punishment was 'a particularly poignant reminder of their faith' to Christians such as Simmons – almost a sacrilegious act that confirmed them in their opposition to the war and militarism. Re-arrested in March 1918, and charged with contravening the Defence of the Realm Act on four counts, he was sentenced to three months hard labour in Armley Gaol. After his release, employed as an ILP organizer, he represented conscientious objectors at military tribunals. He was also prominent in the National Union of Ex-Servicemen, a Socialist organization that campaigned for veteran's rights. The National Union claimed a membership of almost 100,000 at its peak in 1920, but, to Simmons' disappointment, support gradually faded.²⁰⁴ Cape also promoted the NUX's case in Parliament. On three occasions during 1919, he argued unsuccessfully with Winston Churchill for its inclusion on the committee appointed to disburse the United Services Fund.²⁰⁵

The other Socialist MPs were also the most vocal in their opposition to the war: like Simmons, their Socialism reinforced their commitment to peace. For example, Alfred Hill was so opposed to the war that he spoke at a peace demonstration on the first Sunday in August 1914 – a time that he would normally have been in chapel. He declared his opposition to the war, although his arguments were mainly a lament that the war imperilled the international brotherhood of Labour.²⁰⁶ Similarly, Thomas Richardson spoke on public platforms against the war and in favour of a negotiated peace. On at least one occasion, he was stoned and forced to flee from an angry crowd. In Parliament, he was one of a tiny minority of less than forty MPs who consistently voted against the Military Services Act of

²⁰⁴ Lois S. Bibbings, *Telling Tales About Men: Conceptions of Conscientious Objectors to Military Service During the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 210; Simmons, *Soapbox*, 35-44; David Englander, 'The National Union of Ex-Servicemen and the Labour Movement, 1918-1920', *History*, 76, 246, (1991), 24-42.

²⁰⁵ *Hansard*, 28 October 1919 vol 120 c466, 25 November 1919 vol 121 cc1611-2, 02 December 1919 vol 122 c202.

²⁰⁶ *Leicester Pioneer*, 27 Jun, 1924.

1916, which introduced conscription. However, Fenwick, Taylor, and Kenyon voted for the Act. Burt was absent from the debates, although, like Wilson, he believed that the war was just. Like many Primitives, the invasion of Belgium convinced Fenwick that it was a just war and conscription was required for victory. His membership of the parliamentary Committee established to advise the tribunals that heard appeals against conscription, suggest that he wished to ensure they observed the right to conscientious objection. Thomas Richardson went further. He consistently supported the rights of conscientious objectors in Parliament – appealing on behalf of individual COs six times during 1916 alone. He was the only Primitive Methodist MP present who voted against attempts to introduce a Bill in Spring 1917 that would have resulted in the re-examination of some men exempted from military service. Kenyon and Arthur Richardson voted in favour of the Bill; all the other Primitive MPs – Burt, Fenwick, Finney, Taylor – were absent from the House, perhaps diplomatically. Similarly, in 1917 and 1918, when the government attempted to extend conscription to Ireland, only Thomas Richardson was present and voted against the measure. Richardson was also concerned at wartime restrictions of civil liberty, most obviously manifested in police confiscation of Independent Labour Party literature. His anti-war campaigning was unpopular with constituents and, consequently, he lost his seat in the 1918 election. A disappointed man, he lived in Canada for some years after the war.²⁰⁷

Fenby's response to the war was more characteristic of a committed Primitive Methodist and Liberal. He had even named his Bridlington villa home after Gladstone's country house, 'Hawarden'. Fenby was supportive of the war effort until the introduction of conscription, he even attempted to enlist as a soldier in 1914 but deemed too old. A master blacksmith by trade, he also shod the horses of a cavalry battalion stationed there without payment. He even participated in recruitment drives. However, in 1917, he received a letter from a serving soldier criticising the Protestant Churches for their failure to end the war, indeed for not even entertaining proposals to do so – unlike the Pope and the ILP. Seemingly stung by this criticism, Fenby preached two anti-conscription sermons at Primitive Methodist chapels in Bridlington. He declared that conscription was 'one of the greatest crimes in the history of the country'. Furthermore, he complained of 'the hardships of military service and rule ... [and] the brutality and indecency of the medical boards', and insisted that it was 'high time the war was stopped'. Consequently, charged with offences

²⁰⁷ *DLB*, 4, 146-147. *MH*, 09 Oct, 1914, 9; 04 Feb, 1916, 11. *Hansard*, 6 Jan 1916 vol 77 cc1133-256, 12 January 1916 vol 77 cc1617-740, 15 Nov 1916 vol 87 cc760-1. 21 August 1916 vol 85 cc2256-7, 24 October 1916 vol 86 c926, 02 November 1916 vol 86 cc1843-4W, 30 November 1916 vol 88 cc500-1W, 14 December 1916 vol 88 cc888-9W and 31 December 1916 vol 88 cc1592-4, 30 March 1917 vol 92 cc783-878, 02 April 1917 vol 92 cc977-1018, 03 April 1917 vol 92 cc1139-211, 17 January 1918 vol 101 cc526-98, 10 April 1918 vol 104 cc1475-606, 15 April 1918 vol 105 cc59-153. *The Times*, Dec 6, 1918, 10. J.W. Graham, *Conscription and Conscience: A History 1916-19* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1922), 58-9.

against the Defence of the Realm Act in 1917 he stood trial charged with attempting to prevent enlistment. Fortunately for Fenby, the case was dismissed and his views judged ‘fair comment’, commonly expressed by others.²⁰⁸ Subsequently, he continued to preach in a similar vein, railing against those who intimidated and bullied young men to enlist, and emphasising that the Bible declared, ‘THOU SHALT NOT KILL’.²⁰⁹

Kenyon was, perhaps, most in harmony with the Church’s official stance. Although he voted in favour of the Military Service Bill on its first reading – he was absent for later readings, possibly engaged in a recruitment drive – he only did so after he had received assurances that conscientious objectors would receive fair treatment. During that first reading he was one of a minority of 39 against 289 who supported an amendment that would have made military exemption an uncomplicated matter of swearing an oath of conscientious objection before two magistrates. Consequently, to ensure objectors were treated fairly, he served on the county tribunal for the duration of the war. Notwithstanding his recruitment activities, he was the first MP to raise the issue of underage boys enlisting in the army, making this the subject of his initial parliamentary intervention. In addition to his recruitment activities, he toured the country encouraging munitions’ workers to greater efforts, utilising his trade union credentials. He took great pride in addressing over 150,000 of these war workers during the course of the conflict. After the Armistice, he championed the cause of disabled soldiers who had difficulties in claiming war pensions.²¹⁰

Kenyon’s direct support for the war, coupled with protection of conscientious objectors, was a position representative of that of a number of other Primitive Parliamentarians. Cairns received an MBE for his recruitment work but he also supported the release and re-employment of conscientious objectors after the war.²¹¹ He was not alone in receiving official recognition for his war efforts. Hartshorn co-operated with the government in maintaining industrial peace for the duration, despite opposition from more militant union colleagues. His loyalty earned him an OBE in 1918.²¹² Similarly, Linfield received an MBE for his war work at the Ministry of Munitions’ Invention Department. However, after the war he was active in the National Council for the Prevention of War.²¹³

²⁰⁸ *HDM*, 10 Sep, 1917, 2. Also *Ibid.*, 08 Aug, 1917, 2 and 22 Aug, 1917, 2; *YPLI*, 01 Sep, 1917, 6; *MG*, Sep 10, 1917, 6; *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 10 Dec 1917, 3.

²⁰⁹ *HDM*, 29 Oct, 1917, 3.

²¹⁰ Graham, *Conscription*, 58-9; R.V. Emdem, *Boy Soldiers of the Great War*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 131. *Aldersgate*, 1920, 103; *DLB*, 1, 208-9; *Hansard*, 22 June 1915 vol 72 cc1043-4.

²¹¹ *Aldersgate*, 1920, 187-9; *MH*, 21 Jun, 1918, 2; *Hansard*, 05 May 1919 vol 115 cc598-9W, 15 May 1919 vol 115 c1760, 05 June 1919 vol 116 cc2257-8W and 30 October 1919 vol 120 cc903-4W.

²¹² *DLB*, I, 151; W.L. Cook, ‘Hartshorn, Vernon (1872–1931)’, Rev. Robert Ingham, *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33744>, accessed 13 Aug 2013].

²¹³ *Gloucester Citizen*, 22 Oct, 1928, 6; *The Longshot*, 11, 2, 2005.

Perhaps Linfield's attitudes changed as a result of his war experience as did Edwards' views. In 1914 he considered, 'like most other Labour leaders, that according to the information I had at my disposal [my emphasis], we had no other alternative but to enter the war'.²¹⁴ He spoke at recruiting meetings in the belief that the real enemy was the militaristic spirit manifested in the German state. In order to defend the interests of his class, he served on tribunals set up under the Military Services Act but found the task distasteful. This experience changed his perspective and he became confirmed in the view that 'force was no remedy'.²¹⁵

Lunn's position at the outbreak of war is unclear, although he appears to have shared some similarities with Spoor. Certainly, after his election, their views aligned. In accord with Conference resolutions, Lunn promoted the League of Nations, argued against any further foreign wars, and supported the interests of troops awaiting demobilisation or those already returned to civilian life. Like Spoor, he complained that the terms imposed on Germany at Versailles were unfair, championed the Union of Democratic Control, and pleaded the cases of conscientious objectors who were still imprisoned. Lunn used his parliamentary position to raise questions regarding the involvement of British troops in Russia, sent there after the Armistice with Germany to fight against the embryonic USSR.²¹⁶ Waterson also protested at this new military entanglement. Soldiers serving in Russia were, supposedly, all volunteers but there were many clear cases of British troops serving there under duress.²¹⁷

Essentially, the Labour MPs, particularly the avowed Socialists, were most likely to be closer to the pacifist end of the Primitive spectrum, while the Liberals tended towards a *pacifist* position.

4.3.6 Ireland and other imperial matters

Between 1914 and 1922, Irish issues forced their way back onto the national political agenda, engaging the Church and its MPs. Their commitment to Home Rule continued to express itself at Conference, in the publications, and in the activities of the MPs too. In 1914, the Third Home Rule Bill (ultimately named the Government of Ireland Act) brought Ulster close to rebellion, due to the northern counties' fear of Dublin rule and the assumed corollary of Roman Catholic dominance. At that year's Conference, Rev. S.S. Henshaw reassured

²¹⁴ Edwards, *Crow-Scaring*, 190.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 191-2.

²¹⁶ *Aldersgate*, 1920, 426. Also: <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-william-lunn/>. and Andrew Taylor, 'Lunn, William (1872–1942)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/65952>, accessed 30 Sept 2014]

²¹⁷ *Hansard*, 01 July 1919 vol 117 cc755-6, 10 July 1919 vol 117 cc2029-30W, cc2033-4W and c2039, 10 December 1919 vol 122 c1331W and 18 December 1919 vol 123 cc687-9W.

delegates that he still supported the limited self-government offered to Ireland by the proposed legislation. He insisted that, once democratic government established itself in Ireland, it would check ‘priestcraft’ and the devolutionary measure would ‘certainly not mean Rome Rule.’²¹⁸ During his Presidential Address of 1916, in an aside on the Easter Rebellion, the armed uprising against British rule of that year, Guttery referred to the ‘folly and suffering of Ireland’, suggesting a differentiated response, both reproving nationalist militancy, yet sympathetic to the overall plight of the Irish people.²¹⁹

However, it was not until the post-war activities of the notorious Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries forces – their vicious suppression of the nationalists’ armed campaign – that Conference again paid serious attention to the complexities of Irish politics. In June 1921, delegates asked the government to pursue a ‘policy of conciliation’ rather than coercion.²²⁰ Although Conference expressed ‘equal horror and detestation of the campaign of murder and terrorism’ perpetrated by the Irish nationalists, they also condemned the British Government in strong terms. Conference expressed:

its horror and detestation of the practice of reprisals because it substitutes vengeance for justice and still further exasperates the animosities already existing. Further this practice discredits the name of Great Britain throughout the world and gravely prejudices all attempts to create a spirit of conciliation between our own and other countries, which is the essential condition for the establishment of goodwill and peaceful progress.²²¹

The motion condemning both sides in the conflict was proposed by H.J. Taylor and seconded by T.W. Casey, MP. It was carried unanimously, but Casey’s partial defence of the reprisals during the course of the debate was not well received. Casey had argued that British reprisals were only initiated after the murder of ‘one hundred policemen’. His speech and the delegates’ response were reported as a ‘stormy interlude’. Casey’s denial of Irish independence on the grounds that the ‘Protestants [there] are simply coerced, victimized, and tyrannized all over the country’ and Irish independence would result in Protestants being driven ‘out of the land’, was interrupted several times. Furthermore, encouraging delegates to support the motion, the President, Rev. S. Horton, reassured delegates that, in doing so, they were not endorsing Casey’s sentiments.²²²

The Primitives were typical of other churches in their condemnation of atrocities perpetrated by both sides of the conflict. Conference’s denunciation echoed that of 13 Anglican bishops and leaders of the Free Churches (including that of their own Conference President) as articulated in a letter to the *Guardian* earlier that year. The signatories,

²¹⁸ *WDP*, 22 Jun, 1914, 9. Also Fanning, *Fatal Path*, location 2136-2731.

²¹⁹ *NEP*, 14 Jun, 1916, 2. Also: Fanning, *Fatal Path*, location 2755-2798.

²²⁰ *PMCM*, 1921, 4.

²²¹ *PMCM*, 1921, 210.

²²² *WMN*, 24 Jun, 1921, 5.

although acting in a personal capacity, deplored the policy of reprisals, arguing that the nationalists' 'outrages' were not 'criminal in the ordinary sense' but represented a 'deep-seated sense of political grievance'.²²³ The following year the Primitive Methodist Conference welcomed the Anglo-Irish Treaty which, in essence, granted Ireland Dominion status without Ulster; delegates thanked God that a resolution of sorts had been achieved and hoped that all parties would 'stand by the settlement.'²²⁴

During the Home Rule Crisis of 1914, the publications consistently supported the government. With the same consistency, contributors condemned Sir Edward Carson, leader of the Ulster Unionists, and his Tory allies for their subversion of the democratic process by arming their supporters, the threat of violence and treason implied by this, and their intransigence in the face of Asquith's conciliatory attitude to their concerns.²²⁵ In contrast, the Irish nationalist leader, John Redmond MP, and his Party deserved praise for their 'patience and self-control' and commentators unanimously greeted the final passage of the Act through the Commons triumphantly.²²⁶ However, Rev. H.J. Pickett lamented the government's ultimate failure to implement the Government of Ireland Act of 1914, due to the continued obduracy of Carson and his allies and the outbreak of war. He believed that, had it been implemented, the Irish people would have remained 'one of the loyalist [sic] ... in our large family of nations', still part of a British Empire or Commonwealth.²²⁷

Despite the failure to implement Home Rule by legislation, the publications did not endorse the Easter Rising of 1916. Reflecting Guttery's view that the Easter Rebellion had been 'folly', the editor of *Aldersgate* described Sinn Fein's attempt at overthrowing British rule as 'a fool's trick' and 'a tragic waste of lives' and laid the blame firmly at the door of 'traitors equipped with German gold'.²²⁸ The *Leader* allocated blame similarly, although it added that the 'contemptible tactics and the gun running exploits' of Carson's followers and the government's impolitic inclusion of Carson himself in the Cabinet, acted as catalysts to revolt. Furthermore, if Home Rule had triumphed, such tragedies would never have occurred.²²⁹

After the war, the publications were consistent in their condemnation of attempts to coerce the Irish. As a *Leader* editorial of 1920 trumpeted, condemning the sometimes 'outrageous' administration of Dublin Castle: 'Attempts to stamp out political opinions by

²²³ *MG*, 06 Apr, 1921, 9.

²²⁴ *PMCM*, 1922, 211. Also: Fanning, *Fatal Path*, 5360-5998.

²²⁵ *PML*, 19 Feb, 116, 19 Mar, 185, 191, 28 May, 359, 1914.

²²⁶ *PML*, 28 May, 359, 1914; 14 Mar, 163, 1918.

²²⁷ *Aldersgate*, 1918, 86.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1917, 491.

²²⁹ *PML*, 04 May, 274, 1916.

repressive measures have always ended in disaster.’ The author implied that such outrages were counterproductive and increased support for Sinn Fein.²³⁰ Similarly, they criticised Lloyd George’s attempts to partition Ireland in the Home Rule Bill of 1920, and praised the minority of MPs who voted against the legislation, a group that included several members of the Church.²³¹ In December 1921, the *Leader* reported the General Committee of the Church’s ‘intense satisfaction’ with the Anglo-Irish Treaty:

We trust that this Treaty, whereby Ireland is recognised as a Free State in the British Commonwealth of Nations, will for ever close the strife which has existed for centuries between the two countries. We believe that in restored goodwill and self-government, prosperity will come to our Sister Isle; also that the settlement will make for closer bonds throughout the British Dominions.²³²

The Church welcomed the end of the conflict, although it still envisaged Ireland as part of the British family of nations.

During the passage of the Government of Ireland Act 1914 – with the obvious exception of Doughty, who endorsed the Lords’ opposition to the Bill and warned that the measure would lead to Civil War in Ireland – the Primitive MPs supported Home Rule for an undivided Ireland.²³³ Similarly, after the war, only the Coalition Liberal Casey was out of step with the other Primitive MPs. For example, during the debate on the Government of Ireland Act of 1920, an attempt to separate Eire and Ulster with Home Rule for each, only Casey supported the government’s proposals to divide Ireland.²³⁴ Only Casey voted against a Labour motion of October 1920 that called for an investigation into the ‘lawlessness in Ireland and the lack of discipline in the armed forces of the Crown ... [the] extent of reprisals on the part of those whose duty is the maintenance of law and order.’²³⁵

The Crown forces’ vicious suppression of the Nationalist movement in Ireland appalled several of the MPs, with the Labour members most vociferous in condemnation. In 1919, Hartshorn proposed a motion that ‘this House views with regret and concern the present conditions prevailing in Ireland, which tend further to alienate the people of that country from the people of Great Britain, and subject to international suspicion our earnest efforts to promote and safeguard the freedom of other small nations.’²³⁶ Waterson’s most vociferous parliamentary interventions were his regular criticisms of the role of the Black

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 11 Mar, 161, 1920.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 08 Apr, 225, 1920; Fanning, *Fatal Path*, location 4215 – 4321.

²³² *PML*, 15 Dec, 798, 1921.

²³³ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 24 Apr, 1914, 12. *Hansard*, 11 February 1914 vol 58 cc161-289, 06 April 1914 vol 60 cc1652-772, 12 May 1914 vol 62 cc948-1082, 12 May 1914 vol 62 cc948-1082, 21 May 1914 vol 62 cc2181-214.

²³⁴ *Hansard*, 31 March 1920 vol 127 cc1287-339, 13 Apr 1920, Vol 127 1538-1591.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 20 October 1920 vol 133 cc925-1039.

²³⁶ *JHC*, V174, 144.

and Tans and their vicious campaign to subjugate the nationalist movement in Ireland.²³⁷ He argued that force was no solution to the Irish problem: ‘You may crush the nation by sword, gun or cannon, but the problem will yet have to be solved’.²³⁸ He attributed his stance to ‘the teachings of the Carpenter of Nazareth’.²³⁹ Carter and Finney also spoke out against the ‘reprisals’ perpetrated by Crown forces in Ireland.²⁴⁰ Lunn raised the issue at the Labour Party Conference of 1920 and, subsequently, visited Ireland in the same year, part of a two man Labour Party investigation of atrocity stories. The Auxiliaries threatened to shoot these investigators if they pursued their inquiries – undaunted they did so and concluded that the British military bore the primary responsibility for such atrocities.²⁴¹ The Liberal Kenyon was as dogged as the Labour MPs, although primarily by asking pointed questions regarding government forces’ responsibility for ‘murders and outrages’.²⁴²

Significantly, in 1921, like their Church, all the MPs supported the government’s negotiations with Sinn Fein and the resulting Anglo-Irish Treaty.²⁴³ All supported the agreement when debated in early 1922²⁴⁴, despite their earlier opposition to the partition of Ireland, which, in Gibbon’s phrase, the agreement ‘buttressed’. Effectively, like that of the Labour movement and their Church, they acquiesced in a solution at variance with the Home Rule policies they had supported since 1886.²⁴⁵

Ireland was considered one of the worst examples of British imperial rule and engaged the MPs correspondingly. By contrast, in 1913 and 1914, only Burt and Fenwick cast votes in favour of Bills that would have granted a degree of devolution to Scotland; the other MPs did not even attend the debates.²⁴⁶ Scotland did not have the same significance as Ireland. As H.J. Taylor argued in an article of 1918, while annexations to the British Empire ‘had sometimes been carried by force’ and British rule was not ‘without reproach’, it had ‘cleaner hands than probably any other’ – with the exception of its treatment of Ireland.²⁴⁷

²³⁷ *DLB*, 12, 295; *Hansard*, 20 October 1920 vol 133 cc925-1039.

²³⁸ *Hansard*, 20 October 1920 vol 133 cc925-1039.

²³⁹ *Aldersgate Magazine*, 1920, 779.

²⁴⁰ *Hansard*, 5 October 1920 vol 133 cc1379-80W, 23 February 1921 vol 138 cc939.

²⁴¹ *Dundee Courier*, 30 Dec, 1920, 5; P.B. Ellis, *Eyewitnesses to Irish History*, (New Jersey: John Wiley, 2004), 244. Lunn’s Parliamentary speeches on this subject were so numerous that readers are directed to the online *Hansard* for examples. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/people/mr-william-lunn/>. Accessed on 13/7/13.

²⁴² *Hansard*, 01 November 1920 vol 134 cc71-2W, 4 Nov, 1367-1483, 11 November 1920 vol 134 c1352, 17 February 1921 vol 138 cc247-8 and c301W, 02 June 1921 vol 142 cc1252-3W, 09 June 1921 vol 142 cc2031-4, 16 June 1921 vol 143 cc623-4W, 23 June 1921 vol 143 cc1518-22.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 31 Oct, 1921 vol 147, 16 December 1921 vol 149 cc305-63.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 17 February 1922 vol 150 cc1389-473.

²⁴⁵ I. Gibbons, ‘The Anglo-Irish Treaty 1921: The Response of the British Parliamentary Labour Party and Labour Press’, *Labour History Review*, 2011, 76 (1), 1 - 15.

²⁴⁶ *Hansard*, 30 May 1913 vol 53 cc471-551.

²⁴⁷ *Aldersgate*, 1918, 233-5.

Primitive commentators often presented the Great War as a defence of the British Empire's integrity. They praised the loyalty of its Dominions and Colonies. However, after the war there was an increasing emphasis on the rights of the Empire's subjects to be free of exploitation, to political enfranchisement and some form of self-determination, possibly within a Commonwealth of Nations.²⁴⁸ Guttery expressed this in 1914, although primarily with Ireland in mind:

the best way to maintain Imperial unity is to grant contentment and freedom to all the nationalities that dwell beneath its flag. These facts are fundamental to all good government, and it is our clear duty to learn their lessons, to accept the law of which they are the framework, and pursue a steady course towards the goal of enfranchisement and peace in every corner of this great Empire.²⁴⁹

Reflecting this, a number of the MPs became firm advocates for the rights of Imperial subjects, especially those in Egypt and India. In 1921, Spoor, who visited both countries, suggested that 'Egypt was seething with unrest and dissatisfaction and India was almost on the edge of revolution.'²⁵⁰ He supported Gandhi's non-co-operation movement and was sympathetic to nationalist aspirations.²⁵¹ Lunn, who often co-operated with Spoor on such issues, shared his sympathy for independence movements.²⁵² Others, such as Finney and Linfield expressed their concern or asked pointed questions concerning the treatment of 'native' peoples.²⁵³

4.3.7 Women's suffrage and related issues

Women's role in the Church improved although it continued to be secondary to that of men. However, support for women's suffrage continued unabated and the Church supported the postwar legislation that increased the electorate, awarding the vote to women for the first time. In his Conference Address of 1914, Rev. G. Bennett urged delegates to embrace the 'utilisation of the Church's womanhood' and 'hailed the approach of women's enfranchisement'.²⁵⁴ Three years later the new President, Rev. Tolefree Parr, insisted that:

More and more should we enlist the splendid genius and intuitive wisdom of women, no longer should she stand in the outer courts or be confined to menial tasks. Leadership as well as service was her right. Let the Church not lag behind the State in her welcome of woman.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁸ Ibid. 1915, 692-4; 1918, 85-7; 1920, 60-1, 396-7, 568-9; 1922, 614-8; *PML*, 08 Oct, 698, 705, 1914. *HR*, 1919, 38-47.

²⁴⁹ *PML*, 19 Feb, 116, 194.

²⁵⁰ *Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser*, 30 Mar, 1921, 7.

²⁵¹ M. Johnson, 'Spoor, Benjamin Charles (1878–1928)', *ODNB*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2014 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/107141, accessed 28 Sept 2014]

²⁵² *Hansard*, 15 May 1919 vol 115 cc1806-7W, 29 October 1919 vol 120 c634, 11 December 1919 vol 122 cc1604-5, 30 November 1920 vol 135 c1139W, 01 June 1921 vol 142 cc1081-2W, 20 February 1922 vol 150 cc1511-2, 14 March 1922 vol 151 cc2009-127

²⁵³ Ibid., 16 February 1920 vol 125 c524W, 26 March 1920 vol 127 c771W, 04 December 1922 vol 159 c1249W, 11 December 1922 vol 159 c2411W.

²⁵⁴ *WDP*, 18 Jun, 1914, 3.

²⁵⁵ *PMCM*, 1917, 787.

However, the Church continued to ‘lag behind’, although Conference agreed to the establishment of an order of deaconesses called ‘Sisters of the People’ in 1914 and, after the war, trained women for foreign missions and encouraged a greater use of female local preachers.²⁵⁶ In 1921, although Rev. George Armstrong confirmed that there was nothing in the Church’s constitution to bar women from the ministry (in response to a question from a woman delegate), no action followed. It was not until the Conference of 1930, following a passionate speech by one of its ministers’ wives, that the Church approved an ‘investigation’ into how it could ‘satisfy the needs of women in its Church’ and redress their ‘feeling of inferiority’.²⁵⁷ In 1931, less than a year before Methodist Union, the Church unanimously approved the ordination of women ministers.²⁵⁸ However, the Methodist Church that emerged from the Union did not ordain a woman minister until 1974.²⁵⁹

During the period under discussion, the publications devoted significantly more column inches to articles written by, for, and about women. For example, *Aldersgate* ran series on ‘Noble Women of Today’ and ‘Women in the Battle Line’, in addition to a regular section entitled ‘My Lady Oracle’ – later renamed ‘The Women’s World’. The *Leader*’s regular column, initially called ‘Women’s World’, later became ‘Women’s Views’.²⁶⁰ The views and opinions articulated by both male and female contributors to the publications mirrored those expressed at Conference. There were calls for women to receive greater recognition and status within the Church, including the ministry. Commentators advocated that women and men should be treated equitably in their access to higher education, treatment under marriage laws and the right to vote. There was an acknowledgment and welcome for women’s increased role in society during the war. However, there was also a concomitant concern that women’s morals and values were threatened by both their and society’s altered circumstances, particularly women’s improved employment prospects and wages, which could be frittered away on luxuries or drink.²⁶¹ Moreover, while welcoming the improved position of women in the Church and State, and looking forward to greater advances, Mrs J.E Leuty insisted that, when their men returned from war, women must

²⁵⁶ *PML*, 28 May, 366, 1914; 03 Feb, 69, 1921. *Western Times*, 23 Jun, 1922, 7.

²⁵⁷ *Lancashire Evening Post*, 23 Jun, 1930, 3.

²⁵⁸ *Portsmouth Evening News*, 24 Jun, 1931, 16.

²⁵⁹ The Methodist Church in Great Britain’s official website: [http://www.methodist.org.uk/news-and-events/news-releases/methodist-church-celebrates-40-years-of-women per centE2 per cent80 per cent99s-ordination](http://www.methodist.org.uk/news-and-events/news-releases/methodist-church-celebrates-40-years-of-women-per-centE2-per-cent80-per-cent99s-ordination)

²⁶⁰ Examples only: *Aldersgate*, 1914, 104-6; 1915, 632-3779-81; 1917, 50-1. *PML*, 12 Nov, 777, 1914; 07 Apr, 211, 1921.

²⁶¹ *HR*, 1914, 115-8, 321-36, 587-90; 1917, 378-89; 1918, 393-6. *Aldersgate*, 1916, 296-7; 1917, 50-1; 1918, 262-2 and 644-5; 1919, 45, 428-9, 792-3; 1922, 635-6. *PML*, 19 Mar, 186, 28 May, 366, 04 Jun, 383, 12 Nov, 777, 779, 1914; 11 Mar, 148, 1915; 12 Jun, 334, 1919.

revert to 'their own special territory, the home'.²⁶² However, there was also support for 'Mother's Pensions', what would now be called family allowances or child benefit, state provisions that would give women access to an income of their own, assisting them to carry out their roles as wife and mother more effectively.²⁶³ Intriguingly and unusually for the Church's publications, one of those arguing the case for Mother's Pensions in 1919 was a Conservative MP, A. Baldwin Roper.²⁶⁴

Three of *Aldersgate's* women contributors, Mrs Joseph Johnson, Mrs Lloyd Pack, and Emily Jones Davies revealed the Church's crucial sentiments during this period. While celebrating women's increased status and opportunities, Johnson insisted that men and women were 'inter-dependent', climbing 'the hill of life together'. Nevertheless, Jill's 'supreme mission in life' was to 'follow' Jack and 'pick him up'.²⁶⁵ Yet, of equal significance, was Lloyd Pack's view of 1922 that 'the time is coming when people will look back upon the political distinction between men and women with as much amazement as they now regard the period when slavery was a recognised institution'.²⁶⁶ For Davies, for whom women's suffrage was both a religious and social question²⁶⁷, and who supported women's improved access to education, each was a means, not an end in itself: 'Educated women make the best housekeepers, the wisest mothers, the brightest homes...'.²⁶⁸ Similarly, in 1917, Younger appears to have revealed that his view of the proper role for a woman, even an enfranchised one, was that of a wife. He proposed a bachelor tax of 50 per cent on the income of all unmarried men. Furthermore, he suggested that women, once given the vote, would support such an imposition unreservedly.²⁶⁹ Although Younger's proposition may have been intended as nothing more than a humorous response to the common view that the war's carnage produced a surplus of 'spinsters', it incorporated both a sincere plea for women's suffrage and an assumption that marriage was the primary aim and purpose of most, if not all, women. In more serious mode, he anticipated that, once voting citizens, women would change the whole 'life of the State'; as wives and mothers, their perspective would be 'the chief instrument in the prevention of future war'. Welcoming this positive influence on government, he also looked forward to the prospect of women MPs.²⁷⁰

²⁶² *Aldersgate*, 1917, 50-1 and 1918, 262-3.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1917, 858-9.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 1919, 571.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 1919, 428-9.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1922, 635-6.

²⁶⁷ *PML*, 04 Jun, 383, 1914.

²⁶⁸ *HR*, 1914, 587-90.

²⁶⁹ *SDESG*, 26 Apr, 1917, 5.

²⁷⁰ *PML*, 21 Feb, 117, 1918. Jay Winter disputes that women's chances of marriage were reduced after the war, partly because they were willing to marry across class and age divides: *The Great War and the British People* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1985), 260-1

All sitting Primitive Methodist MPs supported women's right to vote (restricted to those aged 30 with minimum property qualifications) in the debates on the 1918 Representation of the People Act. In 1919, Spoor sponsored a Bill to extend the vote to both sexes on equal terms and Lunn attempted to raise the issue again in 1922.²⁷¹ Carter, who supported female enfranchisement vociferously, both in and out of Parliament, and Cape spoke in favour of Spoor's unsuccessful measure.²⁷² Women were denied equality with men unjustly, but Carter insisted that their number included those who could 'take up any position in the State with credit to themselves and to the country.'²⁷³ He argued that suffrage extension was not only well-deserved, in recognition of women's (and young men's) contribution to the war, but necessary for social harmony: 'If you want loyalty you must trust the people. If you want service you must give them responsibility, and if you want sane thought on national and international affairs you must give them the vote'.²⁷⁴ While supporting the Bill, Cape was obliged to defend trade union attitudes to the employment of women and reaffirmed the position voiced by Primitive Methodist mining MPs before him:

We have always believed in the principle of adult suffrage. We are still of the opinion that the age limit for women ought to be the same as it is for men, and we ask the House to give the Bill a Second Reading. There are certain industries into which trade unionists will not allow women to enter, not because we are afraid of competition but because of the respect that we have for them. Surely we should not allow women to go into coal mines. Is it fair to expect that they should enter into steel works or blast furnaces or other laborious occupations? We believe there are certain industries which, from the physical standpoint, are not fit occupations for women. We believe women, whatever their class in the social order, are quite capable of exercising all the rights of citizenship as well and as ably as men. One of the chief aims of the trade union movement is the industrial emancipation of women, but there is a wide difference between putting a woman into an industry and giving her the right to enter into the political arena.²⁷⁵

Denying women the right to employment in certain industries or, viewed alternatively, protecting them from the dangers attendant to some trades, did not imply opposing equal pay for women or their employment in occupations previously confined to men. For example, Cairns supported the employment of women police for specific tasks involving children, women, and immorality; additionally, several of the MPs spoke in favour of equal pay for women teachers.²⁷⁶ Furthermore, in 1922, Spoor protested at the dismissal of married women teachers in circumstances that he assumed involved gender

²⁷¹ *Hansard*, 19 June 1917 vol 94 cc1633-756; 20 June 1917 vol 94 cc1811-911; 13 February 1922 vol 150 c604; *JHC*, V174, 78. They also supported the 1920 Representation of the People Bill: *Hansard*, 27 February 1920 vol 125 cc2067-144.

²⁷² *Nottingham Evening Post*, 30 Nov 1918, 3.

²⁷³ *Hansard*, 04 April 1919 vol 114 cc1561-627.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 27 February 1920 vol 125 cc2067-144.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 04 April 1919 vol 114 cc1561-627.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 09 April 1919 vol 114 c2044, 24 February 1920 vol 125 c1462, 25 February 1920 vol 125 c1714W, 25 March 1920 vol 127 c632W, 28 November 1922 vol 159 c524W.

discrimination and supported the admission of female undergraduates to Cambridge, a bastion of male educational privilege.²⁷⁷ Similarly, all the Primitive MPs present, supported the Sexual Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919, Spoor acting as a teller for at least one key amendment that, technically, made all public offices open to all regardless of gender or marital state.²⁷⁸ However, only one Primitive woman appears to have stood as a parliamentary candidate during the history of the Church: Miss Dorothy Woodman in 1931. Woodman, who passed her Oxford Examination in 1918, and matriculated at London University in 1920, was a member of the Labour Party.²⁷⁹

4.4 A brief overview of the Church's political engagement during its final decade

A new note sounded at the Conference of 1923, an indication that the political allegiances of Primitive Methodists were shifting, that the primary allegiance to the Liberal Party was dissipating. H.J. Taylor, in his Address to that Conference as retiring President emphasised that: 'All political colours are among us ... there is scarcely a PM ... who would not immediately leave Party behind, if by doing so he could more swiftly promote education, temperance, economic justice, social righteousness, and international peace and goodwill.'²⁸⁰ Taylor recognised that the Church and its traditions were changing, that the dominance of Liberalism and the Liberal Party had passed. Similarly, writing of his Presidential visits during 1922-1923, he warned that the forthcoming election:

stresses one of the problems of the Church: How men and women of different political faiths can live together in the same church. More and more this question will be with us, and it ought to be said that loyalty to any denomination does not involve adherence to any political party, much less necessary intolerance of other parties. The charity which suffers is to allow every man and woman the same freedom that is claimed for self. Happily, this is increasingly manifest throughout Primitive Methodism.²⁸¹

Perhaps Taylor had in mind the sort of controversies involving Edwards and Gooch.

Other aspects of that Conference indicated that the Church's political allegiance was shifting. Although the Church had included Liberal MPs at official functions and Conferences from at least 1886, and Labour from 1907, it first invited a Conservative politician, Lord Robert Cecil, to address the Conference of 1923 – although his invitation rested on his commitment to the League of Nations rather than his social policies. The *Leader* pointed out that such an occurrence would have been unthinkable ten years before.²⁸² Other *Leader* articles of 1923 demonstrate a similar softening towards, and

²⁷⁷ *Hansard*, 28 November 1922 vol 159 c524W, 28 November 1922 vol 159 cc523-4W.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 27 October 1919 vol 120 cc343-93.

²⁷⁹ *PML*, 22 Sep, 251, 1918; 12 Aug, 484, 1920; 5 Oct, 802, 1931.

²⁸⁰ *PMCM*, 1923, 4-5.

²⁸¹ *PML*, 15 Mar, 165, 1923.

²⁸² *PML*, 21 Jun, 398, 1923.

acceptance of individual Conservative MPs, such as Lady Astor, at least when she was in harmony with Church policies. In particular, she was admired when she promoted temperance or castigated her Party for ‘the attitude of hostility of many Conservatives to questions of welfare affecting women.’²⁸³ In contrast to Doughty, who the Church effectively disowned after his defection to the Liberal Unionists, in 1931 it acknowledged one Conservative MP, Sir Walter Womersley (although his connection to the Church appears to have been tenuous).²⁸⁴

However, an apparently greater diversity of Primitive Methodist political allegiance during its twilight years does not mean that the primary commitment to and traditional embrace of social reform and progressive politics was extinct. As a *Leader* editorial declared during the Conference of 1923:

For while Primitive Methodism does not stand for any political party, the ideals that move a man religiously are not essentially different from those that move him politically, and a constitution so radical [as Primitive Methodism’s] is more likely to commend itself to the democratically minded.²⁸⁵

Oral evidence collected by Field suggests that, after the war, Socialist ministers were more prevalent – or vocal – in Primitive pulpits than those of other Methodist denominations. Yet, in the 1920s, Conference appears to have been less tolerant of those who used the pulpit to propagate their political views – even hauling ‘one [minister] over the coals ... for propagating left-wing views from his pulpit.’²⁸⁶

Indeed, the Church’s institutional commitment to political or industrial activism appears to have waned as Methodist Union approached. As Moore has suggested, the General Strike was a significant turning point in this process for all the Methodist Churches. The Primitive Church’s ‘moderation’, its attempts to create harmony between Capital and Labour had already been strained during the coal crises of 1919-21.²⁸⁷ Events at the 1926 Conference support Moore’s view. In the immediate aftermath of the 1926 General Strike and during the continuing miners’ lockout, the new President, Rev. A.L. Humphries, expressed the Church’s official position clearly:

they had been in sympathy broadly speaking with the aspirations, political and social, of working men and women. They were not a church of the poor ... [although] predominantly a church of working people. They had men of wealth and social standing amongst them. Sympathy with working folk, however, did not mean they were an appendage of any political party. It did not mean either that they approved, at least unanimously, of all the means which the working classes sought

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 01 Mar, 132 and 20 Dec, 832, 1923. Jimmy Moses, a PM MP from 1929-31, did not share their appreciation, believing that the working classes of Plymouth had been seduced by Astor’s ‘glamour’ and ‘largesse’: Hilson, *Political Change*, 168-9.

²⁸⁴ See Appendix.

²⁸⁵ *PML*, 07 Jun, 357, 1923.

²⁸⁶ Field, ‘Sociological Profile’, 91.

²⁸⁷ Moore, *Pit-men*, 210-13.

to achieve their desires. He ... had the clear conviction that lockouts on the part of masters and strikes on the part of the men were deplorable from the Christian point of view. They were attempts to compel by force what ought to be sought by reason, persuasion, and goodwill. They were methods of war, and war was no more rational or commendable in the industrial than it was in the international. It was high time that a nation like ours had evolved a more satisfactory way of settling disputes. We needed a league to prevent war in industry much as we needed a league to prevent war between nations. The interest Primitive Methodists had in social reform had been a supplement to their evangelism—man's supreme need as religion. Slums, public houses, and empty stomachs were no help to religion. The millennium, however, was not going to be brought about merely by legislation and social action. An improved social organisation would be ineffective unless it had good men to work it who in good sense believed in a proper wage for a day's work, and also a proper day's work for a day's wage.²⁸⁸

Significantly, that year's Conference included miners, former miners, a colliery manager, and a coalowner: wage-earners and 'men of wealth and standing'. This had always been the case, at least from when 'Tommy Pringle' attended the Conference of 1905, but Humphries obviously felt a need to emphasise the presence of the denomination's wealthier members. When Revs. F.C. Taylor and Younger attempted to introduce a motion that was favourable to the miners and asked for an immediate end to the lockout, Conference referred the motion back for re-drafting.²⁸⁹ Eventually delegates passed a motion asking the government to take steps to 'put into operation the recommendations of the Coal Commission irrespective of any decision which may be reached in the present wage dispute and whether the parties in dispute agree to such steps or not.'²⁹⁰ The Commission referred to, chaired by Sir Herbert Samuel, rejected nationalisation of the mines, although it recommended the nationalisation of mining royalties, advocated profit-sharing schemes and the establishment of systems for negotiating wages. It opposed increased working hours but proposed a significant wage reduction.²⁹¹ Effectively, although the motion was wary of the wage reduction, it did not support the miners' demands for nationalisation. Similarly, the *Leader's* editorials were critical of the General Strike. One reader wrote to berate the weekly for failing to demonstrate an 'understanding of the motives which actuated the strikers [that] might be-expected from the newspaper of a democratic Church.'²⁹² Another correspondent added that the *Leader* had not only failed to 'do justice' to the miners' case but it had also exhibited 'lack of sympathy' for their circumstances. He concluded, 'We need prayer not for peace, but for the justice that will ensure that peace.'²⁹³

The strike also divided Primitive opinion at a local level, demonstrating the membership's increasingly diverse social and political identities. Field, noting the increasing

²⁸⁸ *DDT*, 09 Jun, 1926, 6.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 11 Jun, 1926, 8.

²⁹⁰ *PMCM*, 1926, 246.

²⁹¹ K. Laybourn, *The General Strike of 1926* (Manchester: MUP, 1993), 36-8.

²⁹² *PML*, 27 May, 295, 1926.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

affluence of Primitive Methodists in the south of the country – some chapels even being described as ‘nob chapels’ – reported one Primitive in Bromley (London) denouncing the miners in 1926 ‘as a lower type, suitable only for heavy toil’.²⁹⁴ By contrast, in Durham, where Primitive Methodism considered itself ‘the established church’,²⁹⁵ five of the eleven Miners’ Association officials during the Strike were Primitive Methodists. The Durham Primitive Methodist Synod passed a resolution that sought ‘goodwill’ from all sides in the dispute but reasserted the principle ‘that a living wage for the worker is the first call upon industry and that industrial reorganisation should keep that in view’. Furthermore, many Durham chapels raised funds for the miners and ran soup kitchens for the strikers and their families.²⁹⁶ Revealingly, Jim Simmons, reminiscing on his activities propagandising for ‘the Socialist Movement’ between the wars, regarded Durham, Northumberland, and South Wales as the most responsive to his message. In the ‘Northern Counties’ he ascribed this openness to Socialism to derive from the ‘legacy’ of Primitive Methodism. Many of Simmons’ hosts in Durham and Northumberland – some of whom treated him to Revivalist and Socialist hymn signing with harmonium accompaniment – were Primitives, including the caretakers of the Consett chapel. In addition, he listed several Primitive Methodists as prominent activists in those counties’ ILP branches, including Rev John Clennel.²⁹⁷ Clennel’s Methodist Conference obituary records that, ‘He was a great fighter for social causes and his social passion sprang, not from political ends but from his love of truth, justice and people, itself the fruit of his love of our Lord.’²⁹⁸

Yet, as J.M. Turner suggested, ‘a fissure developed, especially at the time of the General Strike of 1926, which had the effect of producing alienation between Church and political party which has widened since.’²⁹⁹ Although the Conference of 1927 regretted the Trades Dispute and Trade Union Bill of that year, which severely limited the powers of the unions, and wished for a more rational means of resolving industrial disputes, it considered that some clauses were ‘desirable’.³⁰⁰ The Church as an institution had shifted to a stance less supportive of progressive politics and the Labour Movement than in the pre-war period although it still contained many significant Labour activists. Indeed, eight out of the nine

²⁹⁴ Field, ‘Sociological profile’, 79.

²⁹⁵ *PML*, 07 Jan, 9, 1926.

²⁹⁶ Barron, *Lockout*, 186-192. Also: Henry Green, *Memoirs of a Primitive Methodist: Eventide Memories and Recollection: 1855-1932* (Durham: University of Durham, 1997), 10-11, 16, 19, 19-21, which demonstrates the continuing connection between Primitive Methodism, trade unionism and radical politics throughout the period of this thesis. Green knew Arch, Fenwick, the Spoor family, Wilson, and Revs. Guttery and Storr.

²⁹⁷ Simmons, *Evangelist*, 101-2.

²⁹⁸ Methodist Conference Minutes, 1962, 216. Obtained from ‘My Primitive Methodist Ancestors’ website: http://www.myprimitivemethodists.org.uk/page/clennel_john_1878_-_1962 [Accessed: 10/1/16].

²⁹⁹ Turner, ‘Methodism in England’, 333.

³⁰⁰ *PMCM*, 1927, 244.

Liberal and Labour MPs allied to the Church were present during divisions related to the Trades Dispute Bill. All voted against the clauses that outlawed political strikes, that is any intended ‘to coerce the Government or the community’, and those that severely limited picketing.³⁰¹ For at least one Primitive MP, confirming Turner’s analysis, Methodist Union was the significant watershed. Before 1932, Simmons felt that his time in the Primitive pulpit was well spent, there was enough radicalism within the chapels he frequented; however, after ‘the Prims were absorbed by the more sedate and respectable Wesleyans’, his ‘interest waned’. Although his Christian faith remained undiminished and he regarded himself as an ‘old Primitive Methodist’ until his final years, he considered that he ‘could be a more effective evangelist from the Socialist platform, that I could preach the “Politics of Christ” more effectively from the political soapbox than from the pulpit.’³⁰² Thomas Cape shared Simmons’ disillusionment with the Church’s waning post-war radicalism, although he remained loyal to Methodism: ‘I could complain about ministers not coming up to my ideal of ministers but my leaving the Church will not make them any better.’³⁰³

There has not been enough space within the confines of this thesis to consider in detail the trajectory of the Church during its final decade and that of its MPs in the decades beyond. Catterall has considered the allegiances of Nonconformity as a whole between the wars, including that of Primitive Methodism and some of its MPs, but set within a broader picture.³⁰⁴ A more specific treatment of Primitive Methodist politics between 1923 and 1932 would be valuable in the light of the Church’s exceptional commitment to political activism during the previous decades. Furthermore, from 1924 onwards several of its MPs achieved governmental posts: Hartshorn, Hodges, Lunn, Simmons, Spoor, and Womersley. Their actions at a time when they held the reins of parliamentary power would be worthy of explication. In addition, although this thesis has drawn on Primitive Methodist fiction as a source, the Church’s use of ‘romances’ to spread its message is worthy of research and exposition in its own right.

³⁰¹ *Hansard*, 17 May 1927 vol 206 cc1011-145; 24 May 1927 vol 206 cc1857-973.

³⁰² Simmons, *Soapbox*, 58, 172.

³⁰³ Quoted in Catterall, *Righteousness*, 131.

³⁰⁴ Catterall, *Free Churches* and, more recently, in *Righteousness*.

Conclusion

Although some individual Primitive Methodists and chapel communities were involved in political organisations and agitation during the Church's infancy, the leadership initially cautioned their membership against such activity. However, Primitive Methodists were particularly prominent in trade unions for colliers and agricultural labourers, a consequence of the Connexion's appeal to those occupational groups in some counties. These Labour leaders, influenced by their faith and pragmatic considerations, championed class collaboration wherever possible; their watchword was 'Defence, not Defiance', strikes a weapon of last resort. As the Church and its leadership were drawn into politics and overt support for the Labour Movement, this remained the acceptable brand of trade unionism – there was no appetite for industrial warfare. Strikes created hardship for the Church's membership and were an obstacle to missioning.

Although some individual Primitives were Chartists and Anti-Corn Law activism appears to have been condoned to some extent, the Church did not engage in political action at an institutional level. However, from the late 1860s onwards, the need to respond to legislation that threatened their religious freedoms hauled the Church and its leadership into the political arena. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 acted as a catalyst to political engagement. Subsequently, similarly motivated by a need to protect the religious and social position of its membership, the Church was prominent in opposition to the Contagious Disease and Vaccination Acts. As the Church increasingly engaged in political action, already strongly in favour of temperance as a means of individual social redemption and improvement, it also called for legislation that would restrict the working of the drinks trade: an evil that it associated with the Established Church and the Tory Party. Consequently, agitation for disestablishment of the Anglican Church also increased, motivated by a mixture of religious, social, moral, and political grievances.

Progressively, the Church perceived political action, although always promoted in harness with personal salvation and voluntary effort, as a means of righting the religious, moral, and social wrongs suffered by its largely working-class membership. Correspondingly, the Connexion ultimately embraced franchise reform; the ballot box offered a peaceful means of achieving gradual social reformation. Rev. Thomas Baron captured the Church's political motivation and reformist agenda in his 1886 description of 'The Primitive Methodist Church: As It Was, Is, And Should Be':

The Connexion, springing from the common people, was intensely sympathetic to them, direct discussions on political or popular public questions, were not common in the pulpit; but as by a natural instinct an interest was taken in all that concerned

the true well-being of the people...[these being] temperance, commercial and social ameliorations, and political enfranchisement.¹

Partly inspired by its mission to the working classes, and a reflection of its existing membership's interests, the Church embraced an interpretation of Christianity that energetically promoted improvements in 'the legitimate conditions of life' for 'the working classes', for 'toilers'.²

During the period 1886 to 1922, the Church can be seen to have considered itself, at least in part, as a Labour Church. Although the Church promoted principle rather than party, most Primitive Methodists found the Liberals a congenial vehicle for their political aspirations, at least until the First World War. In 1886, the year in which five Primitive Methodist MPs, all Liberals, labouring men and trade unionists, took their seats in Parliament, the Church considered itself as 'of, for, and with the people'.³ The plebeian origins of the vast majority of its 44 MPs and the proportion involved in the Labour Movement were exceptional, even for Nonconformist Churches. Also of significance was the high proportion drawn from the coalfields of the North, particularly the North-East.

The Church's adherence to the Liberal Party gradually loosened, partly as a result of the Liberals' failure to repeal the 1902 Education Act. Similarly, the Liberal allegiance of the first generation of Primitive MPs gradually gave way to a preponderance of Labour Party members. Those who moved to Labour did so for a variety of motives that were sometimes combined. Although their firm advocacy of Socialism was often a factor, some lost faith in the Liberal Party's ability to represent working-class interests. However, many of the Connexion's first Labour MPs were unwilling conscripts, obliged to sign that Party's constitution when their unions voted to affiliate. Furthermore, although most of the younger generation of Primitive MPs transferred their allegiance to Labour voluntarily, a minority of candidates and MPs remained faithful to their Liberal colours. Even those who embraced Socialism were proponents of an ethical variety that was largely in harmony with the Church's commitment to gradualism and parliamentary activism – although it carried more elements of defiance.

Similarly, the Church, although never abandoning its commitment to individualism and the imperative of personal salvation, became more accepting of collectivism during the period under consideration. Richard Hoggart, raised in a working-class Primitive Methodist family during the Church's final decades, was one of the most astute observers of Primitive traditions and their effect. In one of his autobiographical works he described himself as:

¹ *PMQ*, 1886, 99.

² *PM*, 23 Apr, 216-7, 1893.

³ *PMQ*, 1887, .292.

a once-born socialist and will remain one. I recognise virtues in Conservatism and so why some good people embrace it; but I could never vote that way. The test is the sense of community, of fraternity; and that of Conservatism is at bottom a form of patronage. Similarly, I could never vote for the very far left; their sense of fraternity is often too bossy, “for your own good”; their community is often communitarianism and so finally levelling and centralising. We should feel members one of another, but also retain all we have of sparky, spikey individuality.

He suggested this ‘may to a large extent have come from my early Primitive Methodist years’ and the ‘religious belief ... instilled more consistently than any other principle for living’, which, although lost, had left him with ‘a sense of both belonging to others and of responsibility for our own consciences.’⁴

However, the drift to Labour was never universal. Despite the Church’s increasing numbers of ‘once-born socialists’, possibly over represented among the later generation of the Church’s MPs, many Primitive Methodists remained ‘once-born’ Liberals. Despite those like George Edwards, to who the Labour Movement was a ‘sacred thing’, for others the Labour Party was insufficiently religious, even when its social policies were acceptable. Although there were always Conservative Party supporters in the Church, they never attained prominence in the Connexion’s councils or publications. However, the upward social mobility of some Primitives resulted in an increasing number shifting their allegiance to the Conservatives during the Church’s twilight years.

By the Conference of 1923, the leadership acknowledged that the political fissiparousness of its membership was damaging to its harmony and its mission. The coal crises of the 1920s, during which an increasingly militant trade unionism and Capitalism confronted one another, tested the Church’s sympathy for the Labour Movement. Consequently, the Connexion adopted an increasingly cautious attitude towards a trade unionism that no longer appeared to be the underdog and was perceived as a potential threat to democratic government. As the First World War had demonstrated that the main current of the Church’s attitude to war was *pacifist*, with only a minority of its membership declaring as pacifists, the post-war industrial struggle exposed the boundaries and limitations of its support for the Labour Movement. Although the Church’s leadership did not retreat into quietism or unqualified individualism, the Conference of 1926 established a clear marker: its commitment to democratic processes, gradual social reform and Christian ethics transcended its allegiance to the Labour Movement. Rev. Robert Wearmouth – the former Primitive Methodist soldier, miner, minister, army chaplain and historian – captured the essence of his Church’ view of the Labour Movement in 1959:

The working class combinations were never intended to be the cat’s paw of Continental Revolutionaries. The Communist, according to his pledge is an atheist,

⁴ R. Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning: Life and Times 1940-1959* (Oxford: OUP, 1990), 78.

a materialist, a Revolutionary. One of the fundamental conditions of membership in the Communist Party is a denial of the Supernatural. He is pledged to a ceaseless conflict with what he calls capitalism until it is completely destroyed. He is therefore a Revolutionary. Trade Unionists everywhere ought to ask for legislation to make it illegal and impossible for a Communist to hold office or membership in a trade union.⁵

The Church's support for women's suffrage was another manifestation of its commitment to parliamentary government.

Hobsbawm's suggestion that the Church was partially transformed into a labour sect is relevant regarding the majority of its MPs and the general tenor of the denomination's approach to politics during the period 1886-1922. Most of its MPs sprang from the working classes and were active in the Labour Movement. Primitives constituted a substantial proportion of the first working class MPs – far beyond that anticipated for a minor denomination. The designation is particularly appropriate regarding the Church's manifestation in mining communities, especially in the North-East. However, in addition to the partial nature of its transformation, it must be emphasised that the Church was primarily a Christian denomination. Its political agenda and activism derived from and existed in symbiosis with its religious tenets and traditions, and the social composition of its membership. These established boundaries and limits to the means employed, favouring democratic processes and class collaboration to direct action and class warfare. Similarly, although most of the MPs were trade union activists and Labour issues occupied much of their parliamentary careers, they embraced a much wider political agenda.

In some contexts Primitives were among those Hoggart described as the 'earnest minority' of the working-classes who influenced their societies 'out of all proportion to their numbers'.⁶ However, the process was reciprocal; the Church adapted to its environment, whether that of the industrial village or the suburban villa. By 1923, the Church was beginning to reconfigure itself to accommodate the changing social composition and political views of its membership. Although elements of the Primitives' social and political gospel persisted and individuals carried forward the traditions of progressive politics,⁷ the zenith of the Church's partial transformation into a labour sect had been reached. The Methodist Union of 1932 completed the process.

⁵ Wearmouth, *Trade Unions*, 70.

⁶ Hoggart, *Literacy*, 264-5.

⁷ See R. Colls, 'The Forgotten World of Christian Socialism', *History Today*, 65, 3, (2015), 37-9 for an example.

Appendix: ‘PM made me an MP’: the social, occupational, and denominational background of the MPs.

This appendix provides brief biographical details of those MPs named as Primitive Methodists or as close associates in Church publications during 1874-1932. It focuses on their social and occupational background and their relationship to the Church. Although most were members, usually local preachers or officials, a minority were, at most, hearers – sometimes merely former Sunday School pupils or occasional attendees at Primitive chapels. Omitted are those MPs who were first elected after Methodist Union. However, Primitive politicians active after 1932 identified during the course of this research were Edwin Gooch, Bertie Hazell, the ‘Welsh Primitive Methodist Marxist’ Harold Davies, Eric Ogden, John Beavan, John Ellis, and Ted Willis – all Labour MPs or Peers.¹

In addition to the footnoted sources, the information has been derived from *Hansard*, Debrett’s *House of Commons*, census returns and BMD records. The term ‘miners’ agent’, or similar, describes a multiplicity of roles and essentially means a paid union official or elected representative of any rank: essentially a Labour Movement activist. The letters LC indicate those who served as local councillors; many of these, such as John Johnson, were mayors or, like Ben Spoor, leaders of their councils.²

Joseph Arch (1826-1919)

Norfolk North Western: 1885-1886 and 1892-1900

Liberal

Joseph’s father was an agricultural labourer, as was Arch himself before becoming a national agent of the Agricultural Labourers’ Union. For many years, Arch was a PM local preacher but may have reconciled himself to the Anglican Church in later life.³



¹ *PML*, 28 Sep, 626, 1922 and 22 Oct, 821, 1931; *Hansard*, Lords, 12 December 1973 vol 347 cc1228, 15 June 1976 vol 913 cc448, 26 November 1980 vol 415 cc167, 17 January 1979 vol 960 cc1840, Deb 09 July 1990 vol 521 cc55;

² Correspondents helpfully suggested that J.A. Parkinson, Joshua Ritson and Jack Lawson were Primitives. However, Parkinson, although claimed by the *Leader* as a Primitive on 22 October 1931, the paper later corrected this. In fact, Parkinson was a United Methodist and, later, a Congregationalist according to *The United Methodist* for 07 Feb, 62, 1924, 12 Nov, 554, 1931, and *DLB*, 2, 291-2. Also, according to the *DLB*, Ritson and Lawson were Wesleyans: *DLB*, 2.

³ *PMM*, 1874, 315; 1884, 398-9; Horn, *Arch*, 211-214.

⁴ Elliott & Fry - Notables of

Britain: <https://archive.org/stream/notablesofbritai00londonoft#page/138/mode/2up> All pictures were sourced online on 04/06/15.

Joseph Batey (1867-1949)

Spennymoor: 1922-1942

Labour

Joseph's father was a coal miner, Batey a Durham miners' agent and, although never a member of the Church, he was a life-long adherent.⁵



Sir James Blindell (1884-1937)

Holland with Boston 1929 - 1937

Liberal and National Liberal (LC)

Whip 1931 - 1932

Whip 1932 - ?

Junior Lord of Treasury 1932 - 1935

James's father was a wine cellar man. Blindell initially an errand boy but rose to owning a large shoe manufacture. He was an active member of Flottergate (Grimsby) Primitive Methodist Church and a local preacher.⁷



Thomas Burt (1837-1922)

Morpeth: 1874-1918

Liberal

Parliamentary Secretary 1892 - 1895

Father of the House of Commons 1910 - 1918

Thomas's father was a coal miner and Burt a Northumberland miners' agent. His father was a PM local preacher, Burt attended a PM Sunday school at which he taught, but later had 'a

⁵ Wearmouth, *Twentieth Century*, 129-30; *PML*, 06 Nov, 725, 1924.

⁶ National Portrait Gallery website: <http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp66992/joseph-batey>

⁷ *MT*, 06 Jun, 1929.

⁸ *Grimsby Telegraph*, Dec 14, 2013.

rather detached interest in Unitarianism'.⁹ He was never a member of the Connexion although he 'derived intellectual stimulus, and benefit in other ways' from his Primitive Methodist upbringing.¹⁰ In 1891, a journalist described him as 'a child of the Primitive Methodist Revival'.¹¹



John Cairns MBE (1859-1923)

Morpeth: 1918-1923

Labour

John's father was a coal miner and Cairns a Northumberland miners' agent and a local preacher from an early age.¹³

Thomas Cape MBE (1868-1947)

Workington: 1918-1945

Labour

Thomas's father was a coal miner and Cape a Cumberland miners' agent. His parents were members of the Connexion and he was a local preacher.¹⁴



William Carter (1862-1932)

Mansfield: 1918-1922

Labour (LC)

William's father was a brickyard manager and Carter a Nottinghamshire miners' agent; a life-long Prim, he was a Bible class leader.¹⁶

⁹ Watson, *Labour Leader*, 165. Also: *PMM*, 1881, 382.

¹⁰ Stead, 'Labour Party', 570; Burt, *Autobiography*, 85-8; Satre, *Conciliator*, 8.

¹¹ *Black and White Magazine*, Sept 14 1891, 392.

¹² Thomas Burt by Dorothy Tennant, Woodhorn Museum and Northumberland Archives:

<http://artuk.org/discover/artworks/thomas-burt-18371922-56249>

¹³ *Aldersgate*, 1920, 187-9; *PML*, 23 Nov, 753, 1922; 23 May, 338, 1923.

¹⁴ *Aldersgate*, 1920, 700-1; *PML*, 06, 725, 1924.

¹⁵ They Work for You Parliamentary website:

http://www.theyworkforyou.com/mp/16891/thomas_cape/workington

Thomas W. Casey (1869-1949)

Sheffield Attercliffe: 1918-1922

Coalition Liberal

Both father and son were colliery enginemen. At the time of his election, Casey was a national agent of the Winding and General Engineer's Society. Born into a PM family, he was a local preacher for 57 years. Hugh Bourne had baptized his mother.¹⁷



18

William Crawford (1833-1890)

Durham Mid: 1885-1890

Liberal

William's father was a coal miner and Crawford a Durham miners' agent. Although a local preacher for some years, he was no longer an active member by 1886. Yet Crawford still credited Primitive Methodism as a significant influence on his principles and practice.¹⁹



20

Sir George Doughty (1854-1914)

Great Grimsby July 13, 1895 - July 22, 1898

Great Grimsby August 2, 1898 - January 15, 1910

Great Grimsby December 3, 1910 - April 27, 1914

Doughty was a Liberal MP who transferred his allegiance to the Liberal Unionists in 1898 over the issue of Home Rule. (LC)

George's father was the tenant of a dairy farm, while Doughty was initially a builder/carpenter, but later became a merchant, ship owner, and director of the Humber Commercial Dock. Although educated at a Wesleyan day school, he was a PM 'stalwart in

¹⁶ *Aldersgate*, 1920, 102-3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 350-1; Wearmouth, *Twentieth Century*, 150.

¹⁸ *The Times*, 31 Oct, 1922, 16.

¹⁹ *PMM*, 1885, 189; *PM*, 11Mar, 147-9, 1886.

²⁰ Durham Mining Museum: <http://www.dmm.org.uk/whoswho/c909.htm>

his early days' and a local preacher.²¹ In 1906, when some newspapers suggested that he was a member of the Church, the *Primitive Methodist Leader* was insistent that his association with them had ended 'some years since'.²²



Enoch Edwards (1852-1912)

Hanley: 1906-1912

A Liberal MP who transferred to Labour in 1909. (LC)

Enoch's father was a quarryman and Edwards a miners' agent for the Midland Miners' Federation. He was educated briefly at a PM day school and, later, became a local preacher.²⁴

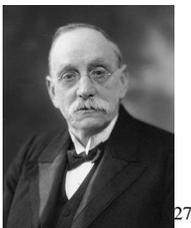


Sir George Edwards OBE (1850-1933)

Norfolk Southern: 1920-1922 and 1923-1924

Labour (LC)

George's father was an agricultural labourer and Edwards a national agent of the National Union of Agricultural Workers; he was a long-serving local preacher.²⁶



²¹ *HDM*, 27 Apr, 1914, 5.

²² *PML*, 01 Feb, 1906, 74.

²³ BBC Your Paintings: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/paintings/sir-george-List> O)ne -mp-1895-mayor-of-grimsby-18921893-82241

²⁴ *Aldersgate*, 1900, 189-91; Wearmouth, *Twentieth Century*, 154-5.

²⁵ F.W. Pethick-Lawrence and J. Edwards, (eds.), *The Reformers' Yearbook, 1905* (London: Taylor, Garnett and Evans, 1905), 35.

²⁶ *Aldersgate*, 1921, 256; Edwards, *Crow-Scaring*, passim.

Thomas Davis Fenby (1875-1956)

East Bradford: 1924-1929

Liberal (LC)

Father and son were blacksmiths/farriers, employing several employees in their own forge. Fenby's family had been among the earliest converts to Primitive Methodism in the East Riding; he was a local preacher for many years.²⁸



29

Charles Fenwick (1850-1918)

Wansbeck: 1885-1918

Liberal

Father and son were coal miners; although Fenwick was active in the Northumberland miners' union, he was still working as a pitman when elected to Parliament. He was a local preacher.³⁰ He told the *Aldersgate Magazine* in 1906: 'If my life has been in any degree a success, I owe it all to the providence of God and continued connection with the Primitive Methodist Church'.³¹



32

²⁷ National Portrait Gallery

website: <http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitLarge/mw63537/Sir-George-Edwards?LinkID=mp62261&search=sas&sText=George+Edwards&role=sit&rNo=0>

²⁸ *MG*, 10 Sep, 1917, 6; *PML*, 17 Nov, 733, 1921.

²⁹ *The Times*, 29 Oct, 1924, 18.

³⁰ *Aldersgate*, 1918, 666.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1906, 313.

³² *The Reformers' Yearbook*, 1905, 27.

Samuel Finney (1857-1935)

Staffordshire North-Western: 1916-1918

Stoke-on-Trent Burslem: 1918-1922

Labour (LC)

Samuel's father was a labourer, Finney a miners' agent of the Midland Miners' Federation. He was educated at a PM day school, and became a friend of Enoch Edwards there. They were both long-serving local preachers in the same Circuit.³³



34

Joseph Gibbins (1888-1965)

Liverpool West Toxteth: 1924-1931 and 1935-1950

Labour

Joseph's father was a labourer, Gibbins a Boilermakers' Union agent in Liverpool. He appears to have joined the Church in 1921 when Rev. H.J. Taylor was assigned to the Liverpool 1 station for a second time.³⁵

Vernon Hartshorn OBE (1872-1931)

Ogmore: 1918-1931

Labour

Postmaster General 1924-1924

Lord Privy seal 1930-1931

Vernon's father was a miner, Hartshorn a South Wales miners' agent. He acknowledged that his political commitment derived from his PM upbringing by his local preacher father.³⁶



37

³³ *Aldersgate*, 1920, 260-1.

³⁴ My Primitive Methodist Ancestor website:

http://www.myprimitivemethodists.org.uk/page_id__1957.aspx

³⁵ *PML*, 06 Nov, 725, 1924.

³⁶ *Aldersgate*, 1921, 256; Koss, *Nonconformity*, 152.

³⁷ National Portrait Gallery website: <http://www.npgprints.com/image/680759/bassano-ltd-vernon-hartshorn>

William Edwin Harvey (1852-1914)

Derbyshire North Eastern: 1907-1914

Liberal to Labour in 1909, but reluctantly after the Miners' Federation affiliated with the Party. (LC)

William's father was a coal miner, Harvey a Derbyshire miners' agent and a local preacher.³⁸



39

James Haslam (1842-1913)

Chesterfield 1906-1913

Liberal to Labour in 1909, but reluctantly after the Miners' Federation affiliated with the Party. (LC)

James's father was a shoemaker, Haslam a Derbyshire miners' agent. He was also a local preacher and close friend of Harvey's.⁴⁰



41

Alfred Hill (1867-1945)

Leicester West 1922-1923

Labour (LC)

Father and son were 'clickers' in the shoe trade and Hill became the Leicester branch President of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives. He was a local preacher.⁴²



43

³⁸ *Aldersgate*, 1907, 236-7.

³⁹ BBC Your Paintings website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/paintings/william-edwin-harvey-18521914-mp-for-north-east-derbyshire61391>

⁴⁰ *DLB*, 1, 153-4.

⁴¹ BBC Your Paintings website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/paintings/james-haslam-18421913-mp-for-chesterfield-19061913-founder61392>

⁴² N. Newitt, *A People's History of Leicester* (Derby: Breedon Books, 2008), 105; *PML*, 23 Nov, 753, 1922.

Frank Hodges (1887-1947)

Lichfield: 1923-1924

Labour

Civil Lord of the Admiralty 1924-1924

Frank's father was a farm labourer who, soon after Hodges' birth, became a coal miner; Hodges himself was a South Wales miners' agent and, later, General Secretary of the MFGB. Brought up in a Nonconformist family, Hodges converted to Primitive Methodism at the age of 16, became a local preacher and studied to enter the ministry but failed his trial sermon. He claimed that he was not sufficiently orthodox on the subject of eternal damnation. Although he no longer felt 'completely at ease within the narrow limits of the Church creed ... It is with feelings of real tenderness and affection that from time to time I enter into the portals of the church to take part in the simple devotion of its members'.⁴⁴



45

John Johnson 1850-1910

Gateshead: 1904-1910

Liberal to Labour (LC)

John's father was a coal miner and Johnson a Durham miners' agent. He became a local preacher in his late twenties and remained so until his death.⁴⁶



47

⁴³ The Who's Who of Radical Leicester website: <http://www.nednewitt.com/whoswho/H.html>

⁴⁴ F. Hodges, *My Adventures as a Labour Leader* (London: George Newnes Ltd, 1924), 18-21; *Aldersgate*, 1921, 518.

⁴⁵ Alamy photo collection: <http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-frank-hodges-mp-56779849.html>

⁴⁶ *Aldersgate*, 1904, 265-7.

⁴⁷ Wikipedia, 1905 postcard in personal collection:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Johnson_\(British_politician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Johnson_(British_politician))

Barnet Kenyon (1850-1930)

Chesterfield: 1913-1929

Liberal and then Coalition Liberal (LC)⁴⁸

Barnet's father was a quarryman, Kenyon a Derbyshire miners' agent and local preacher.⁴⁹



50

Frederick Caesar Linfield MBE (1861-1939)

Bedfordshire Mid: 1922-1924

Liberal (LC)

Frederick's father was a tailor and Linfield a corn merchant. He served as Vice-President of Conference in 1902 and, along with Levi Morse, was involved in the drafting of the Methodist Church Act of 1939.⁵¹



52

William Lunn (1872-1942)

Rothwell: 1918-1942

Labour (LC)

Parliamentary Secretary 1924-1924

Under-Secretary 1929-1931

William's father was a coal miner, Lunn a checkweighman and active in the Yorkshire Miners' Association. Brought up within a PM family of several generations standing, he remained a committed member of the Church.⁵³



54

⁴⁸ Kenyon received the 'coupon' in 1918 but his position as a Coalition Liberal remains somewhat ambiguous. See: R. Douglas, 'A Classification of the Members of Parliament Elected in 1918', *Historical Research*, 47, 115, (1974), 77.

⁴⁹ *Aldersgate*, 1920, 102-3.

⁵⁰ *Illustrated London News*, 01 Dec, 1923, 992-3.

⁵¹ Ritson, *Romance*, 297; Barber, *Pageant*, 308; *PML*, 23 Nov, 753, 1922.

⁵² National Portrait Gallery website:

<http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp98361/frederick-caesar-linfield>

⁵³ *Aldersgate*, 1920, 425-6; *PML*, 23 Nov, 753, 1922.

Horace Rendall Mansfield (1863-1914)

Spalding (Lincolnshire): 1900-1910

Liberal

Horace's father was a carpenter at the time of Mansfield's birth but described as a builder employing seven 'hands' by 1891. Mansfield himself was a pottery and tile manufacturer. He was a local preacher and his first wife a PM Minister's daughter.⁵⁵



56

William Thomas Mansfield (1884-1939)

Cleveland: 1929-31

Labour (LC)

Originally an ironstone miner and checkweighman, Mansfield was General Secretary of the Cleveland Miners and Quarrymen's Association from 1920-1934. At minimum, Mansfield was a hearer.⁵⁷

William McKeag (1897-1972)

Durham: 1931-35

Liberal to National Liberal (later a Conservative). (LC)

Unlike many of the other MPs, McKeag was a privately educated solicitor. Although the *Leader* claimed him as a member of the Church, his involvement may have only been as a Sunday School student.⁵⁸



59

⁵⁴ They Work for You Parliamentary website:

https://www.theyworkforyou.com/mp/18189/william_lunn/rothwell

⁵⁵ *Aldersgate*, 1910, 860 and 1921, 256. *PMW*, 18 Oct, 807 and 815, 1900.

⁵⁶ Chain Bridge Forge Museum website: <http://www.southhollandlife.com/2014/10/general-election-spalding-1906/>

⁵⁷ *Hartlepool Mail*, 20 Mar, 1939, 8; *YPLI*, 23 Mar, 1939, 6; *PML*, 12 Mar, 171, 1925;

⁵⁸ *PML*, 05 Nov, 853, 1931; *The Times*, 05 Oct, 1972, 19; *SDESG*, 19 Jul., 1934, 2

⁵⁹ National Portrait Gallery website: www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp72133/william-mckeag?search=sas&sText=William+Mckeag&OOnly=true

Levi Lapper Morse (1853-1913)

Wilton: 1906-1910

Liberal (LC)

Levi and his son William (see below) were drapers/house furnishers. Levi's father, Charles, had been an itinerant PM preacher. The Morse family were committed PMs for several generations, both representing the Church on many occasions, including serving as Vice-Presidents: Levi during 1896 and William in 1925.⁶⁰



61

William Ewart Gladstone Morse (1878-1952)

Bridgewater: 1923-1924

Liberal (LC)

See above.



62

James John Hanley Moses (1873-1946)

Plymouth Drake: 1929 -1931

Labour (LC)

His father, a shipwright like Moses, died when James was an infant. 'Jimmy' was an active member of his union's national executive, the Ship Constructors and Shipwrights' Association, and had been a local preacher for over 30 years by 1929. He was also active in the Co-op Movement.⁶³



64

⁶⁰ *Aldersgate*, 1912, 133-7; 1914, 151-2. Ritson, *Romance*, 169, 303. *The Times*, 11 Sep, 1913, 9.

⁶¹ *Aldersgate*, 1912, 133.

⁶² *Aldersgate*, 1912, 133.

⁶³ *The Times*, Oct 18, 1929, 9 and Oct 23, 1929, 5; *PML*, 31 Oct, 817, 1929. Stephens, *Jimmy Moses*.

⁶⁴ *Plymouth Herald*: <http://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/Day-Moses-led-way/story-20788052-detail/story.htm>

William Parrott (1843-1905)

Normanton: 1904-5

Liberal (LC)

William's father was a carpet weaver and Parrott a Yorkshire miners' agent. He was a Sunday school teacher, chapel trustee, and local preacher.⁶⁵



66

Arthur Richardson (1860-1936)

Nottingham South: 1906-1910

Rotherham: 1917-1918

Liberal

Arthur's father was a village carrier, Richardson a wholesale grocer/tea merchant in Nottingham and a long serving local preacher.⁶⁷ Although not a trade union activist, his election was endorsed by the Nottingham Trades Council, he spoke at the TUC and, in 1917, was invited to be Vice-President of the Lace Workers' Organization: essentially a trade union for female homeworkers.⁶⁸



69

Thomas Richardson (1868-1928)

Whitehaven: 1910-1918

Labour (LC)

His father was a miner, Richardson a checkweighman and member of the Durham miners' union executive – as was his brother W.P. Richardson, treasurer of the MFGB. The family were all Primitive Methodists and Thomas a local preacher.⁷⁰



71

⁶⁵ *Aldersgate*, 1904, 370-1.

⁶⁶ *The Reformers' Yearbook*, 1905, 28.

⁶⁷ *Aldersgate*, 1910, 245; *Auckland Star*, 17 Jul, 1917, 14.

⁶⁸ See footnote 100 to Chapter Three and *NEP*, 21 Sep, 1917, 5.

⁶⁹ *The Reformers' Yearbook*, 1905, 45.

⁷⁰ *Aldersgate*, 1920, 256; Wearmouth, *Twentieth Century*, 121-3; *DLB*, 4, 146-7; *The Times*, Oct 23, 1928, 18.

Sir David Shackleton (1863-1938)

Clitheroe: 1902 - 1910

Labour (LC)

His father was a power loom weaver and Shackleton an agent of the Lancashire Cotton Weavers' Union. Wearmouth described Shackleton as having been a Primitive Methodist local preacher in his youth. However, Shackleton claimed membership of the Wesleyan Church in 1906 while *Aldersgate* listed him among their Connexion's MPs in 1910. Martin, Shackleton's biographer, using both documentary and oral evidence from family, described how his wife and daughters attended a Wesleyan chapel but later became regulars at a PM chapel – Shackleton accompanying them on occasion.⁷² In reality, Shackleton's own commitment to religion as an adult may have been tenuous; Hancock's description of him was probably the most accurate: 'having Primitive Methodist connections'.⁷³ For example, in 1909, he addressed the PM Conference in harness with J.S. Higham MP, William Hartley's son-in-law.⁷⁴ The *Leader*'s comment of 1906 confirms this: 'Though not officially connected with our church, Mr. Shackleton is a regular worshipper in our Redearth Road Church, Darwen, and takes a deep interest in the affairs of our church'.⁷⁵



76

George William Shield (1876-1935)

Wansbeck: 1929-1931

Labour (LC)

His father was a coal miner, Shield a Northumberland miners' agent and a life-long Primitive Methodist. He died while preaching.⁷⁷

⁷¹ From the collection of W.P. Richardson:

http://www.raggyspelk.co.uk/washington_pages/selections2/disaster_usworth_1885.html

⁷² Wearmouth, *Twentieth Century*, 162; *Aldersgate*, 1910, 245; Martin, *Lancashire Giant*, 143-4.

⁷³ W.C.R. Hancock, 'No Compromise: Nonconformity and Politics 1893 – 1914', *Baptist Quarterly*, 36, 2, (1995), 62.

⁷⁴ *MG*, 21 Jun, 1909, 9.

⁷⁵ *PML*, 08, Feb, 83, 1906.

⁷⁶ *The Reformers' Yearbook*, 1905, 29.

⁷⁷ Wearmouth, *Twentieth Century*, 96-7. *The National Probate Calendar for 1936*, 365.

Charles James Simmons (1893-1975)

Birmingham Erdington: 1929-1931

Birmingham West: 1945-1950

Brierley Hill: 1950-1959

Labour (LC)

Assistant Whip: 1945-1946

Lord Commissioner of the Treasury: 1946-1949

Parliamentary Secretary: 1949-1951

Simmons' father was a master painter in Birmingham. His parents and grandfather were PMs and Liberals. He became a local preacher as a teenager and remained so at least until Methodist Union, with which he disagreed. However, he asserted his 'old Primitive Methodist' allegiance throughout his life.⁷⁸



Benjamin Charles Spoor OBE (1878-1928)

Bishop Auckland: 1918-1928

Labour (LC)

Chief Whip 1924-1924

Ben's father was an ironmonger at the time of his birth, Spoor the same in 1911 and a builder's merchant in 1922. During WW1, he was commander/commissioner for the Y.M.C.A in the Mediterranean region, serving in Salonika. The family had a long association with Primitive Methodism, Spoor, like his father and paternal grandfather, being a local preacher before his parliamentary career.⁸⁰



⁷⁸ *The Times*, 19 Aug, 1975, 14; *PML*, 21 Oct, 821, 1931.

⁷⁹ National Portrait Gallery website:

<http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp75665/charles-james-simmons?search=sas&sText=James+Simmons&OOnly=true>

⁸⁰ Johnson, 'Spoor'.

⁸¹ *Aldersgate*, 1920, 556-7.

Albert Stanley (1862-1915)

Staffordshire North Western: 1907-1916

Liberal to Labour in 1910 (LC)

Albert's father was a miner, Stanley a miners' agent for the Midland Miners' Federation. By the age of 14, Stanley was a local preacher and remained so throughout his life.⁸²



83

Sir Charles Starmer (1870-1933)

Cleveland 1923-4

Liberal (LC)

The son of a labourer, Starmer rose to be a newspaper proprietor. He was a long serving member of the Connexion and, according to the *Aldersgate Magazine* friend 'of the labouring communities'.⁸⁴



85

John Wilkinson Taylor (1855-1934)

Chester-Le-Street: 1906-1919

Labour (LC)

His father was a blacksmith, as was Taylor before he became a Durham Colliery Mechanics' agent. He was also co-owner of a printing business. He served as a local preacher for over 50 years.⁸⁶



87

⁸² *Aldersgate*, 1907, 727-8.

⁸³ Dawley Heritage website: <http://www.dawleyheritage.co.uk/people/34/albert-stanley-mp>

⁸⁴ *Observer*, 02 Jul, 1933, 18; *Aldersgate*, 1917, 740.

⁸⁵ *The Times*, 08 Dec, 1923, 14.

⁸⁶ Wearmouth, *Twentieth Century*, 134-5; A. Haworth and D. Hayter, (eds.), *Men Who Made Labour*. London: Routledge, 2006, 12, 15; *Aldersgate*, 1910, 245.

⁸⁷ Postcard: personal collection.

Alfred Edward Waterson (1880-1964)

Kettering: 1918-22

Co-op Party/Labour (The first Co-op Party MP.) (LC)

The son of a builder but orphaned at an early age and brought up by a working-class widow, Waterson became a railway 'under shunter' and was a railwaymen's union official in Derbyshire at the time of his election. Converted to PM at the age of 17, he became a local preacher the following year and was still active at the time of his election.⁸⁸



89

John Wilson (1837-1915)

Houghton-Le Spring: 1885-1886

Durham Mid: 1890-1915

Liberal (LC)

John's father was a labourer, Wilson a Durham miners' agent. Converted at the age of 31, he soon became a PM local preacher.⁹⁰



91

Sir Walter Womersley (1878-1961)

Grimsby 1924 – 1945

Conservative (LC)

PPS 1931

Lord Commissioner of the Treasury 1931 – 1935

Assistant Postmaster General 1935-39

Minister of Pensions 1939-45

The son of a carter, Womersley began as a part-time factory worker, leaving school at the age of 13, but in later life became Chairman of Relay Exchanges. There is a query regarding Womersley's religious affiliation. Although his children attended the Primitive Methodist Sunday School in Cleethorpes and he presided over several events at PM chapels in Grimsby,

⁸⁸ *Aldersgate*, 1920, 778-9.

⁸⁹ Withington Co-op website: http://withington-cooperative.blogspot.co.uk/2007_06_01_archive.html

⁹⁰ *PMM*, 1896, 687-691; *Aldersgate*, 1915, 385-7.

⁹¹ *The Reformers' Yearbook*, 1905, 29.

both the Baptist and Primitive Methodist Churches claimed him as a member. Furthermore, he received an Anglican burial. Although first elected to Parliament in 1924, the *Leader* omitted him from the list of PM MPs in that year but first referred to his presence in a Primitive Methodist Chapel in 1930 and included him as one of their parliamentary candidates in 1931. He may have been a hearer, rather than a member or adherent.⁹² One of the Chapel meetings referred to above was a temperance meeting and that, in combination with Womersley's humble origins, unreserved support for Sunday closing, qualified support for trade unionism, his sobriquet of 'fishermen's friend' and champion of their widows, may have made him more congenial to the Church during its final decade.⁹³



⁹² *YPLI*, 27 Apr, 1955, 5; Bebbington, 'Baptist MPs of the Twentieth Century', 253 and 287. *PML*, 06 Nov, 725, 1924; 13 Feb, 110, 1930; 22 Jan, 63, 1931; 22 Oct, 821 and 05 Nov, 853, 1931. *The Times*, 'Deaths', Mar 22, 1961.

⁹³ *YPLI*, 13 Jun, 1927, 7 and 15 Nov, 1929, 9; *HDM*, 26 Nov, 1927, 1; *Portsmouth Evening News*, 12 Nov, 1930, 14; *HDM*, 18 Feb, 1929, 6.

⁹⁴ National Portrait Gallery website:

<http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitLarge/mw139535/Sir-Walter-James-Womersley-1st-Bt>

Bibliography

Section A

Primary Sources

Published autobiographies and contemporary texts

- ‘A Nonconformist Minister’, *Nonconformity and Politics*. London: Isaac Pitman, 1909.
- Anonymous, *The Three Death Cries of a Perishing Church*. Nottingham: Richard Sutton, 1835.
- Antliff, W.M, Ed. *Primitive Pulpit: Sermons and Sketches by Various Ministers of the Primitive Methodist Connexion*. London: J. Day, 1859.
- Arch, Joseph, *From Ploughtail to Parliament: An Autobiography*. London: Cresset: 1986 – originally published in 1898.
- Armstrong, N., *A Sermon Preached by the Rev Nicholas Armstrong at the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Cambridge. May 23, 1832* (London: W. Harding , 1832).
- Bax, E. Belfort, *The Nonconformist Conscience Considered as a Social Evil and Mischief – Monger by One Who Has Had It*. London: Eveleigh Nash, 1903.
- Birmingham Daily Gazette, *Ireland As It Is and As It Would Be Under Home Rule* (Birmingham, Birmingham Daily Gazette,1893).
- Brotherhood Movement, *Fellowship Hymn-Book*. London: Brotherhood Publishing, 1909.
- Burnett, John, (ed.), *Useful Toil: Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820s to the 1920s*. London: Routledge, 1997 reprint of 1974 original.
- Burt, Thomas, *An Autobiography*. London: Fisher and Unwin, 1924.
- Campbell, R.J., *The New Theology*. New York: Macmillan, 1907.
- Clowes, W., *The Journals of William Clowes* London: Hallam and Holliday, 1844.
- Dilke, C.W. and Wilkinson, S., *Imperial Defence.*, Cambridge: CUP facsimile reprint, 2012 of 1892 original.
- Edwards, G., *From Crow-Scaring to Westminster: An Autobiography* London: The Labour Publishing Company, 1922.
- Elliott, Ebenezer, *The Splendid Village: Corn Law Rhymes and other poems*. London: Benjamin Steill, 1833.
- The Poetical Works of Ebenezer Elliott*. Edinburgh: William Tait, 1840.
- Fabian Society, *Fabian Tract No 82, The Workmen’s Compensation Act and What It Means And How To Make Use Of It*. London: The Fabian Society, 1901.
- Fawcett, H., *State Socialism and the Nationalisation of the Land*. London: Macmillan, 1883.
- Green, H., and Stokes, W. (ed.), *Memoirs of a Primitive Methodist: Eventide Memories and Recollections*. Durham: The Durham County Council Local History Society, 1997.
- Hall, Rev E., *The Earnest Preacher: memoirs of the Rev Joseph Spoor*. London: G. Lamb, 1874.
- Hobhouse, Mrs Henry, *I Appeal Unto Caesar*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1917.
- Hodges, Frank, *My Adventures as a Labour Leader*. London: George Newnes Ltd, 1924.
- Nationalisation of the Mines*. London: Leonard Parsons, 1920.
- Horton, S., (ed.), *The England of the Future*. London: E. Dalton, 1909.
- Jackson, Rev J Dodd, *The Message and the Man: some essentials of effective preaching, 14th Hartley Lecture*. London: W.A. Hammond, 1912.
- Jessopp, Augustus, *Arkady, For Better For Worse: A Study of Rural Life in England*. London: Fisher Unwin, 1887.
- Kendall, H.B., *Handbook of Primitive Methodist Church Principles and Polity*. London: Holborn Publishing House,1923
- Mackenzie, Mrs Colin, *May a Man Marry His Dead Wife’s Sister*. London: Hatchard, 1880.
- Macrosty, H.W., ‘The Recent History of the Living Wage Movement’, *Political Science Quarterly*, 13, 3 (Sep., 1898), 413-441.

- Osler, E., *Church and King*. Bath: Smith, Elder and Co., 1837.
- Peake, A.S., *Prisoners of Hope*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1918.
- Pethick-Lawrence, F. W. and Edwards, J. (eds.), *The Reformers' Yearbook, 190*. London: Taylor, Garnett and Evans, 1905.
- Russell, T., *The Writings of Thomas Russell: Primitive Methodist Preacher 1806-1881*. Stoke on Trent: Tentmaker Publications, 2005 – originally published in 1869.
- Sage, Josiah, *The memoirs of Josiah Sage: concerning Joseph Arch and the pioneering days of trade unionism among the agricultural workers*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1951.
- Shaw, Bernard, *The Common Sense of Municipal Trading* (Westminster: Archibald and Constable, 1904.)
- Sidebotham, R., *Hyde in Wartime 1914-16*. Hyde: Herald Press, 1916.
- Simmons, Jim, *Soapbox Evangelist*. Chichester: Janay Publishing Company, 1972.
- Shaw, Charles, *When I was a Child*. London: Caliban Books, 1980 – originally published in 1903.
- Stead, F. H., *How Old Age Pensions Came To Be*. London: Methuen, 1909.
- The National Council of Peace Societies, *The Seventeenth International Congress of Peace*. London: The National Council of Peace Societies, 1909.
- Thompson, J., *The Education Question : 1870 — 1914*. London: Sherratt and Hughes, 1914.
- Turner, Ben, *About Myself*. London: Humphrey Toulmin, 1930.
- Walford, J., *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of the Venerable Hugh Bourne by a Member of the Bourne Family*. Cambridge: CUP facsimile of 1854 edition.
- Wesley, J., *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2007 – a reprint of the 1872 Works of John Wesley Vol II.
- Whittle, Rev J, *Owd Roger: Bible Colporteur and Primitive Methodist Lay Preacher – The Story of a Bible Inspired Life*. Preston: Geo Toulmin & Sons Ltd, 1912.
- 'Who's Who in Methodism' (Methodist Times, 1933). Available online: <https://www.british-genealogy.com/threads/22047-Who-s-Who-in-Methodism-1933-Index-of-Lay-Officers>.
- Wilson, J., *Memories of a Labour Leader*. Firlie: Caliban Books, 1980 – original edition 1910.
- Wood, Rev Joseph, *Sunset at Noonday: Memorials of Mrs J. T. Robson of Hull*. London: G. Lamb, 1871.
- Woodcock, Henry, *Primitive Methodism and the Yorkshire Wolds*. London: Joseph Toulson, 1889.

Primitive Methodist Chapel Publications/Jubilee Books

- Anonymous, *Jubilee Souvenir Easington Lane Primitive Methodist Chapel 1869-1919*.
- Patterson, A.H., *From Hayloft to Temple: The Story of Primitive Methodism in Great Yarmouth*. London: Robert Bryant, 1903.

Primitive Methodist Publications

- Consolidated Minutes of the Primitive Methodist Annual Conference*.
- Primitive Methodist Sunday School Hymnal*. London: John Swinden, 1899.
- The Primitive Methodist Hymnal Supplement with Tunes*. London: A. Hammond, 1912.

Weekly newspapers:

- Primitive Methodist*.
- Primitive Methodist Leader* (Changed its name to *Methodist Leader* c.1926.)
- Primitive Methodist World*.

Monthly Magazines:

- Christian Messenger*.
- The Primitive Methodist Magazine*, renamed *Aldersgate Magazine* from 1899.

The Primitive Standard

Quarterly Magazines:

The Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review and Christian Ambassador, renamed *The Holborn Review* in 1910.

Other Periodicals and Newspapers

Aberdeen Evening Express
Aberdeen Journal
Auckland Star
Beds Advertiser and Luton Times
Birmingham Daily Post
Birmingham Daily Gazette
Black and White Magazine
Blackburn Standard and Weekly Express
Brecon County Times, Neath Gazette and General Advertiser
Brisbane Courier
Bristol Mercury
Burnley News
Burnley Express
Bury Free Press
Cambridge Independent Press
Chelmsford Chronicle
Chester Chronicle
Cornishman
Daily Gazette for Middlesbrough
Derbyshire Courier
Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald
Dominion
Driffield Times
Dundee Advertiser
Dundee Courier
Dundee Evening Telegraph
Edinburgh Evening News
Essex Newsman
Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country
Gloucester Citizen
Gloucester Journal
Grimsby Telegraph
Hartlepool Mail
Hawke's Bay Herald
Hull Daily Mail
Lancashire Evening Post
Leamington Spa Courier
Leeds Times
Leicestershire Daily Mercury
Leighton Buzzard Observer and Linslade Gazette
Lincolnshire Chronicle
Lincolnshire Echo
Liverpool Mercury
London Daily News
London Standard
Luton Times and Advertiser
Kent and Sussex Courier
Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser

Maoriland Worker
Monthly Magazine or British Register
Morpeth Herald
Motherwell Times
Newcastle Courant
Newcastle Journal
North Devon Journal
Northern Echo
Northern Star
Northampton Mercury
Nottingham Evening Post
Ohinemuri Gazette
Portsmouth Evening News
Reynold's Newspaper
Punch, or the London Charivari
Review of Reviews
Sheffield and Rotherham Independent
Sheffield Daily Telegraph
Sheffield Independent
Shields Daily Gazette
Sidney Morning Herald
Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette
Staffordshire Sentinel
Tamworth Herald
Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser
Wellington Evening Post
Western Daily Press
Western Morning News
Western Times
Western Gazette
Wrexham Advertiser
Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald
Yorkshire Evening Post
Yorkshire Herald
Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer
The Advertiser (Adelaide)
The Argus (Melbourne)
The Common Cause
The Derry Journal
The Hull Packet and East Riding Times
The Lancashire and Yorkshire Co-operator and Useful Classes Advocate
The Manchester Guardian
The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser
The Spectator
The Tablet
The Times
The United Methodist

Governmental Publications

Accounts and Papers Relating to Elections. Church & c., London: House of Commons, 1833, Volume XXVII.
Board of Trade: Report on Strikes and Lock Outs of 1892. Available online: <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001718249>
Hansard. Available online: <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/>

The Journal of the House of Commons. Available online:
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmjournal.htm>
Report from the Select Committee on Contagious Diseases Acts, 1882. Available Online:
<https://archive.org/details/reportfromselect1882grea>

Archives

Hull History Centre:

- a) Minutes of Great Thornton Street Primitive Methodist Circuit Quarterly Meetings, C DCW/88, 89 and 90.
- b) Collection of Papers on George William McKee, 1865-1949, U DLB/5/53.

Labour History Archive and Study Centre People's History Museum/University of Central Lancashire: LP/LRC/8/279, May 141903; LP/LRC/19/391-2, Jan 1905; LP/LRC/20/211-212, 1905 Feb 3-6.

Digitised Archives

BMD and census records at Ancestry.co.uk

Josephine Butler Collection, The Women's library, London Metropolitan University.
Available Online: <http://archiveshub.ac.uk/data/gb106-3jbl.html?page=1#idm2182912>

Durham Mining Museum: <http://www.dmm.org.uk/mindex.htm>

The Pamphlet Collection of Sir Robert Stout: <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-corpus-Stout.html>

TUC Library Collection, London Metropolitan University:
<http://www.unionhistory.info/index.php>

Woodhorn Museum and Northumberland Archives: <http://www.experiencewoodhorn.com/>

Section B

Secondary Sources

Books

- Abraham, William, J. and Kirby, James E., *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*. Oxford: OUP, 2009.
- Adams R.J.Q., and Poirer, Philip P., *The Conscriptioin Controversy in Great Britain: 1900-18*. UK: Macmillan: 1987.
- Ambler, R.W., *Ranters, Revivalists and Reformers: Primitive Methodism and Rural Society, South Lincolnshire 1817-1875*. Hull: Hull University Press, 1989.
- Churches, Chapels and the Parish Communities of Lincolnshire, 1660-1900*. Lincoln: Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 2000.
- Ashby, M.K., *Joseph Ashby of Tysoe*. London: Merlin Press: 1974 – originally published by CUP in 1961.
- Auerbach, Sascha, *Race, Law and the 'Chinese Puzzle' in Imperial Britain*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.
- Banks, John, *A Primitive Cradling*. Englesea Brook: The Seventh Chapel Aid Lecture, 1997.
- Barber, B. Aquila, *A Methodist Pageant: A Souvenir of the Primitive Methodist Church*.

- London: Holborn Publishing, 1932.
- Barron, H., *The 1926 Miners' Lockout: Meanings of Community in the Durham Coalfield*. Oxford: OUP, 2010.
- Barrow, L. and Bullock, I., *Democratic Ideas and the British Labour Movement: 1880-1914*. Cambridge: CUP, 1996.
- Barry, E. Eldon, *Nationalisation in British Politics: The Historical Background*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1965.
- Baylies, Carolyn, *The History of the Yorkshire Miners: 1881-1918*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Bebbington, D.W., *The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics 1870-1914*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1982.
- Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A history from the 1830s to the 1908s* London: Routledge, 1989.
- The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press: 2005.
- 'Free Church MPs of 1906' in Taylor, S and Wykes, D.L (ed.), *Parliament and Dissent*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.
- Congregational Members of Parliament in the Nineteenth Century, Occasional Publication No 1, The United Reformed Church History Society and The Congregational History Society*, 2007.
- Victorian Nonconformity*. Oregon, Cascade Books: 2011, 2nd edition.
- Bentley, M., *The Liberal Mind: 1014-29*. Cambridge: CUP, 1977.
- Bevir, M., *The Making of British Socialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.
- Bibbings, Lois, *Telling Tales About Men: Conceptions of Conscientious Objectors to Military Service During the First World War*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009.
- Beynon, H. and Austrin, T., *Masters and Servants: Class and Patronage in the Making of a Labour Organisation*. London: Rivers Oram Press, 1994.
- Biagini, Eugenio, F., and Reid, Alastair, R., (eds.), *Currents of Radicalism: Popular Radicalism, Organized Labour and Party Politics in Britain 1850-1914*. Cambridge: CUP, 1991.
- Biagini, Eugenio, F., *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone 1860-1880*. Cambridge: CUP, 1992.
- British Democracy and Irish Nationalism 1876-1906*. Cambridge: CUP, 2007.
- Blackburn, Sheila, *A Fair Day's Wage for a Fair Day's Work: Sweated Labour and the Origins of the Minimum Wage Legislation*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007.
- Bolton, A.J., *The Other Side: Opposition to Methodist Union – An Examination of Some Contemporary Documents*. Peterborough: World Methodist Historical Society, 1994.
- Bowran, J.G., *The Life of Arthur Thomas Guttery*. London: Holborn Hall: 1922.
- Bradley, Ian, *Abide With Me: The World of Victorian Hymns*. London: Faber and Faber, 2010.
- Bradley, James E., *Religion, Revolution, and English Radicalism: Nonconformity in Eighteenth Century Politics and Society*. Cambridge: CUP, 1990.
- Bright, R. K., *Chinese Labour in South Africa, 1902-10: Race, Violence, and Global Spectacle*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Brooks, D., *The Age of Upheaval: Edwardian Politics 1899-1914*. Manchester: MUP, 1995.
- Brown, Callum, G., *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000*. London: Routledge, 2009 Second Edition.
- Religion and Society in Twentieth Century Britain*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2006.
- Brown, J., *The Story of St Andrew's Methodist Church, Sholing*. Kindle version. Southampton: Sholing Press, 1995.
- Brown, Richard, *Society and Economy in Modern Britain: 1700-1850*. London: Routledge, 1991.

- Bruce, S., *Politics and Religion in the United Kingdom*. Kindle version. London: Routledge, 2011.
- Burchardt, Jeremy, *The Allotment Movement in England: 1793-1873*. London: Royal Historical Society, 2002.
- Cannadine, David, *The Undivided Past: History Beyond our Differences*. New York: Vintage: 2013.
- Carr, G., *Pit Women: Coal Communities in Northern England in the Early Twentieth Century*. London: Merlin Press, 2001.
- Ceadel, M., *Pacifism in Britain 1914-1945: The Defining of a Faith. Oxford: OUP, 1980. Semi-Detached Idealists: The British Peace Movement and International Relations, 1854-1945*. Oxford: OUP, 2000.
- Carter, Matt, *T.H. Green and the Development of Ethical Socialism*. Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2003.
- Catterall, P., *Labour and the Free Churches 1918-39: Radicalism, Righteousness and Religion*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.
- Cawood, Ian, *The Liberal Unionist Party: A History*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2102.
- Chaplin, Sid, 'Durham Mining Villages' in M. Bulmer (ed.) *Mining and Social Change : Durham County in the Twentieth Century*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2015 reprint of 1978 edition,59-82.
- Church, R. and Outram, Q., *Strikes and Solidarity: Coalfield Conflict in Britain 1889-1966*. Cambridge: CUP, 1998.
- Clark, D., *Between Pulpit and Pew: Folk Religion in a North Yorkshire Fishing Village*. Cambridge: CUP, 1982.
- Clark, D., (Lord Windermere), *Voices from Labour's Past: Ordinary People Extraordinary Lives*. Kendal: Lensden, 2015.
- Collier, M.A., and Sherwood, R.M., *Prim. Aldershot Stoke on Trent: Tentmaker Publications*, 2010.
- Colls, Robert, *The Collier's Rant: Song and Culture in the Industrial Village*. London: Croom Helm, 1977.
The Pitmen of the Northern Coalfield: Work, Culture, Protest, 1790-1850. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987.
- Communist Party History Group 'Rouse Ye Women': *The Cradley Heath Chain Makers*. London: Communist Party, 2012.
- Cowling, M., *The Impact of Labour: The Beginning of Modern British Politics* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005).
- Crawford, Elizabeth, *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain and Ireland: A Regional Survey*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Crosby, T.L., *Joseph Chamberlain: A Most Radical Imperialist*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2011.
- Crowson, Nick, *Facing Fascism: The Conservative Party and The European Dictators 1935 - 1940*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Cunningham, V., *Everywhere Spoken Against: Dissent in the Victorian Novel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.
- Currie, Robert, *Methodism Divided: A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism*. London: Faber and Faber, 1968.
- Daglish, N., *Education Policy Making in England and Wales: The Crucible Years 1895-1911*. London: Woburn Press, 1996.
- Darlington, R, *The Political Trajectory of J.T., Murphy*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998.
- Davies, H.B., *Nationalism and Socialism*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2009.
- Davies, R.E., *Methodism*. London: Epworth, 1985.
- Davies, R., George, A.R. and Rupp, G., (eds.), *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*. (4 Volumes). London: Epworth Press, 1965-1988.
- Deakin, Nicholas, Jones-Finer, Catherine and Matthews, Bob (eds.), *Welfare and the State: Critical Concepts in Political Science, Volume 2*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2004.

- Dews, D.C. *Ranters, Revivalists, Radicals, Reformers and Revolutionaries: A Celebration of Methodist Local Preachers in Yorkshire*. Leeds: Leeds Methodist District, 1996.
- Dacey, A.V., *Lectures on the Relation Between Law and Public Opinion in England During the Nineteenth Century*. London: Macmillan, 1905.
- Dolan, John, *The Independent Methodists: A History*. Cambridge: James Clarke, 2005.
- Driver, Cecil, *Tory Radical: The Life of Richard Oastler*. Oxford: OUP, 1946.
- Durbach, Nadia, *Bodily Matters: The Anti-Vaccination Movement in England, 1853-1907*. North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Elton, Godfrey, *'England, arise!' A study of the pioneering days of the labour movement*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1931.
- Emdem, R.V., *Boy Soldiers of the Great War*. London: Bloomsbury, 2012.
- Epstein, J. and Thompson, D., (eds.), *The Chartist Experience: Studies in Working Class Radicalism and Culture, 1830-1860*. London: Macmillan, 1982.
- Evans, David, *Labour Strife in the South Wales Coalfield: 1910-11*. Cardiff, Educational Publishing Ltd, 1911.
- Evans, Eric J., *The Contentious Tithe: The Tithe Problem and English Agriculture 1750-1850*. London: RKP, 1976.
- Fanning, Ronan, *Fatal Path: British Government and Irish Revolution 1910-1922*, Kindle version: Faber, 2013.
- Finlayson, G., *Citizen, State and Social Welfare in Britain 1830-1990*. Oxford: OUP, 1994.
- Fowke, Edith and Glazer, Joe, *Songs of Work and Protest*. USA: Dover, 2012.
- Fynes, R., *The Miners of Northumberland and Durham*. Original edition 1873; S.R. Publishers, 1971 edition.
- Fyson, R., 'Labour History' in J. Belchem, (ed.), *A New History of the Isle of Man: The Modern Period 1830-1999*, Volume 5. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000, 279-310.
- Gibson, W. and Hammond, G. (eds.), *Wesley and Methodist Studies: Volume 2*. Manchester: Didsbury Press, 2010.
- Gilbert, A.D., *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change 1740-1914*. London: Longman, 1976.
- Goadby, Raymond, *A Prize Pair of Prims*. Crewe: Methodist Chapel Aid Lecture, No. 10, 2000.
- Graham, D.E., *Three Colleges: Primitive Methodist Secondary Educational Ventures*. Englesea Brook: Eighth Chapel Aid Lecture, 1998 – republished with corrections in 2015. (Available online at <http://www.primitivemethodistwomen.org>.)
- Graham, John W., *Conscription and Conscience: A History 1916-19*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1922.
- Greaves, Pamela, *Labour Women: Women in British Working class Politics 1918-39*. Cambridge: CUP, 1994.
- Green, E.H.H. and Tanner D. M., Editors, *The Strange Survival of Liberal England: Political Leaders, Moral Values and the Reception of Economic Debate*. Cambridge: CUP, 2007.
- Greenleaf, W. H. *The Rise of Collectivism* (London: Routledge, 1983).
- Gregory, Roy, *The Miners and British Politics: 1906-1914*. Oxford: OUP, 1968.
- Hanham, H.J., ed. *The Nineteenth Century Constitution: 1815-1914, Documents and Commentary*. Cambridge: CUP, 1969.
- Gurney, P. *Co-operative Culture and the Politics of Consumption in England, 1870-1930*. Manchester: MUP, 1996.
- Harris, J., *Unemployment and Politics: A Study in English Social Policy 1886-1914*. Oxford: OUP, 1972.
- Harrison, B., *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872*. Kindle version. Keele: Keele University Press, 1994 - 2nd Edition.
- Havinghurst, Alfred, *Radical Journalist: H.W. Massingham*. Cambridge: CUP, 2008.
- Haworth, Alan, and Hayter, Diane, (eds.), *Men Who Made Labour*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Hempton, David, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*. Yale: Yale University Press, 2005.

- Methodism and Politics in British Society: 1750-1850*. London: Hutchinson, 1984.
The Religion of the People: Methodism and Popular Religion c. 1750-1900. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Henshaw, S.S., *The Romance of our Sunday Schools*. London: W.A. Hammond, 1910.
- Hilson, M., *Political Change and the Rise of Labour in Comparative Perspective*. Lund, Sweden: Nordic Academic Press, 2006.
- Hilton, M., *Smoking in Popular British Culture 1880-2000*. Manchester: MUP, 2000.
- Hobsbawm, E.J., *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movements in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. New York: Norton Library, 1959.
Uncommon People: Resistance, Rebellion and Jazz. Kindle version. Orion Books, 1999.
Interesting Times: A Twentieth Century Life. London: Abacus, 2002.
- Hobson, J.A., *Problems of Poverty: An Inquiry into the Industrial Conditions of the Poor*. London: Methuen, 1906, 6th edition.
- Hoggart, R., *The Uses of Literacy*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1960.
A Local Habitation: Life and Times 1918-1940. Oxford: OUP, 1989.
A Sort of Clowning: 1940-1959. Oxford: OUP, 1991.
First and Last Things. London: Aurum Press, 1999.
Introduction to Orwell, G., *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989.
- Hollis, P., *Women in Public, 1850-1900: Documents of the Victorian Women's Movement*. Abingdon: Routledge, 1979 and 2013.
- Holton, Sandra Stanley, *Feminism and Democracy: Women's Suffrage and Reform Politics in Britain. 1900-1917*. Cambridge: CUP, 1986.
- Hoppen, K. Theodore, *The Mid-Victorian Generation: 1846-1886*. Oxford: OUP, 2000.
- Horn, P., *Joseph Arch*. Kington: The Roundwood Press, 1971.
- Horne, J. and Kramer, A., *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial*. Yale: Yale University Press, 2001.
- Howe, A., *Free Trade and Liberal England : 1846-1946* . Oxford: OUP, 1998.
- Howell, D., *British Workers and the Independent Labour Party: 1888-1906*. Manchester: MUP, 1983.
- Howkins, A., *Poor Labouring Men: Popular Radicalism in Norfolk 1870-1923*. London: RKP, 1985.
- Huggins, M., *Flat Racing and British Society, 1790-1914 A Social and Economic History*. London: Routledge, 1999.
Horse Racing and the British 1919-39. Manchester: MUP, 2003.
- Hughes, M., *Conscience and Conflict: Methodism, Peace and War in the Twentieth Century*. Peterborough: Epworth, 2008.
- Husselbee, Lesley and Ballard, Paul, *Free Churches and Society: The Nonconformist Contribution to Social Welfare, 1800-2010*. London: Continuum, 2012.
- Hynes, Samuel, *The Edwardian Turn of Mind*. Kindle version. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.
- Jaffe, J.A., *The Struggle for Market Power: Industrial Relations in the British Coal Industry 1800-1840*. Cambridge: CUP, 1991.
- Jenkins, P., *The Great and Holy War: How World War One Changed Religion For Ever*. Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2014.
- Jones, P. d'Alroy, *Christian Socialist Revival 1877 -1914: Religion, Class and Social Conscience in Late Victorian England*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.
- Joyce, P. *Realignment of the Left? A History of the Relationship between the Liberal Democratic and Labour Parties*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999.
- Kendall, H.B., *History of the Primitive Methodist Church*. London: Joseph Johnson, Primitive Methodist Publishing House, 1919.
The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church, Vol. 1 and 2. London: Robert Bryant, 1906.
- Kent, John, *The Age of Disunity*. London: Epworth Press, 1966.
William Temple. Cambridge: CUP, 1992.
- Koss, Stephen, *Nonconformity in Modern British Politics*. London: Batsford, 1975.

- The Pro-Boers: The Anatomy of an Anti-War Movement*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.
- Kuper, Adam, *Incest and influence: The Private Life of Bourgeois England*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Laity, Paul, *The British Peace Movement: 1870-1914*. Oxford: OUP, 2002.
- Lang, Timothy, *The Victorians and the Stuart Heritage: Interpretations of a Discordant Past*. Cambridge: CUP, 1995.
- Langford, T.A., *Methodist Theology*. Peterborough: Epworth Press, 1998.
- Larsen, T., *Friends of Religious Equality: Non-conformist Politics in Mid-Victorian England*. Milton Keynes: Wipf and Stock, 2005.
- Laybourn, Keith, *The General Strike of 1926*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993.
- Lee, Robert, *Rural Society and the Anglican Clergy 1815-1914: Encountering and Managing the Poor*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006.
- Lee, Robert, *The Church of England and the Durham Coalfield 1810-1926: Clergymen, Capitalists and Colliers*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007.
- Liddington, Jill and Norris, Jill, *One hand tied behind us: The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement*. London: River Oram Press, 2000.
- Linden, M van der and Voss, L.H. van., *Class and Other Identities: Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Writing of European Labour History*. New York: Berghahn Books: 2002.
- Lloyd, J.M., *Women and the Shaping of British Methodism: Persistent Preachers, 1807-1907*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009.
- Lowry, Donal (ed.), *The South African War Reappraised*. Manchester: MUP, 2000.
- Lysons, K., *A Little Primitive: Primitive Methodism from Macro and Micro Perspectives*. Buxton: Church in the Marketplace, 2001.
- Machin, G.I.T., *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain: 1869-1921*. Oxford: OUP, 1987.
- MacKillop, I.D., *The British Ethical Societies*. Cambridge: CUP, 2010 – original edition 1986.
- Macnicol, John, *The Politics of Retirement in Britain, 1878-1948*. Cambridge: CUP, 1998.
- Marquand, David, *Mammon's Kingdom*. Kindle version. Penguin, 2014.
- Martin, Jane, *Women and the Politics of Schooling in Victorian and Edwardian England*. Leicester: Leicester University Press: 1999.
- Martin, Ross, M. *The Lancashire Giant: David Shackleton, Labour Leader and Civil Servant*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000.
- Mates, L.H., 'The Syndicalist challenge in the Durham coalfield before 1914' in *Libertarian Socialism: Politics in Black and Red*, Kinna, Ruth and Pinta, Saku and Prichard, Alex and Berry, Dave, (eds.). London: Palgrave Macmillan: 2012.
- Mayor, Stephen, *The Churches and the Labour Movement*. London: Independent Press, 1967.
- McKibbin, R., *The Ideologies of Class*. Oxford: OUP, 1991.
- McLeod, H., 'Religion and the Organization of the Working Class in Great Britain c. 1830-1960', in L.H. van Voss, P. Pasture and J. de Maeyer, (eds), *Between Cross and Class: Comparative Histories of Christian Labour in Europe 1840-2000*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2005, 285-304.
- McIlroy, J, Campbell, A, Gildart, K (eds.), *Industrial Politics and the 1926 Mining Lockout: The Struggle for Dignity*. Cardiff: University of Wales, 2004.
- Merritt, Major John, (ed.), *Historical Dictionary of the Salvation Army*. Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2006.
- Milburn, G., *Primitive Methodism*. Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2002.
- Miller, Harold, *Growing Up with Primitive Methodism*. Sheffield: Methodist Chapel Aid Lecture, No. 5, 1995.
- Millward, Robert, 'The political economy of urban utilities', in M. Daunton, (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain: 1840-1950*, Vol. 3 (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), 315-349.
- Mingay, G.E., (ed.), *The Victorian Countryside*, Vol 1, London: RKP, 1981.

- Moore, Robert, *Pit-men, Preachers and Politics* Cambridge: CUP, 1974.
- Moss, Jim, *The Sound of Trumpets: History of the Labour Movement in South Australia*. South Australia: Wakefield Press, 1985.
- Munson, J., *The Nonconformists: In Search of a Lost Culture*. London: SPCK, 1991.
- Murdoch, Norman H., *The Origins of the Salvation Army*. Knoxville: University of Texas, 1996.
- Murray, A Victor, *A Northumbrian Methodist Childhood*. Morpeth, Northumberland County Council, 1992.
- Newitt, Ned, *A People's History of Leicester*. Derby: Breedon Books, 2008.
- Niebuhr, H.R., *The Sources of Denominationalism*. New York: Meridian Books, 1957.
- Obelkevich, James, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825-1875*. Oxford: OUP, 1976.
- Owen, J., *Labour and the Caucus: Working-class radicalism and organised Liberalism, 1868-88*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014).
- Patterson, W.M., *Northern Primitive Methodism*. London: Dalton, 1909.
- Packer, Ian, *Lloyd George, Liberalism and the Land: The Land Issue and Party Politics in England, 1906-14*. Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2011.
- Liberal Government and Politics: 1905-15*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Parsons, G., (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain: Controversies*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988.
- Paz, D.G. (ed.), *Nineteenth Century English Religious Traditions: Retrospect and Prospects*. London: Greenwood Press, 1995.
- Peake, A.S., *The Life of Sir William Hartley*. Kindle version: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926.
- Pennell, C., *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: OUP, 2012).
- Perkins, A., *A Very British Strike: 3 May-12 May, 1926*. London: Macmillan, 2006.
- Phillips, Paul T., *A Kingdom on Earth: Anglo-American Social Christianity 1880-1940*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 1996.
- Pope, Robert (ed.), *T & T Clark Companion to Nonconformity*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.
- Seeking God's Kingdom: The Nonconformist Social Gospel in Wales 1910-1939*. Cardiff: University of Wales, 2015 edition.
- Pratt, Andrew, *O for a thousand tongues: The 1932 Methodist Hymn Book in Context* Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2004.
- Price, Richard, *An Imperial War and the British Working Class: Working class Attitudes and Reactions to the Boer War 1899-1902*. London: Routledge, 1972.
- Pugh, M., *Speak for Britain*. London: Bodley Head, 2010.
- The Making of Modern British Politics: 1867-1939*. Kindle version. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.
- Rieger, Joerg and Vincent, John J., (eds.), *Methodist and Radical*. Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2003.
- Riso, M., *The Narrative of the Good Death: The Evangelical Death Bed in Victorian England*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016.
- Ritson, J., *The Romance of Primitive Methodism*. London: Primitive Methodist Publishing House, 1910.
- Rosen, Andrew, *Rise Up Women! The Militant campaign of the Women's Social; and Political Union: 1903-14*. Abingdon: Routledge, 1974.
- Rubinstein, David, *Before the Suffragettes: Women's Emancipation in the 1890s*. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986.
- Russell, Rex C., *Three Lincolnshire Labourers' Movements: Protest and Incendiarism, Friendly Societies, Farmworkers' Trade Unions*. Barton on Humber: WEA, 1994.
- Satre, Lowell, J., *Thomas Burt, Miners' MP, 1837-1922: The Great Conciliator*. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1999.
- Scotland, Nigel, *Methodism and the Revolt of the Field: A Study of the Methodist Contribution to Agricultural Trade Unionism in East Anglia, 1872-96*. Gloucester: Sutton, 1981.

- 'The demand for a stake in the soil' in E. Biagini ed., *Citizenship and Community* Cambridge: CUP, 1996.
- Searle, G.R., *A New England: Peace and War: 1886-1918*. Oxford: OUP, 2004.
- Sell, Alan P F, *Christ and Controversy: The Person of Christ in Nonconformist Thought and Ecclesial Experience, 1600-2000*. Kindle version. Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2011.
- Shaw, J. and Kreider, A. (eds.), *Culture and the Nonconformist Tradition*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999.
- Sherington, G., *English Education, Social Change and War: 1911-20*. Manchester: MUP, 1981.
- Shils, Edward, *Tradition*. Chicago, University of Chicago, 1981.
- Simon, Brian, *Education and the Labour Movement: 1870-1920*. London: Camelot Press, 1965.
- Smith, L., *Religion and the Rise of Labour*. Keele: Keele University Press, 1993.
- Snell, K.D.M., *Church and Chapel in the North Midlands: Religious Observance in the Nineteenth Century*. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991.
- Snell, K.D.M and Ell, P.S., *Rival Jerusalems: The Geography of Victorian Religion*. Cambridge: CUP, 2000.
- Stephens, L., *The Life and Times of Jimmy Moses*. (Old Plymouth Society, 2010).
- Swartz, Marvin, *The Union of Democratic Control in British Politics During the First World War*. Oxford: OUP, 1971.
- Tanner, Duncan, *Political Change and the Labour Party: 1900-1918*. Cambridge: CUP, 1990.
- Taylor, David W., *Like a Mighty Army: The Salvation Army, the Church and the Churches*. Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2014.
- Thompson, David, M., *Nonconformity in the Nineteenth Century*. London: RKP, 1972.
- Thompson, E. P., *The Making of the English Working Class*. Harmondsworth: Penguin: 1991 reprint of 1968 edition.
- Townsend, J., *J.A. Hobson*. Manchester, MUP, 1991.
- Tracey, Herbert, (ed.), *The Book of the Labour Party: Its History, Growth, Policy, and Leaders*, Volume III. London: Caxton, c. 1925.
- Turner, John Munsey, *Wesleyan Methodism*. Peterborough: Epworth Press, 2005.
- Valenze, Deborah, M., *Prophetic Sons and Daughters: Female Preaching and Popular Religion in Industrial England*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.
- Waites, B., *A Class Society at War: England 1914-1918*. Berg: Leamington Spa, 1987.
- Waltman, J.L., *Minimum Wage Policy in Great Britain and the United States*. New York: Algora Publishing, 2008.
- Ward, W.R., 'Church and Society in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century' in Rupert Davies et al. (eds.), *A History of the Methodist Church*, Vol 2, pp. 11-97.
- Watson, Aaron, *A Great Labour Leader: Being a Life of the Right Hon. Thomas Burt M.P.*. London: Brown, Langham and Co., 1908.
- Watts, M.R., *The Dissenters Volume II: The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity 1791-1859*. Oxford: OUP: 1995.
- The Dissenters, Volume III, The Crisis and Conscience of Nonconformity*. Oxford: OUP, 2015.
- Wearmouth, R.F., *Methodism and the Working Class Movements of England: 1800-1850*. London: Epworth Press, 1937.
- Methodism and the Struggle of the Working Classes 1850-1900*. Leicester: Edgar Backus, 1954.
- The Social and Political Influence of Methodism in the Twentieth Century*. London: Epworth Press, 1957.
- Methodism and the Trade Unions*. London: Epworth Press, 1959.
- Werner, Julia Stewart, *The Primitive Methodist Connexion: Its Background and Early History*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984.
- Wigley, J, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Sunday*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980).

- Wilkinson, A., *Dissent or Conform? War, Peace and the English Churches 1900-1945* London: SCM Press, 1986.
Christian Socialism: Scott Holland to Tony Blair London: SCM Press, 1998.
- Wilkinson, E. *The Town that was Murdered*. London: Victory Gollancz Left Book Club, 1939.
- Wilkinson, John T., 'The Rise of Other Methodist Tradition', in Rupert Davies et al., (eds.), *A History of the Methodist Church*, Vol. 2, pp. 276-330.
- Williamson, Stanley, *The Vaccination Controversy: The Rise, Reign and Fall of Compulsory Vaccination for Smallpox*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007.
- Wingerden, Sophie A., *The Women's Suffrage Movement in Britain: 1866-1928*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999.
- Winter, J., *The Great War and the British People*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1985.
- Woodcock, Henry, *The Hero of the Humber or the History of the Late Mr. John Ellerthorpe*. London: Primitive Methodist Bookroom, 1880.
- Worley, Matthew, (ed.), *The Foundations of the British Labour Party: Identities, Cultures and Perspectives, 1900-39*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.
- Wrigley, C., 'Labour and the Trade Unions in Great Britain, 1880-1939', *Refresh*, 13, 1991.
- Yeo, Eileen, 'Practices and Problems of Chartist Democracy' in James Epstein and Dorothy Thompson, eds., *The Chartist Experience*. London: Macmillan, 1982, 345-380.
- Yeomans, Henry, *Alcohol and Moral Regulations: Public Attitudes, Spirited Measures and Victorian Hangovers*. Bristol: Policy Press, 2014.

Reference Works

Australian Dictionary of Biography National Centre of Biography, Australian National University. Available online: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/>

Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography. Available online: <http://webjournals.ac.edu.au/ojs/index.php/ADEB>

- Dictionary of Labour Biography*, Saville, J., Bellamy, J., Gildart, K., and Howell, D., (eds.), Volumes: 1-3, 4, 11, 12 and 13, (Palgrave Macmillan, 1972-2010):
 Bellamy, Joyce, 'Carter, William', 1, 69-70; 'Lunn, William', 2, 253-255.
 Bellamy, Joyce and Margaret Espinasse, 'Richardson, Thomas', 4, 146-147.
 Bellamy, Joyce and Anthony Mason, 'Taylor, John Wilkinson', 1, 313-314.
 Bellamy, Joyce and John Saville, 'Arch, Joseph', 1, 26-30; 'Cape, Thomas', 3, 31-32;
 'Edwards, Enoch', 1, 190-111; 'Finney, Samuel', 1, 120-121; 'Hartshorn, Vernon', 1, 153-155;
 'Parrott, William', 2, 292-293; 'Stanley, Albert', 1, 308-311.
 Bing, H. F. and John Saville, 1, 'Burt, Thomas', 59-63.
 Espinasse, Margaret, 'Shield, George William', 3, 163-164.
 Gildart, Keith, 'Waterson, Alfred Edward', 12, 292-297.
 Howell, David, 'Simmons, Charles James 'Jim' 1893-1973, 13, 2010, 339-352.
 Martin, David E., 'Shackleton, David', 2, 335-339.
 Mason, Anthony, 'Crawford, William', 1, 93-94; 'Johnson, John', 1, 195-197.
 Mason, Anthony and Barbara Nield, 'Batey, Joseph', 2, 31-33.
 Mason, Anthony and John Saville, 'Wilson, John', 1 348-350.
 Saville, John, 'Cairns, John', 2, 79-80; 'Fenwick, Charles', 1, 115-118.
 Robinson, N. W., McKee, George William, 5, 147-9.
 Williams, J. E., 'Harvey, William Edwin', 1, 152-153; 'Haslam, James', 1, 153-155;
 'Kenyon, Barnet', 1, 208-209.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Oxford, online version.

Journal Articles / Papers

Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society:

- Bowmer, J. C. 'Methodist Union', 43.5, 1982, 104-5.
- Crump, J., 'Charles Booth and the Primitive Methodists', 60.2, (2015), 47-63.
- Field, C., 'Demography and the Decline of British Methodism I and II', 58.4 175-189 and 58.5, (2012), 200-216.
- Horn, P., 'Methodism and Agricultural Trade Unionism in Oxfordshire, the 1870s', 37.3, (1969), 67-71.
- Johnson, M. 'The persuasive tongue of the contentious Rev Henry Booth Coventry', 60.2, (2015), 74-8.
- Milburn, G.E., 'Tensions in Primitive Methodism in the 1870s: And the Origins of the Christian Lay Churches in the North-East', 40, (1976), 93-10, 135-143.
- Morris, M.R., 'Primitive Methodists and the Miners' Union', 37, (1969), 59.
- Parkes, W., 'The Original Methodists: Primitive Methodist Reformers', 35, (1965), 58-64.
- Turner, Munsey, J., 'Robert F. Wearmouth 1882-1963 Methodist Historian', 43.5, (1982), 111-116.
- 'The Christian Study of History', 46.1, (1987), 10.
- Wearmouth, R.F., 'The Evolution of Primitive Methodism', 27.6, (1948-50), 135-137.
- Young, D.M., 'Early Primitive Methodism and Folk Religion', 60.6, (Oct 2016), 302-1.1.

Other journal articles:

- Bashford, Alison and McAdam, Jane, 'The Right to Asylum: Britain's 1905 Aliens Act and the Evolution of Refugee Law', *Law and History Review*, 32, 2 (2014), 309-350.
- Bearman, C.J., 'An Examination of Suffragette Violence', *English Historical Review*, 120, (2005), 365-97.
- Bebbington, D. W., 'Unitarian Members of Parliament in the Nineteenth Century', *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, 24, 3, (2009), 153-175.
- 'Baptist MPs in the Nineteenth Century', *The Baptist Quarterly*, 29, 1, (1981), 1-24.
- 'Baptist M.P.s of the Twentieth Century', *Baptist Quarterly*, 31, 6, (1989), 252-287.
- 'Baptist Members of Parliament: A Supplementary note', *Baptist Quarterly*, 42, 2, (2007), 148-161.
- 'Nonconformity and Electoral Sociology, 1867-1918', *The Historical Journal*, 27, 3, (1984), 633-656.
- Bellanta, Melissa, 'Feminism, mateship and brotherhood in 1890s Adelaide', *History Australia* 5 1, (2008), 7.1 to 7.14. Available online: <http://journals.publishing.monash.edu/ojs/index.php/ha/article/viewFile/271/284>
- Bevir Mark and Rhodes, R.A.W., 'Defending Interpretation', *European Political Science*, 5, (2006), 69-83.
- Brittain, J.D. 'Hugh Bourne and the Magic Methodists', *Methodist History*, 46.3 (2008), 132-140.
- Brown, Kenneth, D., 'Nonconformity and the British Labour Movement: A Case Study' in *Journal of Social History*, 8, 2, (1975), 113-12.
- Bruce, Steve, 'Methodism and Mining in Durham County: 1881-1891', *Northern History*, 48, 2 (2011), 337-355.
- Catterall, Peter, 'Morality and Politics: The Free Churches and the Labour Party between the Wars', *The Historical Journal*, 36, 3, (1993), 667-685.
- Review of Leonard Smith's *Religion and the Rise of Labour* in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 47, 1, Jan 1996, 200-203.
- 'Labour and the Politics of Alcohol: The Decline of a Cause', An Institute of Alcohol Studies Report, (2014). Available Online: <http://www.ias.org.uk/uploads/pdf/IAS%20reports/Labour%20and%20the%20politics%20of%20alcohol%20-%20The%20decline%20of%20a%20cause.pdf>
- Colls, Robert, 'The Forgotten World of Christian Socialism', *History Today*, 65, 3, (2015), 37-9.
- Daunton, M.J., 'Down the Pit: Work in the Great Northern and South Wales Coalfields, 1870-1914', *The Economic History Review*, 34, 4, (1981), 578-597.

- Douglas, Roy, 'A Classification of the Members of Parliament Elected in 1918', *Historical Research*, 47, 115, (1974), 74-94.
- Englander, David, 'The National Union of Ex-Servicemen and the Labour Movement, 1918-1920', *History*, 76, 246, (1991), 24-42.
- Field, Clive D., 'A Sociological Profile of Methodism, 1900-1932', *Oral History*, 4, 1, (1976), 73-95.
 'The Social Structure of British Methodism: Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 28, 2, (1977), 199-225.
 'The social composition of English Methodism to 1830: a membership analysis', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 76, 1, (1994), 153-78.
 "'The Devil in Solution": How Temperate were the Methodists?', *Epworth Review*, 27, 3, (2000), 78-93.
- Gibbons, I., 'The Anglo-Irish Treaty 1921: The Response of the British Parliamentary Labour Party and Labour Press', *Labour History Review*, 2011, 76 (1). 1 - 15.
- Hamilton, Margaret, 'Opposition to the Contagious Diseases Acts, 1864-1886', *Albion: Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 10, 1, (1978), 14-27.
- Hancock, W.C.R., 'No Compromise: Nonconformity and Politics 1893 - 1914', *Baptist Quarterly*, 36, 2, (1995), 56-69.
- Hopkins, Eric, 'Religious Dissent in Black Country Industrial Villages in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 34, 3, (1983), 411-424.
- Howkins, Alan, 'The Centenary of the Farm Workers' Union', *Rural History Today*, 12, (2007).
- Howkins, A. and Verdon, N., 'The state and the farm worker: the evolution of the minimum wage in agriculture in England and Wales, 1909-24', *Agricultural History Review*, 57, II (2009), 257-74.
- Hughes, Michael, 'British Methodists and the First World War', *Methodist History*, 41, 1, (2002), 316-328.
 'Dilemmas of the Nonconformist Conscience: Attitudes Towards War and Peace Within Primitive Methodism', *Wesley and Methodist Studies*, 5, (2013), 75-96.
- Hughes, Thomas Parke, 'Managing Change. Regional Power Systems, 1910-30', *Business and Economic History*, 2, 6, 1977, 52-68.
- Hutchinson, Mark, 'Smailes, George Wells'. Available online: webjournal@ac.edu.au.
- Johnson, M., 'The People's Loaf and the Prims', *The Ranters' Digest*, 12, 2015, 25-32.
- Laffan, Tony, 'Christian Socialism in Newcastle: 1890-1916', *The Hummer*, 3, 6, (2001). Available online: <http://asslh.org.au/hummer/vol-3-no-6/christian-socialism/>.
- Linder, Robert D., 'The Australian Love Affair with the Australian Labour Party: 1891-1929', *Lucas: An Evangelical History Review*, 23 and 24, (1997-8), 35-61.
 Available online:
<http://webjournals.ac.edu.au/ojs/index.php/LUCAS/article/view/8717/8714>
- McAnnula, Stuart, 'Understanding Tradition in British Politics and Beyond', POLIS Working Paper 24, (2007), Leeds University, 3-4. Available online:
<http://www.polis.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/research/workingpapers/wp24mcanulla.pdf>.
- McCormick, B. and Williams, J.E., 'The Miners and the Eight Hour Day, 1863-1910', *The Economic History Review*, 12, 2, (1959), 222-238.
- McKibbin, R., 'Why Was There No Marxism in Great Britain', *The English Historical Review*, 99, 391, (1984), 297-331.
- Milden, K., 'Culture of Conversion: Religion and Politics in The Cornish Mining Communities', Paper delivered at the Cornish History Network Conference 2001.
- Pelling, Henry, 'The Politics of the Osborne Judgment', *The Historical Journal*, 25, 4, (1982), 889-909.
- Reid, Alastair, Review of Hobsbawm's *Worlds of Labour* in *The Historical Journal*, 30, 1 (1987), 225-238.
- Riddell, Fern, 'The Weaker Sex? Violence and the Suffragette Movement', *History Today*, 63, 3, (2015).

- Rubinstein, David, 'The Independent labour Party and the Yorkshire Miners: the Barnsley By-Election of 1897', *International Review of Social History*, 23,1, (1978), Vol 23, 102-134.
- Rusling, G.W., 'The Nonconformist Conscience', *The Baptist Quarterly*, (1967), 126-142.
- Helena Wray, 'The Aliens Act of 1905 and the Immigration Dilemma', *Journal of Law and Society*, 33, 2, (2006), 302-23.
- Thane, P., 'The Working Class and State Welfare in Britain 1880-1914', *The Historical Journal*, 27,4, 1984, 877-900.
- Yeo, Eileen, 'Christianity in Chartist Struggle: 1838-1842', *Past and Present*, 91, 1, (1981), 109-38.
- Zebel, Sydney H., 'Joseph Chamberlain and the Genesis of Tariff Reform', *Journal of British Studies*, 7, 1, (1967), 131-157.

Unpublished theses

- Ambler, R.W., *Social Change and Religious Experience: aspects of rural society in south Lincolnshire with specific reference to Primitive Methodism, 1815-1875*. PhD thesis. The University of Hull, 1984. Available online: <https://hydra.hull.ac.uk/resources/hull:5003>
- Calder, Alexander, J. *The Primitive Methodist Connexion: Tackling the Myth*. PhD Thesis, (Open University), 2012. Available online: <http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.594250?>
- Catterall, Peter Paul, *The Free Churches and the Labour Party in England and Wales 1918-1939*. PhD thesis. University of London, 1989. Available online: <https://qmro.qmul.ac.uk/jspui/handle/123456789/1367>
- Dalton, Raymond David, *Labour and the Municipality: Labour Politics in Leeds 1990-14*. PhD thesis. University of Huddersfield, 2000. Available online: <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/4872/1/327145.pdf>.
- Edmondson, J.J.W., *The doctrines of hell and judgment and the need for personal conversion as an index to the development of liberal theology within the theological colleges of the Methodist Church in England from 1907 to 1932*. MA thesis Durham University, 1990, 32-68. Available online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/6466/>
- Friend, S.F., *A Sense of Belonging: Religion and Identity in Yorkshire and Humber Fishing Communities, c.1815-1914*. PhD thesis. University of Hull, 2010. Available online: <https://hydra.hull.ac.uk/resources/hull:2709>.
- Garratt, D., *Primitive Methodism in Shropshire. 1820-1900*. PhD thesis University of Leicester, October, 2002. Available online: Available online: <https://ira.le.ac.uk/handle/2381/4728>
- Graham, E Dorothy, *Chosen by God: the Female Itinerants of Early Primitive Methodism*. PhD thesis. University of Birmingham, 1986. Available online: <http://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/17346396.pdf>
- Hatcher, S., *The Origin and Expansion of Primitive Methodism in the Hull Circuit 1819-51*. PhD thesis. University of Manchester, 1993.
- Johnson, Wayne J., *In Triumph of Faith: Primitive Methodism and the Labouring People in the North Midlands, 1812-62*. PhD thesis, Keele University, 1989. Available online: <http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.276172>
- Mabuchi, Akira, *The Revolt of the Field and Churches in the South of England*. PhD thesis. Cambridge University 1999.
- Marshall, Craig, *Levels of industrial militancy and the political radicalization of the Durham miners 1885-1914*. MA thesis, Durham, 1976. Available online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/9370/>
- Perks, R.B., *The new liberalism and the challenge of Labour in the West Riding of Yorkshire 1885-1914*. PhD thesis. Huddersfield Polytechnic, 1985. Available online: http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/4598/1/D065033_1.pdf.

Webster, Frank, *Durham miners and unionism, 1831 - 1926: a sociological interpretation*. MA thesis. Durham University, 1974. Available online: <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/10050/>

Woolley, T.R., *A New Appearance on the Face of Things: Retelling the Primitive Methodist Creation Narrative*. PhD thesis, Cliff College, 2013. Available Online: <https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:201825&datastreamId=FULL-TEXT.PD>

Websites:

An index of Methodist Ministers: <http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/search-resources/guide-to-special-collections/methodist/using-the-collections/index-of-methodist-ministers/>

BBC Your Paintings: <http://artuk.org/>

History and Policy website: <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/>

My Primitive Methodist Ancestors: <http://www.myprimitivemethodists.org.uk/>

National Portrait Gallery: <http://www.npg.org.uk/collections>

The Methodist Church in Great Britain://www.methodist.org.uk/

The Longshot: The family history magazine of the Linfield family. Available online: <http://www.lindfield.org/about/>