

HILARY ANNE EVANS.

RELIGION AND THE WORKING CLASSES

IN

MID- NINETEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND.

ProQuest Number: 10097307

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10097307

Published by ProQuest LLC(2016). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.  
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

The thesis is a study of the working classes in the middle of the Nineteenth Century in relation to their reactions towards the churches and formal religious observance and of the factors which were influential in determining these reactions. The basis of the study rests upon the statistical evidence regarding attendances at church or chapel taken from the Religious Census conducted on 30th March 1851 when a count of heads was made at every religious service held on that day in every parish throughout England and Wales. Attendances are placed alongside the statistics of population, at a national, county and parish level in order to determine the proportion of the population which could be classed as church-going.

In seeking to isolate those factors which were influential in deciding the religious character of any one population a comparative study is made of seven parishes in different parts of the country. These are examined firstly in terms of the proportion of church-goers to the adult population and secondly in terms of the occupational structure communal relationships, the general standard of living, degree of urbanisation, level of education and availability of leisure time activities. These social influences are given further attention on a more general scale as in the response of the various churches to the rise in population and the problems of industrialisation in terms of their efforts to reach the people, their theology and organisational structure. An evaluation is thus made of the contribution made by each of these factors in determining the extent of formal religious observances among the working-class population.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION

THE 1851 RELIGIOUS CENSUS

PARISH STUDIES

AGRICULTURAL

WEDMORE-----SOMERSET.

EXNING-----SUFFOLK.

URBAN-INDUSTRIAL FACTORY.

BRADFORD-----YORKSHIRE, WEST RIDING.

BOLTON-----LANCASHIRE.

URBAN-DOMESTIC

ARNOLD-----NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

MINING

ST. BURYAN-----CORNWALL.

HASWELL-----DURHAM.

THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCHES

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THE METHODIST CHURCH

OTHER FORMS OF DISSENT

PEW RENTS

SOCIAL INFLUENCES

INDUSTRIALISATION AND URBANISATION

FREE THOUGHT AND OTHER WORKING CLASS MOVEMENTS

EDUCATION

FORMAL LEISURE ACTIVITIES

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION



INTRODUCTION.

The central piece of evidence regarding the religious character of the population in the mid - Nineteenth Century is the Religious Census of 1851, which provides adequate if not always precise, information on the religious habits of the people for every parish in England and Wales. Returns are available for every religious building, of all denominations and these give general information on the size and type of church and the number of seats available, together with the number of attendants at each service on Census Sunday, 30th March 1851.

Broadly speaking its findings were that a considerable proportion of the population could not be classed as regular church-goers and that those who were absent from worship came predominantly from the working-classes. Having established this working-class alienation the task is then to discover how this differed between areas, particularly between urban and rural populations, and to what specific influences it can be attributed.

Geographical distribution is an important factor, especially in the light of Nineteenth Century demographic history, the phenomenal growth in population and, more significantly, the emergence of massive urban conurbations where class divisions were on a physical as well as cultural, basis. Census statistics taken at county level and in more detail from a study of seven parishes in different parts of the country will show that devotion to religious worship, or lack of it, was by no means uniform or universal. The parish studies have been chosen so as to represent various types of working-class communities according to the predominant work situation of the area, to see how far this was a relevant factor in determining the propensity to religious worship or otherwise. Thus, there are two agricultural parishes, taken from separate counties, representing the old established way of life, little affected by the Industrial Revolution; two mining parishes, one in the North and one in the extreme South; two urban working-class parishes which were distinctly products of industrialisation and a further urban parish, dealing with those people involved in the old and decaying domestic industries.

From these studies broad patterns emerge, which show that the proportion of church attenders among populations in the new industrial centres was very much lower than that in rural or semi-rural areas. In the large towns, the average worshipping population was approximately 25% of the total e.g. in Manchester, Sheffield and the St. Giles Parish of London, although in Shoreditch the proportion was only 12% and in Bethnal Green only 6%. On the other hand, in rural parishes the proportion was generally above 50% and often well above 60%, particularly in the agricultural counties of the South.

Reasons for working-class alienation from the church must inevitably be pointed towards the mere fact of industrialisation and the problem is thus one of determining what factors were influential in bringing about this comparative alienation of the urban working-classes, while at the same time what factors contributed towards the greater religiosity of their counterparts in the countryside. The evidence however, that there were pockets of

irreligion even among rural communities means that the answer is not simply to be found in industrialisation, the rise in the scale of communities and the resulting impersonality of the system, though these were undoubtedly of major importance. Other influences which must be considered include, the increasing facilities for education in the Nineteenth Century which led to a reading public brought up, not on the Bible alone, but with easy access to all kinds of literature, some of it radical, some of it infidel; the rise of the free-thought movement and how great its appeal was to the working-classes; and also the move towards increasing leisure time and the question of how far the working-classes were being drawn away from the church by the prospect of more attractive leisure-time activities.

Allied to these considerations are the basic questions regarding religious faith itself together with the state of the actual churches; the strength of the various denominations in each particular parish and especially the strength of non-conformity in working-class areas; what, for example, were the reasons for the appeal of early Methodism. One needs to look at the attitudes of the churches and their response towards a rapidly expanding and changing society. How far for example were they willing, or able to adapt themselves to meet the needs of an urban civilisation. This involves not only their ideals and the relevancy of their message but also the actual provision of accommodation, its distribution and its rate of growth, as compared with the rise in population.

Obviously the degree of religious observance among any population is not likely to be explained in terms of any one phenomenon, but the need is to examine those factors which may be thought to be influential and to isolate those which prove to be of most significant importance.

THE RELIGIOUS CENSUS.

In 1851 the first and only religious census ever to be taken was conducted through England and Wales. (1) It was an attempt to obtain on a national scale, information as to the religious habits of the population by the counting of heads in every church on one particular Sunday. The original intention of including religious affiliation as one of the questions on the general census of 1851 was rejected under the pressure of opposition from Churchmen who regarded it as an unnecessary intrusion into privacy, and who were also somewhat afraid of having the Established Church judged upon the basis of quantitative utility. Nonconformists were equally upset by the realisation that many non church-goers would, in all probability still consider themselves as nominal members of the Church of England and would answer the questions accordingly. The decision to organise instead a great voluntary count of attendance to be taken on 30th March 1851 was most welcome to the sects who had nothing to lose. Wilberforce however spoke for many churchmen when he warned that the returns would be unreliable and incomplete; it was generally felt that religion defies statistical method and that the value and extent of clerical labours could not be assessed by the mere counting of heads. Churchmen denied that they were trying to hide from reality but at the same time Bishop Denison predicted that ' unjust, mischievous and dangerous ' inferences would be drawn. (2).

Besides the repudiations by church opinion both before and after the event, the entire census has also been rejected by more impartial critics as a useless experiment, on the grounds that its results were sufficiently inaccurate as to damn the whole project as worthless. It is true that as a precise statistical document it leaves much to be desired and needs to be treated with caution. There were undoubtedly inaccuracies which must be taken into account but on the whole the census does offer a fairly reliable picture of church attendances on a national scale at that time, indeed, the only picture available to historians. Its results are also of great value in determining relative levels of church attendance in different areas.

The census was conducted by the barrister Horace Mann, who unfortunately was not entirely unbiased, coming down firmly on the side of the church. Nevertheless he expressed the objects of the census as being a) to establish the number of individuals who attended divine service on a particular Sunday and b) to estimate the number of people in the general community who attended worship at all. On the schedules which were sent to every place of religious worship in England and Wales, the church officials were asked to return the denomination and the date of

(1) The Census of Great Britain 1851 Religious Worship.  
 (2) Hansard CXV ( 1851) 630-2.



erection or consecration of the building, together with the seating capacity, distinguishing between those which were free and those which were appropriated. Additional questions were intended to obtain information on how the church was endowed, the extent of its income and from what sources. The actual count of heads was to be returned for each service held on that Sunday and supplementary to this the census office also asked for the estimated average attendances at church over a period of six months so as to make allowances for any peculiarities on the actual day of the census.

For the purposes of organisation, England and Wales was divided into 30,610 separate districts each of which was the sphere of one enumerator whose duty it was to procure the returns. To establish where the schedules must be sent, the enumerators were directed to prepare a list of all the places in their district where religious services were held, giving the name and residence of the minister or official party. When delivering the schedules to the proper parties the enumerators had to tell them that it was not compulsory upon them to reply but "that their compliance with the invitation was entirely left to their own sense of the importance and value to the public of the information sought." No sanctions could be levelled against churches or individuals who failed to comply with the requirements and in several cases clergymen flatly refused to complete the forms. The clergy were especially opposed to that section dealing with matters of church finance, so much so that at the last moment, the Registrar General decided that these questions should be disregarded, though in some cases answers to these were received.

Having collected the completed returns the local Registrars then dispatched them to the census office where they were checked against the original list; the returns from the Church of England were also checked against the Clergy List. According to Mann there were, at this stage, a considerable number of deficiencies principally from the Church of England "several of the clergy having entertained some scruples about complying with an invitation not proceeding from episcopal authority." Where no forms were received a second application for information was made direct from the Census Office in the form of a shortened questionnaire. This brought in the majority of the outstanding returns; for the few remaining cases the local Registrars either obtained the information from secular officers of the church or else made their own estimates! The absence of any official sanction was certainly a disadvantage since not only were some schedules never completed but frequent returns gave only half the required information, for example, in 2,524 cases no information could be obtained with regard to the number of sittings and failure to answer one or other of the questions makes comparison very difficult. Also only about half the forms received gave the required information about average attendances over a period of six months and in those cases where this information is missing it is impossible to assess whether the figures returned were truly representative. Where the returns show a disproportionately high or low number of attendances one would like to know whether there were any special circumstances on census Sunday which might account for this, or whether this was the normal practice. This of course was the aim in asking for average attendances, but not only did so many church returns omit the information but, where it was received, almost invariably the average



figures were higher than those relating only to Census Sunday and appear to have been inserted almost by way of apology when the actual attendance was low, which leaves one somewhat doubting their validity.

The most serious weakness of the census was the fact that the actual enumerating was left to the responsibility of each priest or minister, who received no directions as to how the count might best be carried out. In many cases it becomes apparent that the count was little more than a guess, especially suspicious where the figures returned have been rounded off to the nearest hundred. Another factor of inaccuracy was the obvious temptation to exaggerate returns, a fault which could easily have been eliminated had counting officers been employed. This failure to establish an accurate count has left the census wide open to critics who question the validity of the results. Added to this, Mann's failure to separate children from adults at any of the services is another charge against the census, although he does provide separate information on the number of Sunday scholars present.

The particular Sunday on which the census was taken 30th March was Mid-Lent or Mothering Sunday, having average, if not fine weather. However, attendances were probably lower than normal in certain parts of the country, Yorkshire in particular, because of the custom of visiting parent's homes on that day. It is unlikely though that such marginal factors would have made any appreciable differences to the calculations.

Having collected his information, Mann's task was to establish what proportion of the population had worshipped on that particular Sunday at any place of religious worship. The returns give the number of attendants at each service Morning, Afternoon and Evening but they do not distinguish between those who had attended twice or three times in the same day. Simply to total up the number of attendances would have implied that nearly eleven million people or 61% of the population had been present once at church or chapel; but those who did attend any one particular service were not nearly so numerous. Mann's method of calculating this number was as follows :-

"Firstly the numbers attending morning service were taken as a basis since it was clear that they were all separate individuals who could not yet have attended twice. Then it was asked how many of the afternoon attendants were not present anywhere at the morning service and ought therefore to be added as fresh worshippers, and it was supposed that one half of them were thus additional. Finally, similar question was put regarding the evening attendants and it was supposed that one third of them had not attended anywhere at either of the previous services and ought therefore to be considered as a further addition to new worshippers."

It will be seen that Mann adopted this process on the basis of a good deal of supposition for which he produces no concrete evidence and the validity of which can only be guessed at. It is clear however that this method was weighted considerably in favour of the Church of England owing to the fact that her main service of the day was generally regarded as the morning one while the same was not true for most of the Nonconformist chapels which had their highest attendances in the afternoon or the evening.

Nevertheless this was the plan and the calculation for the number of Church of England attendants was thus -

	Morning Service	Afternoon Service	Evening Service
Actual attendances	2,541,244	<u>1,890,764</u>	<u>860,543</u>
		2	3

This gives the total number of attendants, as distinct from attendances as - 3,773,474.

In so far as he wished to determine whether the accommodation provided for church goers was sufficient, Mann's next stage in processing the data was to take into account the actual number of sittings that might realistically be filled on any one Sunday. This involved an estimate of the number of people who would necessarily be absent from church, a figure which he put at approximately seven and a half million. Various estimates had been made previously as to what proportion of church accommodation there should be for the population. In the towns some thought 50% adequate, others thought 75% while all too often, churchmen and their critics simply counted the number of churches and sittings and compared them with the number of people in a given district, failing to take into account the age level of the population and the number of people incapacitated by illness or old age. Worried bishops often spoke as if there should be provision on a per capita basis for the entire population. On a more realistic level, the maximum thought necessary for rural districts was given as a lower proportion than that for the towns, the argument being that the distance of the church from people's homes acted as a check on attendance.

To arrive at his estimate of seven and a half million people who would always be away from church, Mann enumerated what he considered to be valid reasons for absence.

1) Young Children.

In 1851 the population of children under ten years of age in England and Wales was 4,440,466, while those under five years of age numbered 2,348,107. From these statistics it was estimated that three million children would always be absent from any place of worship.

2) Invalids and Aged Persons.

The estimated proportion of the population coming under this category was put at 7% taking into account not only those constantly sick and incapacitated by old age but also those suffering from minor indispositions. This reduced the church going population by a further one million.

3) Persons in charge of houses.

This group was included to cover those people necessarily left in charge of houses and those left in attendance upon categories one and two. To arrive at a figure of 3,278,039 Mann simply took the total number of inhabited houses in England and Wales, as given in the general census, and deducted one individual for each house as being engaged in household duties.

4) Persons employed on public conveyances.

It was estimated that the number of people in London alone, working on Sunday buses was 6,000. A further one quarter of a million deducted here to cover those employed on a Sunday brought the total to seven and a half million absentees.

Once again the assumptions used appear to be based more upon personal opinion than hard statistical evidence, and they account for a very large proportion of the population so that if incorrect they would seriously affect the validity of the results. Mann's conclusion was that church sittings could not be required for more than 10,427,609 people, or 58% of the population. This does not mean however that the remaining 42% were entirely without opportunity to attend church; most churches held more than one Sunday service and many who could not be present at one service did go to another,

this is particularly true of domestic servants where a system of relief often worked.

Returns from 31,943 places of worship gave an aggregate number of sittings of 9,467,738. 2,524 churches omitted to return their number of sittings, in these cases estimates were made and these added to the above figure gives the number of sittings reported to the census office as 10,212,563. When compared with the total number calculated as desirable - 10,398,013 - this shows the deficiency over the whole of England and Wales as 185,450 or for only 1.03% of the population. However, this taken as a national figure conceals the major factor of unequal distribution between districts. It was calculated that church accommodation within reasonably easy reach of those who wanted it was not available for more than 8,753,279 leaving an actual deficiency of 1,644,734 sittings. This situation was slightly worse than in 1801 although considerably better than it had been in 1820 and 1830.

The following table shows the amount of accommodation at different periods in the whole of England and Wales.

Periods	Population	No. of Places of Worship	Estimated No. of Sittings	Rate of Pop.	Increase of Sittings	No. of Sit. Per 100 People.
1801	8,892,536	15,080	5,171,123			58.1
1811	10,164,256	16,490	5,524,348	14.3	6.8	54.4
1821	12,000,236	18,796	6,094,486	18	10.3	50.8
1831	13,896,797	22,413	7,007,091	15.8	15	50.4
1841	15,914,148	28,017	8,554,636	14.5	22.5	53.8
1851	17,927,609	34,467	10,212,563	12.6	19.4	57

This deficiency was chiefly felt in the large and densely populated towns, rural districts in general, having adequate and sometimes superabundant provision. The following tables show the increase of accommodation at different periods in the large town districts - i.e. with populations of 10,000 and upwards - as compared with the remaining areas of England and Wales.

#### LARGE TOWNS

Periods	Population	No. of Places of Worship	Estimated No. of sittings	Rate of Pop.	Increase of Sittings	No. of Sit. Per 100 People.
1801	3,608,024	3,500	1,506,922			41.8
1811	4,260,848	3,805	1,638,240	18.1	8.7	38.5
1821	5,241,895	4,501	1,937,901	23	18.3	37
1831	6,435,953	5,670	2,441,213	22.8	26	38
1841	7,735,136	7,391	3,182,188	20.2	30.3	44.1
1851	9,229,120	9,586	4,127,244	19.3	29.7	44.7



## RESIDUE OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

11.

Periods	Population	No. of Places of Worship	Sittings	Rate of Pop.	Increase Sittings	No. of Sittings per 100 people.
1801	5,284,512	11,580	3,664,201			69.3
1811	5,903,408	12,685	3,886,108	11.7	6.1	65.8
1821	6,758,341	14,295	4,156,585	14.5	7	61.5
1831	7,460,844	16,743	4,565,878	10.4	9.8	61.2
1841	8,179,012	20,626	5,372,448	9.6	17.7	65.7
1851	8,698,489	24,881	6,085,319	6.3	13.3	70

The statistics show that the proportion of church accommodation available was in inverse ratio to the size of the town.

SIZE OF TOWN% PROPORTION OF SITTINGS.

10,000 - 20,000	66%
20,000 - 50,000	60%
50,000 - 100,000	47%
Over 100,000	34%

When these statistics of accommodation are broken down between the various denominations it will be seen that the Church of England possessed 5,317,915 sittings, just over one half the total number of sittings provided by all religious bodies, which was accommodation enough for 29.7% of the population. However the distribution of these seats was very uneven. While the population of large town areas (10,000 plus) was 9,229,120 the Church of England was providing only 1,995,729 seats, i.e. for 21%. In the remaining areas of England and Wales however, where the total population was 8,698,489 the Church of England had 3,322,186 seats i.e. provision for 40%. Only just over one million new sittings had been provided between 1801-1851 and the number of sittings in the Church of England per 100 persons had dropped from 48.2 in 1801 to the present 29.7.

In the aggregate, the Protestant Dissenting Churches, on the other hand provided accommodation in 1851 for 4,657,422 or 26% of the total population - this was 45.6% of the total number of sittings provided by all bodies.

The following table shows the proportion of accommodation provided by each religious body.

Denomination	Places of Worship	Sittings	% of Sittings.	
			To Population	To Total Number Provided by all Bodies.
Church of England	14,077	5,317,915	29.7	52.1
Independent	3,244	1,067,760	6	10.5
Baptist	2,789	752,343	4.3	7.4
Wesleyan Methodist	11,007	2,194,298	12.2	21.8



Denomination	Places of Worship	Sittings	% of Sittings.	
			To Population	To Total Number Provided by all Bodies.
Quakers	371	91,599	0.5	0.9
Unitarians	229	68,554	0.4	0.7
Moravians	32	9,305		0.1
Calvinist Methodists	937	250,678	1.4	2.5
Isolated Congregat- ions	627	124,981	.9	1.7
Roman Catholics	570	186,111	1	1.8
Latter Day Saints	222	30,783	0.2	0.3
Brethren	132	18,529	0.1	0.2

Since 1801 an additional 19,387 places of worship had been built, providing 5,041,440 sittings. The Dissenting congregations had been most active in providing these new sittings; of the 19,387 places of worship erected since 1801 16,689 belonged to the Dissenters and they accounted for 4,013,408 sittings most of which were in urban areas. Table 17 of the Census Report shows the rate of increase of the principal dissenting bodies.

Period	METHODISTS (ALL BRANCHES)			INDEPENDENTS			BAPTISTS		
	Places of Worship	Sittings	% Rate of Inc.	Places of Worship	Sitt. %	Rate of Inc.	Places of Worship	Sittings	Inc.
1801	825	165,000		914	299,792	-	652	176,692	-
1811	1,485	296,000	80	1,140	373,920	24.7	858	232,518	31.6
1821	2,748	549,600	85	1,478	484,784	29.2	1,170	317,070	36.4
1831	4,622	924,400	68.2	1,999	655,672	35.2	1,613	437,123	37.9
1841	7,819	1,563,800	69.2	2,606	854,768	30.4	2,174	589,154	34.7
1851	11,007	2,194,298	40.3	3,244	1,067,760	24.9	2,789	752,343	27.7

PROVISION OF FREE SEATS TO TOTAL.

	Total	Free	Proportion % Free to Total.
Methodists	2,194,298	1,066,312	48.6
Independents	1,067,760	438,211	41
Baptists	752,343	377,571	50.2

Over the same period of fifty years the rate of increase of provision by the Church of England was as follows :-

Period	Places of Worship	Sittings	% rate of increase	Period	Places of Worship	Sittings	% rate increase
1801	11,379	4,289,883	-	1831	11,883	4,481,891	2.9
1811	11,444	4,314,388	0.6	1841	12,668	4,775,836	6.6
1821	11,558	4,357,366	1	1851	14,077	5,317,915	11.3

In the towns overall provision had increased from 1801 - 1851 by 174% while in rural areas by only 66%. Despite this however, the proportion of accommodation to the population in the towns ( i.e. places with over 10,000 inhabitants ) had hardly changed, since in these areas the population had increased over the same period by 156%, while in rural areas by only 65%. The situation regarding religious accommodation in large towns in 1851 was thus -

Town	Population in 1851	Total Number of Sittings	Proportion % of Sittings to Population	Additional Seats required to accommodate 58% of Population
Bolton	61,171	21,801	35.6	13,678
Bradford	103,778	32,827	31.6	27,364
Bristol	137,328	72,516	52.8	7,134
Hull	84,690	37,413	44.2	11,707
Leeds	172,270	79,266	46	20,651
Liverpool	375,955	125,002	31.4	93,052
London (Metrop)	2,362,236	713,561	29.7	669,514
Manchester	303,382	95,929	31.6	80,033
Oldham	52,820	16,976	32.1	13,660
Sheffield	135,310	45,889	33.9	32,591
Southampton	35,305	17,959	50.9	2,518
Swansea	31,461	18,539	58.9	
York	36,303	23,650	65.1	

This shows clearly that it was in the industrial towns of the North and in London where church accommodation was most deficient. The needs of the population were best catered for in the old established cities such as Bristol and York and in the smaller towns which were not heavily industrialised such as Southampton and Swansea.

The correlation between size of parish and provision of religious accommodation can be seen from the following survey of parishes of various sizes taken indiscriminately from Kent and Norfolk, showing also the comparison between Church of England and Dissenting provision.

Size of Parish	Number of Parishes	Aggregate Population	Sittings Provided		Proportion % of Pop. Accommodated.		Total	Total
			C of E.	Dissent	C of E.	Diss.		
less than 100	52	3,269	4,606	220	4,826	141.3	6.7	148
100-500	423	118,046	69,508	29,310	89,818	58.8	18.1	76.9
500-1,000	186	119,870	58,441	26,454	84,895	48.7	22.1	70.8
1,000-2,000	97	128,910	55,652	29,537	85,189	43.2	22.9	66.1
2,000-5,000	46	137,808	30,618	20,165	50,783	22.2	14.6	36.8
5,000-10,000	28	198,656	44,653	51,899	96,552	22.5	26.1	48.6
	832	706,549	263,478	148,585	412,063	37.3	21	58.3

This not only shows the inverse ratio of accommodation to the size of the parish but also that the proportion of the population provided for by the Church of England decreases with size, while for Dissents, the opposite is the case.

Data for England and Wales taken as a whole shows that on Census Sunday the Church of England numbered 3,773,474 attenders. Methodists of all connexions accounted for 1,385,372. Baptists - 587,978. Independents - 793,142 Roman Catholics - 305,393 All other Churches 415,664. This gave a total number of church attenders on Census Sunday as 7,261,023 which represented 40 $\frac{1}{2}$ % of the population.

If 58% of the population or 10,427,609 were all able to attend church this meant that 3,166,586 people could be classed as non-worshippers. Obviously their distribution was not uniform over the country. The breakdown of the Census material into eleven Registration Divisions, forty-four counties, seventy three large towns and boroughs and six hundred and twenty-three Registration Districts or Poor Law Unions, make comparisons readily available.

With regard to England, if the statistics of attendance at all places of religious worship are broken down into the forty two counties the most striking conclusion to be drawn is that Church attendance was highest in those counties which were predominantly rural and which had been least influenced by either commerce, mining or manufacture.

The following table shows the percentage proportion of Church attenders to the total population in each county.

Bedfordshire	65	Rutland	46	Westmoreland	36
Huntingdonshire	61	Somerset	46	Herefordshire	35
Northamptonshire	57	Hampshire	45	West Riding	35
Buckinghamshire	56	Leicestershire	44	Cheshire	34
Dorset	56	Gloucestershire	44	Staffordshire	33
Wiltshire	56	Norfolk	41	Warwickshire	33
Cambridgeshire	54	Shropshire	41	Lancashire	31
Suffolk	54	North Riding	41	Surrey	29
Hertfordshire	50	Sussex	40	Northumberland	27
Essex	49	Lincolnshire	38	Cumberland	26
Oxfordshire	49	Kent	38	Durham	26
Berkshire	48	Worcestershire	38	Middlesex	26
Monmouthshire	47	East Riding	37		
Cornwall	46	Derbyshire	36		
Devon	46	Nottinghamshire	36		

Thus, while a large proportion of Surrey was still in 1851 agricultural, the religious average of the county as a whole was dragged down by the low figures of attendance returned for the southern portion of London which was populated by a large number of the outcast and poor. In Southwark for example, the non-worshipping element accounts for 68% of the population.

When these statistics are further broken down between the denominations it becomes apparent that the injury of one religious body did not necessarily contribute to the success of another. Taking the counties - of the twenty-two places which show a high percentage of Church of England attenders thirteen of these also show a high percentage of Dissenters, while Surrey and Middlesex come very low on the scales for both Churchmen and Dissenters. Much more would seem to depend upon the moral and religious tone of any particular place than on the success of one denomination over another.



Table is to show those counties with the highest and lowest percentages of Church of England attenders out of total number of attenders.

County	Highest % of C. of E. Attenders	County	Lowest % of C. of E. Attenders
Suffolk	63.8	Durham	21
Wiltshire	63	Surrey	19
Northamptonshire	63	North Wales	18
Buckinghamshire	62		
Rutland	61		
Hertfordshire	61		

Table to show those counties with highest and lowest percentages of Nonconformist attenders.

County	Highest % of Nonconformist	County	Lowest % of Nonconformists
South Wales	69	Warwickshire	19
North Wales	57.7	Cumberland	16
Monmouthshire	55.5	Herefordshire	16
Cambridgeshire	46	Middlesex	15
Huntingdonshire	45.5	Surrey	15
		Westmoreland	12

In the large towns religious attendance for all denominations was low.

Town	Total Population	Number of places of Worship	NUMBER OF SITTINGS			Worshipping Pop. as % of total Population
			Free	Appropriated	Total	
Bethnal Green	90,193	41	13,232	6,071	22,613	6.6
Birmingham	173,951	70	25,441	28,646	53,987	26
Bolton	114,712	92	14,793	24,751	41,904	28
Bradford	181,964	159	23,115	46,629	72,360	32
Bristol	65,716	68	19,564	20,463	42,177	48
Carlisle	41,557	54	7,007	5,354	16,925	-24
Durham	55,951	91	9,791	7,687	18,838	25
Gloucester	32,045	52	5,704	5,178	14,719	39
Manchester	228,433	106	29,904	45,913	75,817	26
Nottingham	58,419	38	11,624	16,163	28,487	39
Sheffield	103,626	62	12,250	23,863	36,863	25
Shoreditch	109,257	35	9,383	8,431	18,489	12
Stockport	90,208	82	16,162	21,867	38,859	31
Stoke on Trent	57,942	54	11,888	16,685	28,573	25
Wigan	77,539	65	8,797	13,539	24,186	32

The population figures given here refer to the Registration Districts and not strictly to the parishes or parliamentary boroughs.



If most people in the large towns were not enticed to worship with any congregation, of those who did, most preferred nonconformity. A survey of the twenty - nine largest manufacturing towns indicates that, in all but three ( Halifax, Kidderminster and Warrington ) Church of England worshippers were in the minority. In twenty of these towns Nonconformists alone comprised the church-going majority and in six others Roman Catholic attendances combined with those of the Dissenters, sufficed to keep the National Church in the minority (1)

In the small towns and rural areas, particularly in the Southern Counties, where religion in general was most favourably received the Church of England was much more successful. It has been estimated that on the basis of adding all the attendances and expressing them as a percentage of the total population, in rural areas slightly more than 71% attended Anglican Services as compared to an average index of 50% in towns of more than 10,000 people (2)

The following sample of rural parishes indicates the comparative strength of the Church of England among small populations.

County	Parish	Total Population	Adult Pop. over 15 yrs.	% of adult at all places of worship	% Adults at C. of E.
Sussex	Slindon	599	378	91	64
	Bosham	1,126	706	72	69
Oxfordshire	Shorthampton	309	183	55	100
	Shipton	2,958	1,806	86	66
	Steeple Aston	702	441	36	100
	Bladon	720	454	64	69
Suffolk	Exning	1,556	967	100	89
	Swaffham Prior	1,027	638	84	56
Dorset	Charminster	905	585	66	84
	Cerne Abbas	1,343	871	78	56
Wiltshire	Cricklade	1,906	1,178	63	64
	Purton	2,087	1,296	61	59
Somerset	Shipham	610	384	31	50
	Blagdon	1,128	712	75	53
Durham	Easington	7,062	4,236	24	43
	Painshaw	2,120	1,272	43	40
Lancashire	Sharples	3,904	2,849	17	60
	Horwich	3,952	2,814	35	64
Northumberland	Stennington	1,000	600	18	63
	Gosforth	2,319	1,508	35	60

(1) K.S. Inglis - 'Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851' - The Journal of Ecclesiastical History XI April 1960 P. 80.

(2) R.A. Soloway - Prelates and People ( 1969 ) P. 437.

The seven million people who attended church on Census Sunday were divided almost equally between Anglicans and Nonconformists, to the despair of the Church of England and the delight of the sects, but more important than these comparisons was the overwhelming evidence that a quarter of the population was not present in either church or chapel; a fact which was viewed with alarm by all denominations. Furthermore the greater proportion of this group was made up by the working classes particularly in the cities and large towns where an 'absolutely insignificant proportion of the congregations was composed of artisans'. Religious feeling among the labouring population was said to amount to a negative, inert, indifference; they were 'Unconscious Secularists' ignorant or careless of the future. Reasons for this indifference, were according to Horace Mann, the maintenance of class distinctions within places of worship which provided a mental and physical barrier between rich and poor; the indifference of the churches to the social condition of the poor; the misconception by working people of the motives of religious ministers, and the conditions of poverty and overcrowding under which the majority of the working classes lived. The extent of these factors and their relative importance can best be assessed by examining the social and economic structure of a variety of working class parishes together with their general response to religious worship.

AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES.(1) WEDMORE - SOMERSET

The Parish of Wedmore lies between the valleys of the rivers Brue and Axe in central Somersetshire. During the first half of the Nineteenth Century the greater part of its population was engaged in agriculture. A statement compiled by the overseers of the parish in 1831 (1) (When the total population was 3,557) shows that there were 701 houses, occupied by 724 families, 572 of whom earned their livings from the land, while a further 131 families were engaged in trade. This report also shows that there were 513 labourers in the parish, 92 male and 147 female servants and thirteen who were classified under the heading of wholesale merchants, capitalists, bankers or professionals.

The population of the parish steadily increased during the first four decades of the Nineteenth Century from 2,122 in 1801 to a peak of 3,995 in 1841 (2) At the time of the religious census the total population was 3,905.

Evidence is not wanting to prove the poverty of this population, or that in the early years of the Nineteenth Century the Overseers' anxiety to placate the ratepayers frequently resulted in their refusal of assistance to people by whom it was desperately needed. During the first thirty-five years of the Century the Overseers of the Poor carried on the difficult and thankless task of relieving the parish poor while endeavouring to keep the rates at a sufficiently low level to satisfy the most grudging of ratepayers. In addition to the regular allowance of 3/- to 3/6d weekly to adults and 1/6d to 2/- for children, for which the total bill for the parish was £5 per week, payments were also made to people temporarily too ill to work, to the Doctors and nurses who attended them and, when the illness proved fatal to the coffin makers and others concerned with the funeral. To the most necessitous of the poor, coal, peat, clothing and occasionally potatoes were supplied.

Conditions of poverty were mainly due to the prevalence of very low wages which, in most cases were inadequate for the support of the average labourer's family. The 1834 Report of the Poor Law Commissioners (3) showed that, on the whole it was only possible for a family to be maintained on average wages if they lived on the cheapest food and then only provided they were excellent managers and escaped sickness. It was quite exceptional in Somerset for a labourer to own the cottage in which he lived, or to be in a position to rent a piece of land or keep a pig.

The misery of the population had come to a head in the winter of 1830-31 when farmers were threatened with rioting, rick - burning, and the destruction of their threshing machines. With the reform of the Poor Law in 1834 some of the worst evils of the old system of dealing with poverty were swept away but a good deal had still to be done to improve the condition of the agricultural labourer.

(1) W. Marston Acres - A Brief History of Wedmore (1954) P. 58.

(2) The Census of Great Britain 1801-1851

(3) Report from His Majesty's Commissioners for inquiring into the

Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws 1834 (44) XXV11. 1.



Under the Poor Law Amendment Act Wedmore was joined with the Thirty-seven other parishes, in the Axbridge Union from 28th January 1836; Wedmore was the largest parish of the group and the only one to have three guardians. In June 1836 there were one hundred and twenty three Wedmore people in the Union Workhouse and by March 1837 this figure had risen to one hundred and fifty-nine. (1)

In 1842-43 an average labourer's wage in Somerset was 8/6d per week with a daily allowance of three pints of cider. "In the part of Somerset I visited, the average wages during the whole year, paid in money, appears to be rather lower than in Wiltshire, but the labourer has an allowance of cider, considered by both master and labourer as worth about 1/- to 1/3d per week; but in this county generally I believe the labourer has few or no advantages in addition to his wages and probably, were the case accurately investigated it would be found that in Somerset the labourer is worse off than in Wiltshire and considerably worse off than in Dorset and Devon." (2)

Though, in Somerset, women were employed less in agricultural work than in Dorset, the work they did ~~do~~ gave them 7d to 9d per day, plus two pints of cider. In summer they were employed in weeding, haymaking and potato planting, in autumn they did lighter harvest work and in the winter they took up the roots and cleaned the land. In the Summer their hours were from 8 - o - clock until six and in winter from 8 - o - clock until four. This outdoor work was said to have a beneficial effect upon their physical condition although other reports stated that women and young people were often intoxicated with cider by the end of the day. (3)

Average wages in the South and West of England were, at this time 37% lower than in the coal-fields of the Midlands. While wages in Lancashire had almost doubled since 1750, in the South they had been practically stationary, though meat was 80% dearer and wool and butter had doubled in price. (4)

The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 gradually led to great agricultural depression in the county and the conversion of arable land to pasture meant a falling demand for labour which further added to the sufferings of the poor. Overcrowding in living conditions was commonplace; James Caird stated that in 1851 the usual type of cottage found in Somerset had only one bedroom and that, in one instance, as many as twenty-nine people were found living together. (5) With these prevailing conditions it is hardly surprising that a very low state of morality was said to exist, with drunkenness being widespread.

(1) W. Marston Acres - Op. Cit. P. 60.

(2) Report of the Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture 1843 (510) Xll. 1.

(3) Ibid.

(4) J. Caird - English Agricultural in 1850 - 51 (1852) P. 510.

(5) Ibid. P. 246.



The Vestry Minutes of Wedmore show that the emigration of poor persons was encouraged. (1) In 1842 it was agreed that £20. should be paid, out of the Poor Rate, to defray the expenses of James Reeves with his wife and family to Canada and that £25. should be paid from the same source as a contribution for defraying the expenses of poor persons, having settlements in the parish and being willing to emigrate. In 1850 the matter came up again when a rate of threepence in the pound was proposed for raising money to assist emigrants, but was postponed as on a show of hands there was an equal vote!

As regards the education of children, the Churchwardens' Accounts for 1707 show that there was then a school in existence. The efforts of Hannah More and her sister to establish Sunday and Day Schools in the Mendip villages, which began in 1789 with the opening of a school in Cheddar, met with violent opposition from local farmers and other employers of labour. One man assured the sisters that religion would be the ruin of agriculture, while another told them that they should not come to make his ploughman wiser than himself: he did not want saints but workmen. (2)

Nevertheless the Misses More opened a school in Pilcorn Street, Wedmore in 1799. Fierce opposition to its establishment was aroused and at a meeting of the vestry on 18th August 1799, at which the vicar, curate and churchwardens were present it was resolved :-

"That the school in this parish, erected and supported by subscription through the hands of Miss More is offensive to us as being the meeting-place for people who are not respectful to the regular ministry of the Church. We do not approve of such schools as having, in our opinion, the doubtful if not dangerous tendency of innovation. The care of the poor youth of this parish is ours and we meet again upon, a, plan of a school for them at our own expense", (3) The savage and depraved farmers (as Miss More described them) then presented a petition to the Dean of Wells asking that Miss More's school be suppressed and notice was given out in church that a parish school would be opened on the following Sunday and if the children did not attend it 'the parish officers should be upon them.' This shows once again the Church of England being goaded into action, not by its own initiative but by the fear aroused when other agencies attempted to exercise those rights which hitherto had been exclusively Church'property! The objectors however, were obviously not very successful; in 1800 Martha More reported that the school was not as full as we could wish, yet some appearance of improvements 'but added'but the parish as depraved and shocking as ever! (4)

The educational situation in the village continued to improve throughout the first half of the nineteenth Century but progress was hampered by the fact that children were usually taken away from school in the harvest and potato seasons. The 1843 Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture shows that in Somerset the majority of parishes then had a day school in which a considerable number of children of

(1) W. Marston Acres - Op. Cit. P. 68

(2) Hannah More - 'Letter to a friend' 1792 in B. Johnson Ed. The Letters of Hannah More (1925)

(3) W. Marston Acres - Op. Cit. P. 49.

(4) Hannah More - 'Letter to Wilberforce' in B. Johnson Op. Cit. P. 178.

both sexes of the labouring class were taught reading, writing and sometimes a little arithmetic. (1) The report also gives great credit to the Sunday Schools which, with very few exceptions, were in every parish, and in which reading and sometimes a little writing were taught although their principal object was instruction in religious duties.

Church life during the eighteenth Century would not seem to have been very vigorous since most of the vicars were non-resident and the parish was left to the care of curates. Services in Wedmore Church were few in number and, for the most part monotonous and unrelieved by music. There was some improvement however, in 1811 when the Rev. John Richards, who already held a living in Bath, was also appointed vicar of Wedmore. He delegated his Wedmore duties to a resident curate and directed him to conduct an afternoon service each Sunday. This arrangement continued until Richard's death in 1825 but following the appointment of the Rev. John Kempthorne to the vicarage in 1827 further changes took place. Almost immediately evening services were started and in 1828 a barrel-organ, on which psalm tunes were played, was placed in the gallery of the church, though many parishoners protested at these innovations. (2)

As the population steadily increased, so too did the need for additional church accommodation. The Rev. John Richards took the initiative for providing this by building Chapels-of-ease in the hamlets of Blackford and Theale, at the western and eastern boundaries of the parish.

It is probable that the small Wesleyan Chapel then in existence was built towards the end of the Eighteenth Century. As the number of members increased, a larger building became necessary and in 1817 the present chapel was built. The old chapel was then sold for £105 to the Church of England trustees and from 1820 onwards this was used as a church Day and Sunday School. (3)

There was a congregation of Anabaptists in Wedmore as early as 1656 and 1709 William Sprake converted a house on Clayhill into a meeting place for them. In 1775 his son granted the house to Baptist trustees and the present chapel was probably built about that time.

Among notable residents of Wedmore in the Nineteenth Century was the Rev. William White who, appointed in 1828, was the first incumbent of Theale Church. He was encouraged by a gradual increase in attendance at Sunday services and also by the success of the Sunday School, but at the same time was very much disturbed by the annual 'Revel' held in the village, which gave rise to much drunkenness and fighting. In June 1829 he issued a printed address condemning the revels as being under the devil's patronage and referred in particular to a dreadful amusement called backwood - playing in which men were encouraged to break each other's heads!

- (1) Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture Op. Cit. P. 36.
- (2) W. Marston Acres - Op. Cit. P. 64
- (3) Ibid. P. 58.

In the following year he issued another address expressing the hope that the ancient but sinful custom of revelling might be swept away. His efforts were not without avail since the revel was held for the last time on June 18th 1830.(1)

The religious condition of Somerset in general is discussed in the 1843 Commissioners report. Dissenters were very few in the county and attendance at church was held to depend very much upon individual clergymen in each parish." Where attention is paid by the clergyman or minister to the labourers ( which is now nearly always the case) their attendance once in the day is tolerably constant." In this respect a change appears to have taken place in the preceding few years and it was stated that nearly everywhere the clergy were taking a part in attempting to improve the condition of the labouring population.

Although there is no direct evidence relating to Wedmore, it seems likely that the parish did not entirely escape the influence of the Temperance Movement which was very active in Somerset in the late 1830's and throughout the 1840's. (2) The first temperance missionary journey to the West of England was undertaken in 1836 by James Teare, a Manx bootmaker. During twelve months he travelled 8,000 miles held four hundred meetings and carried the message as far south as Devon. Somerset at first proved very unwelcoming; at Taunton the Wesleyans provided the use of their chapel but the landlords and moderation people kicked up a row, broke the pews and pulled the hat pins out of the wall and threw them on the platform." At Street, Teare was attacked so violently that two of those responsible were sent to the treadmill for six weeks and two others were fined £3 each. However, despite initial opposition temperance societies sprang up all over the West Country. In the 1840's, at the height of the railway boom, a popular West Country speaker was Samuel Garnett' the teetotal navy'. Joseph Eaton an iron merchant from Bristol was another well-known temperance orator and a popular Somerset 'double act' were an elderly couple of Primitive Methodists from Nunney, near Frome. (3) The Bristol pioneers, being town-dwellers were often accused at village meetings of knowing nothing about country life. At first, until teetotal farm labourers were available as speakers, they were constantly assailed by the questions - " If it be wrong to drink beer and cider what did the almighty send Barley and apples for?" and " How can a fellow do a day's mowing or reaping without a gallon of cider or beer?". Despite the goadings by temperance people to 'sign the pledge' the three pints of cider daily continued to be a part of the labourers wages and the reports of appalling drunkenness continued well into the 40's. One observer of the Somerset population in the Nineteenth Century after noting the wretched conditions came to the conclusion that there was not the least desire on the part of the poor labourers to raise themselves from their abject position. (4).

(1) Ibid. P. 60.

(2) N. Longmate - The Waterdrinkers ( 1968) P. 43

(3) Ibid.

(4) F.G.Heath- The Romance of Peasant Life in the West of England (1872) P. 21.



They were apathetic because for so many generations they had been oppressed and downtrodden to such an extent as to have lost even the desire to ameliorate their condition.

The results of the religious census show that of that part of the population over the age of fifteen (2,342) 53% were present once at either Church or Chapel on Census Sunday.

The total number of sittings provided by the Church of England, Wesleyans and Baptists together amounted to 2,135 i.e. accommodation was available for 91% of the adult population. Lack of provision therefore is not a reason open to us when explaining the abstinence of 47% from worship. Of the 2,135 sittings provided, 1,628 or 76% of them were free.

The Church of England, with three places of worship in the parish provided sittings for 1,284, or in other words, for 55% of the adult population or 33% of the total population, when according to the Church's own estimates, the ideal proportion of her provision to total population should be around 60%. However, 82% of the Church's accommodation was recorded as free, the Parish Church being entirely free; half the seats at Theale Chapel-of-ease were free and similarly, two thirds of those at Blackford Chapel-of-ease.

The single Wesleyan chapel provided for 356, i.e. 15% of the adult population; just over half of these seats (184) were free.

The Baptist community which comprised three chapels within the parish provided 495 sittings, accommodation for 21% of the adult population with just over three-quarters of these (390) being free.

The following returns present the statistics of attendances.

Denomination	Name of Church	Built	Free seats	Others	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
		before					
C. of E.	St. Mary's	1800	700	-	201	93	-
	Christ Church						
	Theale.	1827	124	130	151	-	200
	Holy Trinity						
	Blackford.	1823	230	100	160	-	220
			1054	230	512	93	420
Wesleyans	Wesleyan Chapel	1817	184	172	-	190	250
		before					
Baptist	Baptist Chapel	1800	200	-	40	-	45
	Cuckham Chapel	1841	100	100	-	106	-
	Cluer Chapel	1820	90	5	-	7	-
			390	105	40	113	45

The percentage of the population who were thus church attenders was divided among the three denominations with 61% worshipping at the Church of England, 25% at the Wesleyan Chapel and 15% at the Baptist Chapels.

(2) EXNING - SUFFOLK.

The parish of Exning is situated in the western extremity of the county of Suffolk, two miles North-East of Newmarket, eleven miles from Ely and fourteen miles from Cambridge. An agricultural parish, the 1851 Census returns mark it as one of the most devout communities in the country, where all the adult members of the population appear to have been present at at least one religious service held on that particular Sunday. Nor was Exning an isolated case, since returns for the whole county show that Suffolk was among the top eight counties having the highest proportion of religious attenders. 54% of the entire Suffolk population were recorded as present at either Church or Chapel.

The total population of Exning in 1851 was 1,556 of whom 967 were over the age of fifteen years. 1,170 attendances were returned which, if we use Horace Mann's method of weighting, would account for 1,016 attenders, although in reality this figure may have been slightly reduced owing to the imprecise return for the afternoon service at the Parish Church. The Church was reported to be full but as there was no actual counting of heads it is impossible to tell whether in fact every one of the six hundred and fifty seats provided was occupied, or whether, as seems more likely, this was a vague description not allowing for vacant seats here and there. Nevertheless, the overall picture is one of great attention to public worship, a phenomenon which in the mid Nineteenth Century was not altogether remarkable, being found in many isolated country parishes, particularly in the Southern agricultural counties which were far away from the great centres of industry.

The social and economic conditions of Suffolk labourers however, were by no means idyllic; during the Nineteenth Century they endured the recurrent crises and depressions through which farming passed and suffered much insecurity and poverty, depression being relieved by only short bright intervals.

The post-war crisis following on the fall in grain prices was accentuated in Suffolk by the disappearance at the same time of the home-spinning industry which had provided work for many women and was an important source of supplementary income.(1) The continued depression of agriculture in the 1820's led some farmers to abandon their farms altogether for want of means to pay the rates, while others were so destitute of capital that they were unable to stock their farms and entered into agreements with stock dealers who supplied the cattle and received them back again when fat. The labourers inevitably felt the brunt of these hardships and in the late 1820's and early 1830's the problems of poor relief were coming to a head. Costs had begun to rise as more and more outdoor relief was given, a trend which was aggravated by the new system whereby the parishes in each hundred contributed to the cost of poor relief according to the numbers they sent to the Union workhouse. Previously each parish had paid a fixed sum regardless of how many they sent but the incentive now was to keep the numbers low; parish

(1) Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children In Agricultural 1843 (510) XI. 1.

officials were tempted to grant more outdoor relief and ultimately the cost to the parish rose while the workhouses were neglected. The high rate of unemployment at this time explains why emigration from Suffolk began so early; in the 1830's labourers were already moving northwards and to America whereas in other Eastern and Midland counties this movement did not begin until much later.

In many cases the labourer's plight was worsened by his separation from his employer which came about as an indirect result of the class structure and lay-out of Suffolk villages; The distinction must be drawn here between 'open' and 'closed' parishes since the consequences of each for the labouring population were very different. A closed parish was usually part of a large estate and owned entirely by one landlord who besides influencing almost every aspect of a labourer's life, regulated migration into the village. As a landlord and farmer it was in his interests to limit the number of tenant farmers and hence also the number of labourers finding employment in the parish who might later become a charge on the poor rates. Once inside the parish however conditions for the working population were generally much better than in open parishes where there was no effective form of control.

" On estates such as the Duke of Graftons, the Marquis of Bristol's and Lord Cadogan's, the cottages are well built, are kept in excellent repair and are provided with good gardens, sheds, outhouses, closets and wells and are often let for £2.10.0d or £3.10.0d. I visited the cottages belonging to Mr. Manfield, a large farmer in Ixworth Thorpe, and there was a great contrast between them and those in Ixworth which is a large 'open' village about a mile and a half distant. Mr. Manfield's cottages are built of brick with tiled or slated roofs, and each contained a large sitting-room, three bedrooms, a pantry, a scullery and a bakehouse, and are provided with an outhouse, a closet and a well and a quarter acre garden. The rent of these cottages is £3 a year and some of the occupants are able to pay it out of the profits they make from the apple and other fruit trees in the gardens". (1)

However these were the exception rather than the rule in Suffolk where, since Anglo-Saxon times there had been a high proportion of freeholders. In villages where there was no resident manorial lord these people were the ruling members, but they were too many to be effective and the parishes grew in size without hindrance. Instead of settlers being deterred from moving into the parish the opposite was the case, since local tradesmen and small holders found it extremely profitable to become petty landlords buying up old and often almost derelict cottages for £50 and letting them to labourers at an annual rent of between three and five guineas. House purchase was considered one of the most rewarding forms of investment for village people with a small amount of capital.

"In the open villages, the cottages are constantly owned by small tradesmen who have bought the property as an investment, men without means to carry out improvements or to effect necessary repairs and whose one object

(1) The Report of the Royal Commission on Labour 1893 XXXV pp. 35-5



is to get as high a rent as possible. This class of property is frequently mortgaged, and in some instances there is no margin available for outlay even if the owner has the desire to improve it. The condition of these cottages is often deplorable. In many instances the bedrooms let in rain and wind. In others the ceilings are so low, sometimes little over five and a half feet that it is impossible to stand upright, while the windows are often only a foot or two square. In cottages with two bedrooms, one is frequently little better than a passage and many have no light or ventilation except through the door of the adjoining apartment which generally has several occupants." (1)

The other significant consequence of the open parish for the agricultural labourer was that he lived out of sight of his employer, usually walking from the village to his work on a nearby farm and in no way sharing any part of the farmer's domestic life. This estrangement and consequent polarisation of feeling into labourers on the one hand versus employers on the other may help to explain the rapid increase of trade unionism in the county after 1872.

If we look at the evidence of Mr. Frederick Clifford 'The Times' Commissioner, writing about the agricultural lock-out in 1874 (2) It appears that Exning was a good example of a 'mixed' village having - "Sixteen to twenty decent respectable cottages built by the squire with two bedrooms overhead, a comfortable sitting-room downstairs, a nice bit of garden and common offices in the rear including ovens for bread making. But these were aristocratic mansions compared with some others in the village. Many cottages have but one bedroom. I visited one such cottage in which father, mother and six children were compelled to herd together - one a grown-up daughter. The man said he had asked his landlord to put up a partition and make another window, but in vain. In another case the woman said they had put the children upstairs and she and her husband had slept in a bed on the brick floor below until the bottom board of the bed had fallen to pieces from damp, and then they had to go among the children again. The Sanitary inspector visits these dwellings occasionally to prevent overcrowding but the difficulty is for the poor to find other cottages, even when they are inclined to pay more rent. Some of the worst of these cottages belong to small occupiers; some are mortgaged up to the hilt and the owners often can afford neither to rebuild or repair. It is a hard thing again, for the sanitary inspector to pronounce a cottage unfit for human habitation, when no better-perhaps literally no other- can be had for the family."

As far as wages were concerned, in Suffolk they were actually lower than they had been in 1770 although the reduction in the price of food-stuffs was almost equivalent to the fall in wages. According to Arthur Young, the average wage in the years 1767-1770 was 7/11d per week; at the turn of the century it was 10/- and in 1851 it was between 7/- and 8/-. The decline

(1) Ibid. pp. 35-6

(2) F. Clifford - The Agricultural Lockout 1874 in J. Thirsk & J. Inray Suffolk Farming in the Nineteenth Century Suffolk Records Society (1958) P. 150.

in food prices meant that, had it not been for the high cottage rents which remained unchanged, the overall economic position of the labourer would have been little affected.

Below, the prices of food-stuffs in 1851 are compared with those of 1800, although it should be remembered that prices in this year were higher than usual.

	1851	1800
1 stone flour	1s 10d	2s 6d
1/2 lb. butter	6d	8d
1 lb. cheese	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> d	10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> d
1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> ozs. tea	4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> d	6d
1/2lb. sugar	2	2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> d
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	3s 6d	4s 9d
Rent of Cottage	2 -	2 -
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Weekly Wage	5 6d	6 9d
	8 -	10 -
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Balance for Sundries	2 6d	3 3d

The work of women and children was therefore very important in order to supplement such small wages. The 1843 Report on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture shows that in Suffolk the average wage for women was 8d, while children, who were employed at a very early age, received 2d or 3d rising to a maximum of 5d or 6d. The Report also gives an example of one Suffolk family, consisting of man and wife and five boys, in which the weekly income amounted to 13/9d. Only 9s of this was earned by the father and the wife contributed only 9d, while three of the boys aged twelve, eleven and eight years earned 2s, 1s and 1s respectively.

Besides stretching wages to cover the necessaries of life, in most Suffolk villages there was a benefit club which, for the labourer who joined, meant an additional 1s-6d per month for the subscription. Many of these village benefit societies were on a very precarious financial basis, a situation which in the 1870's alarmed many of the gentry and led to the establishment of a single Suffolk Provident Society in 1875. Meanwhile the club at Exning had been forced to close owing to financial difficulties, which for many villagers meant the loss of all they had ever saved. Frederick Clifford reported the following conversation in Exning between a farmer and one of his employees. "How old are you John?" "Sixty-one next birthday Master". "How many children have you had?" "Twelve- nine living." "You have always kept them without help from the parish?" "Yes Thank God; I never had a penny from the parish in my life." The man, as I afterwards found, had received a small money prize from the village Agricultural Society for bringing up a large family without parochial relief. "How long did you subscribe to that benefit club of yours John?" - "Nigh upon five and thirty years." "It's gone now, has it not?" - "Ah, yes! That was a bitter bad job, surely!" This poor man - happily still hale and

strong - had paid into the club 1/6d a month out of his hard earnings - by what extraordinary thrift and self denial one may easily imagine with his large family - and now all was lost. The club had 'broke up' but that said my companion is the history of three-fourths of the benefit clubs about here". (1)

In conclusion, the labourers of Suffolk in general, and Exning in particular suffered the same fluctuations of fortune common to all agricultural populations in the first half, of the Nineteenth Century although conditions in the 'closed' parishes appear to have been more stable than in 'open' parishes where labourers were often at the mercy of speculating and unscrupulous free-holders. Exning is peculiar in that it exhibited the good and bad features of both systems, being not an entirely closed village but having a squire who was responsible for the living and working conditions of perhaps half the population. Other than this, there were no special circumstances that might have explained why so many attended religious service on Census Sunday. It is probable that the power of the squire alone was a major factor, since he would be likely to influence not only those who were directly dependent upon him for employment but also those who were indirectly dependent upon his patronage and goodwill such as local tradesmen and craftsmen.

In the countryside the habit of deference to the landed gentry, practised for so many centuries was firmly rooted and very slow to disappear. For those who had been brought up by the Church to believe that the existing social order was God-given and unalterable, this was an automatic process about which they never thought, while others who did think about it, clearly felt that it was in their own best interests to conform. The relatively small amount of support raised for the Methodist Church in the parish - only 11% of the total church-going population - would further suggest that this pressure to conform was a significant factor. As the chapel was well-established in the village, having been built in 1820, by 1851 its presence was no novelty to the population and so it would be unlikely to increase its membership further by any large degree.

The census returns for the whole country show that the Church of England was at her strongest and most effective in small rural parishes and that, among these populations, all forms of Nonconformity made relatively little headway even at the even at the height of the Eighteenth Century Revival.

The statistics of worship in Exning on Census Sunday are as follows:-

Denomination	Name of Church	Built	Free Seats	Others	ATTENDANCES		
					Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Church of England	St. Martin's	before 1800	650	-	60	Full	-
	Union House	?	?	?	-	250	-
Wesleyan Methodist	Wesleyan Chapel	1820	100	100	40	60	110

(1) F. Clifford - The Agricultural Lockout 1874 Op. Cit. P. 151.



(1) BOLTON.

The town of Bolton was described by Engels in 1844 as being little more than a huge working-class community being completely industrialised and with all its commercial affairs being transacted in Manchester. (1) The only parts of the town not given over to housing the workers were the factory buildings, some main streets lined with shops and a few semi-rural lanes where the factory owners had their villas and gardens. Situated eleven miles North-West of Manchester, it was a gloomy unattractive hole even on a fine day and despite the fact that the houses had only one or two stories.

The growth of Bolton and the several other large towns of South Lancashire was the result of the rapid expansion of the cotton industry in the last part of the Eighteenth Century and the early decades of the Nineteenth. By far the most striking change in the scale of organisation during the Industrial Revolution took place in the large and well established group of textile industries and the process of innovation which was crowded into a relatively short span of years had profound effects not only upon the British Economy but also upon the social life of those drawn into its clutches.

In 1838 the two separate parishes of Great Bolton and Little Bolton were united and the charter of incorporation transformed them into a borough. At this time the total population was 43,396 and of this, 23,257 people were reported to be employed in work connected with the textile trade. 11,961 were employed in the cotton factories, 2,000 in print works, 500 in bleach works, 968 as counterpane weavers, 4,300 as handloom weavers and 528 in the flax mills. (2)

The conditions of the factory workers have been described at length both by Dr. Andrew Ure and by Edward Baines (3) but the state of those who were working in the smaller branches of the industry and particularly the outworkers is more difficult to assess. According to Baines the smiths, mechanics, joiners, bricklayers, masons and other artisans employed in the construction of buildings for the cotton industry were earning excellent wages, working moderate hours, and in general, were enjoying a much higher standard of living than ever before. Those employed to tend the machinery were also well paid and their hours of work were limited by law to twelve per day and nine on Saturday. The average weekly wage of a male operative was approximately twenty-one shillings. On the other hand, the hand-loom weavers employed in making plain goods were said to be in a deplorable condition both in the large towns and in their surrounding villages; their wages were a miserable pittance for work done in confined and unwholesome dwellings. These men were working fourteen hours and upwards daily and after a week's work, earning only from five to seven shillings. (4)

(1) F. Engels - The Condition of the Working-Class in England, 1844.

(2) J.L. & B. Hammond - The Age of The Chartists - 1832-1854 (1930) P.80.

(3) A. Ure - The Philosophy of Manufactures (1835) Book The Third.

Edward Baines - History of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain (1835) Chapter XVI.

(4) Edward Baines - Op. Cit. Chap. XVI.

Mr. John Makin, a manufacturer of Bolton stated before the Committee of the Commons on Handloom Weavers in 1834 that a weaver of the kind of cambric generally produced by his firm, could only weave one piece in a week, the gross wages for which were 5/6d subject to a deduction of about 1/4d. Dr. Kay described the hand-loom weavers as "ill-fed, ill-clothed, half-sheltered and ignorant, weaving in close damp cellars or crowded ill ventilated workshops - it only remains that they should become, as is too frequently the case, demoralised and reckless, to render perfect the portraiture of savage life." In 1818 the weavers had broken out in riots in Bolton as well as in Manchester, Bury and Burnley and there were also outbreaks of Luddism; these died down in the 20's but from 1820-1840 the overall condition of the weavers continued to deteriorate.

"The houses of the labouring population of Bolton, described by Dr. James Black in 1837 were 'mostly all built of brick and covered with blue slate. If the house is that of an artisan the cellar is for his work tools, the first floor for his kitchen and eating room, and the upper storey for the sleeping apartments. In other houses a labourer or common operative inhabits the cellar while the upper storeys are occupied by an operative spinner or other respectable mechanic. (1)

In 1845 there were 1,210 cellar dwellings accomodating 4,961 and the sanitary conditions of the town were described as deplorable. " The sewers of Bolton empty themselves into the small rivers which wind sluggishly through the town and yield to the air in their passage, the most offensive emanations!"(2)

While in some instances the mill-owners were reported as having shown an earnest desire to promote the welfare of their employees by providing schools, libraries, baths etc. (3) the town as a whole was still very deficient in its amenities; although in the view of Edward Baines these disadvantages were counter-balanced by definite advantages accruing to large towns in general. " There are certain evils affecting the health and morals of the working classes which belong to large towns generally and not to this manufacture in particular. There are also advantages in large towns, especially in the facility of obtaining religious and general instruction which go far to counterbalance the evils. Those very places also furnish the means of intellectual, moral and social improvement in much greater abundance than districts where the population is more scattered!"(4) The substance of these remarks however was hardly verified by the facts.

Before the 1840's facilities for education among working class children in Bolton were practically non-existent. A statement by E. Ashworth who read a paper at a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in Liverpool in 1837 entitled " The State of Education in Great and Little Bolton in 1837" revealed that out of a population of 43,396, only 2,565 were receiving formal education.

While giving credit to the work of the Sunday Schools where reading and writing were taught, he maintained that the state of education in Bolton was lower than in any other manufacturing town in the United Kingdom.

- (1) H. Hamer - Bolton 1838 - 1938 (Bolton, 1938)
- (2) Report of Commissioners on the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts 1845 - Appendix - Part 11. P.9.
- (3) e.g. P.R. Arrowsmith of Middlebrook, Bolton - Ibid. P. 18.
- (4) Edward Baines - Op. Cit. P. 501.



Philanthropic mill-owners such as Mr. Arrowsmith of Middleton and Mr. Ashworth of Turlow who not only provided schools but also garden allotments, excellent houses, a good reading room and a library for their employees, were the exception rather than the general rule. Their benefits extended only to a tiny minority of factory workers and factory workers in their entirety amounted to well under half the total population.

For the majority of the working class the means of both education and recreation were few. A mechanics institute had been opened in 1825 but there was no public library in the town until 1853. Neither were there any open spaces. One form of entertainment was to be found however, in the concert rooms, of which there were eight or nine in Bolton. These offered the attractions of songs and scenic representations and conjurers and tumblers! The usual custom was to charge an entrance fee of twopence for which a check was given entitling the holder to twopence worth of refreshments; these assemblies seem to have been very well attended. In the opposite vein, following on the formation of the first English Temperance Society in Bradford in 1830, Bolton set up its own society in 1831. Five years later it had expelled all its 'moderate' members and had become strictly teetotal; a new Temperance Hall was built and the town later became a centre of temperance literature. (1)

At the end of the 1830's there was great economic distress in the town and surrounding districts caused by low wages, much unemployment and the high rate of prices for foodstuffs. In 1839 Chartism took root in the town; there were riots during which Chartists attacked the Parish Church and the Post Office and which resulted in troops being brought in. When political meetings were banned by the Government, Chartist class meetings were formed. Politico-religious camp meetings were also held, but opposition emerged from the very people from whom the Chartists had borrowed so much in ways and methods. According to a letter from Bolton 'the Wesleyans have not only denounced the Chartists as enemies to peace and order, but are impeding by every means the progress of the so-called National Petition. (2) Conditions, if possible, were becoming worse as the new power factories were throwing more and more hand-workers into poverty. Troops were again brought out in Bolton in 1842 to suppress the Plug Drawing Riots when bands of rioters drew the plugs from the boilers, damaging machinery and for a time effectively put the power factories out of action.

With a change for the better in economic conditions Chartist agitation died down until 1847 when economic depression set in once again. In Lancashire as a whole 50% of the mill-hands were idle and in Preston, Bolton and Ashton, out of 153 workers only twenty-nine were working full-time. To add to these economic hardships in 1847 there was a severe outbreak of typhus in the town which killed many, and a year later cholera broke out.

The police report of 1847 (3) shows that there were at this time 7,990 inhabited dwellinghouses and 1,418 inhabited cellars, 84 mendicant

- (1) N. Longmate - The Waterdrinkers Hamilton (1968) P. 56.  
 (2) R.F. Wearmouth - Some Working-Class Movements of the Nineteenth Century (1948) P. 190.  
 (3) H. Hamer Op. Cit. P. 46.



lodging houses and 9,986 tramps receiving lodging tickets. There were also one hundred and seventeen public houses in the town and two hundred and twenty-three beer houses.

In 1851 when the population had reached 59,811 the religious census which then divided the borough into separate parishes of Great Bolton and Little Bolton shows that there were in all thirty-seven churches providing total accommodation for 19,532 or 32% of the total population. If this is broken down between the two parishes however, it will be seen that in Great Bolton accommodation was available for only 20% of the population while in Little Bolton seats were available for 57% of its population of 19,888.

While the population of Great Bolton was 39,923, religious accommodation was provided for only 8,220 - 20% of the total population or 32% of the adult population over the age of fifteen years. The Church of England, having only two churches in the town provided a mere 1,526 of these sittings. Strongest, in terms of the number of buildings and sittings provided were the Wesleyan Methodists with five chapels and 2,650 seats, 1,590 of which were free. The Bolton Methodist circuit had been organised in 1784; shortly afterwards a Sunday School was opened, then the only one in Bolton, and two years later membership of the society was reported to be 650 (1) By 1839 the membership had risen to 1800 although during the seven years following 1820 the number of Methodists decreased at a rate of nearly one hundred per year. In 1851 membership stood at 1,990. The Primitive Methodists had two chapels with a total of 584 seats, while the Methodist New Connexion accounted for one additional church and a further two hundred seats. The Baptist and Independant congregations each had two churches and the remaining religious accommodation was provided by the Presbyterian church, the Roman Catholics and the Christian Brethren, each having one church.

The total of 6,694 attendances recorded for all these churches on Census Sunday represents 4,820 worshippers or 19% of the adult population, a proportion which puts Bolton among the most irreligious of the large towns and which would certainly be lower were it not for the 1,264 people who attended at the Roman Catholic Church. The proportion of Roman Catholics to the total number of worshippers was 30%, while Anglicans accounted for only 13%, Wesleyans, 18% and Primitive Methodists, Baptists and Independents 8% each. The incumbent of Emmanuel Church referred to the low figures of attendance at his services as being caused by the Mid-Lent Fair which was being held in the neighbouring town of Bury and which had drawn many of his congregation away from church. The additional figures he supplied show that on a normal Sunday a further one hundred could be expected to attend. This by itself would not radically alter the size of the non-worshipping population although it may reasonably be supposed that other congregations were affected in the same way.

As regards the provision of the free accommodation the Primitive Methodists show the highest proportion with 65% of their seats open to all. 60% of Wesleyan accommodation was free and similarly 51% of the Anglican provision. The Baptists provided 30% of their total accommodation free while in the Independent churches only 7% were free. The Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Church returns show that in both, all their seats were

(1) J. Musgrave - Origins of Methodism in Bolton (Bolton 1865) P. 29.

appropriated, but a statement by the Roman Catholic priest indicates that the poor were admitted to any of the sittings at the 9-o'clock service and also at the afternoon and evening services. It is clear that attendances at all the churches were well below the level of accommodation provided even though this would appear totally inadequate for the size of the population; furthermore the lack of free sittings could not be attributed as a cause of non-attendance.

The religious situation in Little Bolton was a great deal better, where religious worshippers accounted for 51% of the adult population of 12,573. Accommodation here was available for 11,312 in fourteen churches. In contrast to the paucity of Anglican accommodation in Great Bolton, here the Church of England was responsible for six churches with a total number of 7,530 sittings ( for 60% of the adult population) although only 29% of these were free. The Wesleyan, Primitive and New Connexion Methodist each had one church, as did the Roman Catholics, Quakers, Unitarians and the United Free Gospel Church. Independents accounted for two churches and four hundred and sixty seats, but there was no Baptist congregation in the parish.

Of the worshipping population, the Anglicans made up 50%, the Wesleyans 16%, Independents 11% and Roman Catholics 8%.

CENSUS RETURNS

GREAT BOLTON

Denomination	Name of Church	Built	Free Seats	Others	ATTENDANCES		
					Morning	Afternoon	Evening
C. of E.	Emanuel Church	1839	384	342	104	132	47
	Christ Church	1844	400	400	300	80	250
Wesleyans	Bowkers Row Chapel	1846	150	350	113	-	287
	Fletcher St. Chapel	1819	240	410	168	-	285
	Moss St. Chapel	1845	250	-	12	14	15
	Rigeway Gate	?	850	-	254	-	-
Wesleyan Refuge Socy.	Wesleyan Refuge	1834	100	300	140	-	140
Primitive Methodist	?	1841	300	-	135	120	63
Methodist Connexion	?	1822	84	200	60	100	158
Methodist Connexion	New Lever St. School	1836	200	-	-	40	-
Independent	Mawdsley St. Chapel	1808	-	800	293	-	303
	Dukes Alley Chapel	1754	110	640	350	-	300
Baptist	?	1822	50	350	230	-	240
	?	1794	113	27	26	27	-
Christian Brethren	Preaching Room	Before 1800	70	-	25	-	30
Calvinists	Independent School	1824	?	?	-	-	40
Presbyterian	St. Andrew's	1846	-	500	60	60	-
Roman Catholics	St. Peter's & St. Paul's	Before 1800	-	600	1016	136	541



## CENSUS RETURNS.

LITTLE BOLTON.

Denomination	Name of Church	Built	Free Seats	Others	ATTENDANCES		
					Morning	Afternoon	Evening
C. of E.	St. George's	1796	400	1,440	695	-	665
	St. John	1849		1,000	100	-	100
	All Saints Chapel	1743	-	370	97	102	-
	St. Paul's	1840	320	300	75	83	-
	St. Peter's	Ancient	50	1,650	1300	700	-
	Holy Trinity	1826	1000	1,000	300	200	350
Wesleyans	Wesleyan Chapel	1803	168	1,082	688	343	681
Primitive Methodist	Bethesda	1836	66	106	43	-	74
Methodist New Connexion	Temperance Hall	1839	400	-	68	-	92
Independent	Bury St. Chapel	?	60	-	-	30	30
	Albert Place	1846	100	300	280	-	230
Society of Friends	Meeting House	1820	300	-	70	30	-
Unitarian	Bank St. Chapel	1696	14	600	300	180	-
United Free Gospel Church	?	1822	150	550	40	47	120
Roman Catholic	St. Marie's	1847	?	?	506	80	170

(2) BRADFORD.

Bradford, which lies in an irregular valley in the West Riding of the county of Yorkshire owed its remarkable growth during the Nineteenth Century to the rapid expansion of the woollen and worsted industry, and in common with all the other towns which sprang up in the period we call the Industrial Revolution, it exhibited some of the worst evils of industrialisation. From a population of 29,794 in 1801 it grew to 76,986 in 1831 and by 1851 had reached 149,543 and in no decade between 1811 and 1851 did the growth of its population fall below 50% (1) In 1851 less than half the inhabitants of Bradford had been born within the borough. The colossal greatness of Bradford, wrote its first historian, James, in 1857 was dependent upon the invention of steam engine; whereas in 1801 the town had only one mill, in 1841 there were sixty-seven. (2) The output of woollen cloth in the West Riding of Yorkshire rose from 75,000 pieces in 1738 to 490,000 in 1817 and so rapidly did this industry develop that in 1834 the export of cloth was 450,000 pieces more than had been exported in 1825. (3)

The accumulating wealth of Bradford however, was not shared by all its inhabitants, there were sharp divisions between rich and poor which led to appalling conditions for the working-class population. Engels reported Bradford as lying on a little pitch-black stinking river - 'On a fine Sunday the town presents a magnificent spectacle from the surrounding heights, but on week-days it is covered with a grey cloud of smoke. The interior of Bradford is as dirty and uncomfortable as Leeds.' (4)

Reporting to the Commission set up to inquire into the state of Large Towns and Populous Districts in 1845, James Smith described it as 'the most filthy town I have visited.' The houses of the labouring population were delapidated, dirty and often unfit for human habitation. They were only half a brick thick, and built back to back without ventilation or drainage. They covered a superficial sixteen yards, cost less than £100 to erect and were let at between two and three shillings per week. Those at the bottom of the valley were packed between high factory buildings and consisting generally of two rooms. Many of the houses were built by building clubs composed of working-class members but these too were defective both in their construction and in basic amenities. Added to these were very many cellar dwellings consisting only of one room, with a fireplace and sometimes a cupboard. Among the English population there was seldom more than one family in a house but the Irish immigrants were generally found crowded together, to the detriment of both health and morals.

The factories, on the other hand were reported to be well-regulated, and the factory children, healthy looking. "When trade is good," stated one witness, 'the working people of Bradford make good wages and they live well, so far as eating and drinking go and many have a taste for good clothing and good furniture in their houses and save a little money,

(1) Census of Great Britain 1801-1851.

(2) J. James - History of Bradford (1857)

(3) J. Bischoff - A Comprehensive History of the Woollen & Worsted Manufactures (1842) Vol. 11. Appendix - Tables IV and VII.

(4) F. Engels - The Condition of the Working-Class in England 1844.

but the great bulk make the day and way alike long. " Earlier reports had described the factory population of the West Riding as discoloured and stunted, seeming more like some ill-fated race of pigmies than normal human beings. " I can have no hesitation," wrote one witness, " in stating my belief, from what I saw myself, that a large mass of deformity has been produced at Bradford by the factory systems. The effect of long and continuous work upon the frame and limbs is not indicated by actual deformity alone, a more common indication of it is found in a stunted growth, relaxed muscles and slender conformation." (1) But while the condition of the factory workers was improving with the implementation of each successive Factory Act, the condition of the old wool-combers and hand-loom weavers was becoming more and more wretched. The great majority were living on the borders of starvation. The Bradford worsted weavers in 1835 claimed that from an average wage of ten shillings per week, their total deductions amounted to five shillings and threepence; and in 1836 the ratio of power looms to hand looms was still about 3,000 - 14,000 (2)

In both Bradford and Leeds there was a serious problem of public health and in addition to the ill-health caused by bad sanitary conditions and inadequate civic administration there were also recognised occupational diseases and the effects of all these are reflected in the death rate. In 1845 when the total population was 132,164, the death rate was 2.4%; the average age of death was 20 years 3 months and the proportion of deaths of infants under the age of five years to total deaths was 29.6%. (3)

As regards education the same report stated that the schools in Bradford were generally well conducted; the school rooms were not thought to be objectionable and several were well-ventilated but, on the whole, the provision for educating the children of the working-classes was far too limited for so large a community. Much of the work was left to the Sunday Schools which, in 1845, numbered thirty-four, with 11,570 scholars. This report however only gives evidence regarding the Church of England Sunday Schools. In 1851 the total number of Sunday Schools, under all denominations was one hundred and sixty one, the Church of England was accounted with thirty-three and the Wesleyan Methodists had forty-four Independents having twenty-one.

The Bradford Mechanics Institute had been established to provide adult education for the working classes, in 1832 after having failed at its first attempt because of opposition from both Churchmen and Dissenters, to the sceptical opinions of its promoters. At the second attempt the initiators tried to get religious support, and obtained it from ministers of the Baptist, Independent and Methodist Churches, from members of certain leading Quaker families, and from a Roman Catholic priest. The Church of England remained aloof and in 1843 founded its own Church Literary Institute, giving lectures on church subjects and sacred history as well as on science, art and literature. A class was also established for the benefit of the most advanced pupils in the Parochial schools and for adult members of the church. The first annual report showed a membership of 694. (4).



Facilities for working-class recreation were minimal. Theatre-going was condemned from Dissenting pulpits, there were no public libraries or concert halls for the working-classes and almost all the open spaces in the town had gradually been eroded. Bawling, hustling and beer was the working-class reaction to Sunday. Even had they wanted to spend the day in religious worship at church the opportunity was only open to a few since the provision of church accommodation was totally inadequate. In 1851 there were twenty six places of religious worship provided by ten denominations and offering accommodation for 20,926 or 32% of the adult population. In this provision the Church of England was particularly found wanting. In 1841 when the population was 105,257 Bradford had only four churches beneficed by the Church of England. Of these, the Parish Church had no free seats, Christ Church had sixty free seats, the Church of St. John the Less had no free seats and St. James' Church, which was built by John Wood, the factory reformer contained six hundred free seats. Twenty years later the Church could only boast one additional church.

The appropriation of seats was one of the grievances of the Chartists in Bradford and in August 1839 they took over complete possession of the Parish Church in an attempt to assert their rights to those places of worship which had been erected for their use. (1) In Bradford and the surrounding districts Chartism took on a politico-religious colour and character and had among both its leaders and its rank and file a large proportion of Methodists and ex-Methodists. George Hepworth of the Methodist New Connexion was expelled from that body for attending and taking the chair at a Radical meeting, and the Rev. Mr. Thornton who travelled all over Yorkshire agitating the cause of the Chartists was a Bradford Methodist minister. Forbidden to worship in the Parish Churches, the Chartists began to acquire buildings of their own and sometimes obtained the loan of Methodist Chapels. In Bradford they rented a chapel and school in which Chartist sermons were preached. On 15th September 1839 J. Arran of the Methodist Association preached in the morning and the Rev. Thornton in the evening. (2) Camp meetings were also held in and around Bradford between 1842 and 1848 and when Chartism revived in 1848 religious activity became more pronounced.

The Wesleyan Methodists, however, in Bradford as elsewhere, were very hostile to Chartism whether it claimed any religious affiliations or not. In 1841 the minister at Horton Lane Chapel published a sermon, together with a letter he had addressed to the candidates at the General Election in which he said " We have among us Chartists and Socialists - the one, the radical subverters of our constitution, the other the infidel blasphemers of our religion." (3)

The Wesleyans preferred to direct their energies rather to the temperance movement. When the Bradford Temperance Society was founded by Henry Forbes in March 1830 this marked the real beginning of the movement in England. Local manufacturers released their employees early to attend the first meeting and the hall was packed with 1,800 people until almost

- (1) H.O. 40 (1839), 51. - in R.F. Wearmouth - Some Working Class Movements of the Nineteenth Century (1948) P. 187.
- (2) 'The Northern Liberator' 21st Sept. 1839 - in R.F. Wearmouth Op.Cit.P.188
- (3) 'The Dangers and Duties of the Christian Elector' 1841 - in J.L. & B. Hammond - The Age of the Chartists (1930) P. 248.

midnight. Soon afterwards all the Doctors in the town issued a joint declaration condemning spirit drinking and twenty-six local grocers agreed to cease to offer spirits to their customers. (1)

Among the worshipping population of Yorkshire in 1851 the preference was undoubtedly for dissent. Out of a total county population of 1,789,047, 983,423 church attendances were recorded by the census and of these over 600,000 were at dissenting places of worship. Methodists, of all branches, accounted for 431,000 attendances. The Bradford returns show this same pattern with the Wesleyans accounting for 36% of the worshipping population.

The overall picture of the religious climate in Bradford however, left much to be desired by all denominations, since only 25% of the adult population over the age of fifteen bothered to attend any of the church services held on Census Sunday. This figure, it should be recognised, is subject to possible inaccuracies of calculation due to the fact that no information regarding attendances was received from St. Peter's Church of Endland and also that the Roman Catholic return shows the morning attendance as being 3,028 spread over five separate services. Estimated attendances have been inserted for St. Peter's Church, and for the Roman Catholic Church the morning attendances have been treated as one, on the grounds that few people could be expected to attend Mass more than once in one morning.

Having made these adjustments, it will be seen that Anglican worshippers accounted for only 16% of the total number of worshippers and for only 4% of the total adult population. Accommodation in the two churches in the town, was available for 3,434 i.e. only 5% of the adult population and only one third of these sittings were free. It is true that the Church of England possessed an additional two churches in near-by Bowling providing a further sixteen hundred seats but these were not strictly in Bradford itself.

The Wesleyans made a somewhat better showing having eleven places of worship and providing accommodation within these for 10,901 or 16% of the adult population, but again only one-third of these seats were free. Nevertheless, with 36% of the worshipping population Wesleyan Methodism, in terms of numbers, was the strongest religious body in Bradford.

The Roman Catholic church with 71% of its seats free captured 21% of the worshipping population and the Baptist Community comprising both Particular and General Baptists accounted for a further 16%; only one quarter of the accommodation provided by them was free. The Latter Day Saints on the other hand, who provided four hundred seats all of them free comprised only 3% of the worshippers and the Quakers with one thousand seats available to all, could attract only 214 attenders representing slightly more than 1% of worshippers.

The two Independent chapels accounted for a further 7%; they provided seats for 3,000 but 90% of these were appropriated. The total number of worshippers was made up 468 who attended at the remaining two Methodist Connexion chapels and by the 457 attenders at the United Presbyterian Church.

Overall, religious feeling in Bradford appeared to be at a very low ebb. In theory the amount of religious accommodation provided was wholly inadequate for the size of the community, but a quick glance at the returns

(1) J.L. & B. Hammond Op. Cit. P. 164.

will show that in practice many of the seats which were provided were left unoccupied. One or two of the Methodist chapels came close to being full but the only church which could justifiably claim to be making full use of its accommodation was the Roman Catholic church where the congregations were chiefly made up of Irish immigrants. The majority of Bradford's population in 1851 must be described as irreligious



## CENSUS RETURNS.

## BRADFORD.

Denomination	Name of Church	Built	Free		ATTENDANCES		
			Seats	Others	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
C. of E.	St. Peter's	before 1800	300	1700			
	Christ Church	1815	734	700	800	500	800
Wesleyans	Bridge St. Chapel	1839	200	1,000	250	-	300
	Preaching Room	1840	25	115	-	20	16
	?	1823	60	520	300	50	300
	Eastbrook Chapel	1825	400	1,556	1,000	200	1,800
	Undercliffe "	1835	30	176	80	150	165
	New Leeds Chapel	1849	60	58	-	50	50
	Philiadelphia	1834	-	365	67	-	130
	West End Chapel	1847	-	100	50	-	60
	Kirkgate Chapel	1811	171	1,164	631	86	685
Wesleyan	Temperance Hall	1850	?	-	525	-	630
Reformers	Oddfellows Hall	1801	660	-	300	-	700
Primitive Methodists	Fron Chapel	1845	200	156	145	74	102
Methodist New Connexion	Ebenezer Chapel	1838	230	543	210	-	285
Particular Baptist	Sion Chapel	1823	35	753	506	-	540
	Zoar Chapel	1844	170	200	140	170	-
	Westgate Chapel	before 1800	467	1,300	750	412	702
General Baptist	Preaching Room	1846	?	-	75	-	85
	?	1837	140	460	123	96	192
Independent	College Chapel	1839	50	680	300	-	-
	Salem Chapel	1836	150	1,098	628	-	403
United Presbyterian	?	1849	14	625	230	-	255
Society of Friends	Bridge Street Meeting House	before 1800	1000	-	167	95	-
Latter Day Saints	Meeting Room	?	400	-	200	350	450
Roman Catholic	St. Marie's	1825	380	150	3028	-	800
					over five services.		

URBAN-DOMESTIC COMMUNITY

42.

ARNOLD.

The parish of Arnold is taken as an example of those districts principally supported by domestic industry, in this case, the hosiery industry which was the chief manufacture of Nottingham and its surrounding areas.

The parish lies four miles to the north of Nottingham; its population in 1851 was 4,704 spread over an area of 4,670 acres which were chiefly arable. (1) The greater part of this population was engaged in framework knitting though there was also a good number of agricultural labourers whose earnings varied from between eight and thirteen shillings per week. (2)

The mean age at death in 1844 was 32 years; the following year, as a result of a great number of infant deaths, this mean was reduced to 22 years. The number of births per year, in proportion of the total population, was 1: 24½; the death-rate was in the proportion of 1:52. This compared with the national rate, throughout England and Wales of 1: 31 of the total population for births and 1: 49 for deaths.

Table to show Population and Death Rates 1801 - 1851 (3)

Year	Population	No. of Deaths	Death Rate per 1,000.
1801	2,768	92	33.23
1811	3,042	62	20.38
1821	3,572	76	21.27
1831	4,054	83	20.51
1841	4,509	98	21.73
1851	4,704	101	21.45

Many of the houses of the labouring class were in a deplorable condition and generally the population was in a very depressed state. A report of 1845 stated that nine-tenths of the people were paupers ' or next to it '. (4)

Framework knitting which was the principal occupation in the village exhibits some of the worst features typical of domestic industry in the Nineteenth Century. The framework knitters household was an integrated economic unit in which his wife and family contributed towards family income. Conditions were generally cramped and falling rates of pay in a declining industry necessitated very long hours of labour which, together with eye strain which accompanied especially the finest work, affected the outworkers physical condition. Children were often put to work at the age of five, six or seven and frequently worked the same hours as their parents, winding cotton or silk for the frames or seaming the articles which had been made. Conditions had altered little between 1815-1850 when average earnings were about seven shillings for sixty hours labour. (5)

- (1) The Census of Great Britain 1851
- (2) J.D. Chambers - Nottingham in the Nineteenth Century : Appendix -Arnold.
- (3) R.W. King & J. Russell - A History of Arnold, Notts. (1913) P. 101.
- (4) Report of the Commissioners To inquire into the condition of the Framework Knitters 1845 (609) XVI Appendix Part II (641) XV.665.
- (5) E.P. Thompson - The Making of the English Working Class P. 802.

This placed the workers very low on the scale of wage-earners, allowing them a standard of living only slightly higher than that of the hand-loom weavers.

Framework knitting had become a declining industry despite the fact that between 1812-1844 the number of frames employed had risen from 29,590 to 48,482 (1) The demand for hosiery however was well below the level necessary to maintain that number of frames fully employed, so that due to the practice of spreading the work, underemployment was common-place.

Discontent was already being shown by the workers as early as 1811 when outbreaks of Luddism occurred in Nottingham and the surrounding villages. In March of that year sixty stocking frames were broken at Arnold by rioters who were cheered on by the crowd and again in November, frame breaking was widespread but was now being undertaken systematically by small disciplined bands who moved rapidly from village to village at night. In some respects Luddism took the form of a secret society; it was generally believed that the Luddites acted under a solemn oath and that disobedience to the General's order was punished with death. (2)

Early in 1812 the movement in the Midlands died away. The Luddites were partially successful in that the majority of hosiers agreed to pay better prices and wages had generally risen by as much as two shillings a week. A further inducement to inactivity was the presence of several thousand troops in the area and thirdly a Bill was then before Parliament to make frame breaking a capital offence; for these reasons Luddism gave way suddenly to constitutional action in the form of a trade union. Further outbreaks of Luddism occurred in 1816 and 1817 but this was the last phase of the movement in Nottingham.

The central feature of industrial organisation in the hosiery trade was outwork. Villages within a ten mile radius of Nottingham housed the framework knitters who were occasionally self-employed but more often worked for the town's hosiers or middlemen. The economic life of such villages as Arnold was dominated by the bag hosiers who, in addition to selling the frame-knitted goods of other knitters, purchased their own materials and sold their own articles to the hosiers and shopkeepers. Besides insuring their own incomes in times of depression by spreading the work and maintaining the level of charges, bag hosiers in the villages commonly made what were known as truck payments. (3)

One of the characteristic features of the trade's organisation was 'frame rent'; very few people owned their own frames but used instead, those belonging to the large hosiery firms in Nottingham. During the early years of the century frames cost between £15 to £20. In the 1830's they could be picked up second hand for about £4 but there seems to have been little economic advantage to be gained from frame ownership. Between 1815-1849 the customary frame rent per week was ninepence for a narrow frame and one shilling for a normal size frame. Over and above this the

- (1) W. Felkin - An Account of the Machine-Wrought Hosiery Trade (1845)P.602.
- (2) E.P. Thompson - Op. Cit. pp. 569 - 659.
- (3) R.A. Church - Economic and Social Change in a Midland Town  
Victorian Nottingham Cass (1966)



framework knitters had to supply themselves with needles, oil, candles and coals, further items which when the factory system was later adopted, became recognised as costs of production, not to be met by workmen.

The condition of framework knitters depended to a large extent on whether they worked direct to a warehouse, through a middleman or through a 'baggan'. Those who worked for large manufacturers seem to have been better treated than most, having their frame rent suspended when trade was bad. Middlemen were in the habit of insuring their own incomes in times of depression by spreading the work load while maintaining the same charges. This practice helps to explain the depths of poverty into which so many of the village framework knitters sank, especially as villagers were often ignorant of the piece-rates paid for the work at the warehouse.

"If I am a rogue and working to two or three different houses which are giving prices; explained a middleman master framework knitter, I shall tell them (the outworkers) the lowest price and put the difference in my pocket." (1)

Evidence as to the wages received by these men is found in the report of the Commission to enquire into the condition of the framework knitters in 1845. William Jackson, a framework knitter, wrought hose branch made seven pairs of hose per week at 17/6d per dozen and out of this wage had to pay 1/- rent, 6d for 'taking in' and 1/- for seaming. William Taylor also in the wrought hose branch, averaged 7/2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d per week after deductions.

Nearly all the witnesses before this Commission complained of the truck system of payment which was a frequent custom of the bag hosiers and out of which added further distress to the labourers situation. Many 'bagmen' owned butchers, grocers or bakers shops or ale-houses, and then would only pay the workers in kind. Framework knitter George Kendall, later to become a prominent member of the Hosiery Board of Arbitration, observed that, in two years he had received only 16/6d in cash of which 10/6d was given to enable him to pay the interest on pawn tickets.

"When Saturday night came I had to turn out with a certain quantity of meat and candles or tobacco or ale or whatever I had drawn as wages, to dispose of at a serious loss. I used to take a can of ale to the barber to get shaved with, and a can of ale to the sweep..... I was obliged to take a pound of candles at 7d and leave it for a newspaper the price of which was 4d. I used to take my beef at 7d per pound and sell it to the coal-woman for 5d, and any bit of sugar or tea or anything of that kind that my employer did not sell, I used to get from the grocer living at the bottom of the yard by swopping soap and starch." 2) For many, sugar and tea were luxuries in which they could not afford to indulge.

It was common however for villagers to grow potatoes on land rented from the farmers or else on the small plots of ground which were attached to many of the cottages. Even so the condition of the labouring people was extremely poor both economically and physically.

- (1) Evidence of George Chandler : Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Condition of the Framework Knitters 1845 (609) XV 1.
- (2) Evidence of George Kendall : Ibid.

" They are mentally depressed and too often, morally debased. Ill-fed, ill lodged, ill-clothed, they are a class by themselves and easily distinguishable from most others by their personal appearance." (1)

To a large extent these people were the victims of technical backwardness, paying for the critical failure of the hosiery trade to become a mechanised factory industry. The absence of alternative opportunities for employment meant a continued drift of labour into an industry already overcrowded. Underemployment kept wages very low so that to maintain any level of subsistence within a family, women and children were forced to work very long hours for only meagre rewards.

Due to the dispersion of workers and the employment by the hosiers of men in various localities, combined action to improve their lot was difficult. Instead the framework knitters became involved in the wider labour movement and in Chartism. Local Chartism drew its support mainly from the chronically depressed framework knitters of Nottingham and its surrounding villages, but this support was very much cyclical and had its counterpart in the fluctuating strength of the trade unions.

1836-43 were years of almost unrelieved depression for the hosiery trade, during which trade union activity disappeared; at the same time many local Chartist clubs sprang up. In Arnold the movement had many adherents. (2) Meetings were quasi-religious; members sang Methodist hymns and counted among their speakers several ministers of religion. The ritual of hymn and service was often used as a device by which crowds might more easily become emotionally involved with the Chartist philosophy, though the sermons were in fact only political speeches with a sprinkling of religious references. The fact that the majority of these meetings were held on Sundays often meant that for many people they took the place of religious worship.

With the return of better trade conditions framework knitters unions revived, Chartism fell away into the background and there was an attempt to establish a general union call The United Company of Framework Knitters of Great Britain and Ireland. Two years later this union enrolled in Doherty's National Association of United Trades for the Protection of Labour, and a branch was set up in Arnold. The commercial crisis of 1847 brought the disappearance of local unions and led to a reactivation of the Chartist rank and file. When the price of corn fell in June, mobs assembled outside bakers' shops in Arnold and other neighbouring villages, in anticipation of a reduction in bread prices. When local bakers cut bread prices by only a fraction, shop windows were smashed and bread stolen. (3) To focus local attention on their standard of discontent, large meetings in support of the Charter were held prior to its presentation at Westminster on April 10th. In Nottingham one thousand, six hundred special constables were sworn in, but the danger of serious local disturbances was imaginary rather than real.

- (1) ' Some Particulars of the Past and Present State and Extent of the Hosiery Trade ' : Appendix 3 to First Report of Select Committee on the Exportation of Machinery 1841.
- (2) R.W. King and J. Russell Op. Cit. Parish Miscellanea.
- (3) ' The Nottingham Review ' June 4th 1847.

In 1849 with an upturn of economic activity came the erosion of massive support for Chartism. There was a reversion to direct trade action and at Arnold ratepayers formed an association to aid the union in its campaign. The committee included among its members a farmer, a surgeon and a school-teacher.

Against this background of great economic insecurity, the picture of education in the village was also one of deprivation. The National School was not built until 1860 and the British School was not built until 1868. In 1851 there were two day schools open to the children of the poor. The Free School which was repaired and improved in 1813, admitted children from the age of seven and taught them the catechism of the Church of England and reading from the Bible. The Meadows School was an infants school intended for poor children under the age of ten years, and in union with the National School Society. However, Her Majesty's Inspector - The Reverend Henry Mosely - reported in 1846 "The School is called an infants school but contains children of all ages. One hundred and thirty one children were present at my examination and they were in the charge of a single mistress, not more than nineteen years old." The fee at this school was 1d per week per child. (1)

In sharp contrast with the lack of educational establishments in the village, in 1844 Arnold could boast eleven public houses and seven beer-houses.

The religious needs of the population were comparatively well catered for as regards the provision of churches and accommodation within those churches. However, there was no minister of religion living in the village, only a curate at the Parish Church, whilst the Dissenting chapels were all serviced by circuit preachers.

The adult population of Arnold in 1851 numbered 2,961; (2) taken as a whole the six places of worship in the parish could accommodate 2,306 of these or 77%.

Denomination	No. of Churches	Free Seats	Others	% seats Free
Church of England	1	200	500	28
Wesleyans	1	250	165	60
Primitive Methodists	1	104	63	62
General Baptists	1	300	74	81
Particular Baptists	1	350	-	100
Mormonites	1	300	-	100

Both the Parish Church and the Wesleyan Chapel were well established in the village; the Parish Church of St. Mary's was consecrated before 1800 and the first Methodist Society was formed in the village in 1800, by three women. In 1803 there were thirty-two members and three years later a chapel was built and enlarged in 1828. The Particular Baptist Chapel in Cross Street was built in 1825, and the Baptist Chapel, Front Street was erected in 1845 with a school-room at the rear. The Primitive Methodist Chapel was built in 1829, before that time worshippers met in a

(1) R.W. King and J. Russell Op. Cit. pp. 137 - 148.

(2) The Census of Great Britain 1851.



barn. The Mormanite Chapel was built in 1849.

The statistics of attendances on Census Sunday show that 43% of the adult population were present at one or other of the churches.

Denomination	Name of Church	ATTENDANCES.		
		Morning	Afternoon	Evening
C. of E.	St. Mary's	350	-	350
Wesleyans	Wesleyan Chapel	-	51	79
Primitive Meth.	?	-	30	50
General Baptists	Cross St. Chapel	-	98	180
Particular Baptist	?	-	220	178
Mormanites	Mormon Chapel	50	80	150

This table shows that 41% of the total number of worshippers attended the Church of England. 22% were present at the Particular Baptist Chapel and 14% at the General Baptist Chapel. 10% were present at the new Mormon Chapel while the Methodists had a comparatively low rating; only 8% were at the Wesleyan Chapel and only 56 at the Primitive Methodist Chapel.

(1) ST. BURYAN, ST. JUST AND ST. LEVAN - S.W. CORNWALL.

The parishes of St. Buryan, St. Just and St. Levan lie together at the South Western tip of Cornwall. In the Nineteenth Century their populations were chiefly supported by the copper and tin mining industries, having a system of employment, a character and a way of life totally different from any other working-class community in the country. Before examining the religious colouring of the area it is necessary to understand something of the peculiarity of their situation, their independence and their comparative isolation.

The work of the mines, on the surface as well as underground was universally performed by contract and in Cornwall the plan of making the contract with the miners was that of periodically bringing all the work to a kind of public auction. (1) The act of contracting which was called a setting, took place usually at the end of every two months, in the open air and generally in front of the mine counting house. There were three forms of contract, tutwork, tribute and dressing, according to the particular type of work done. At the public auction, or 'survey' as it was called, the captain would state that a certain amount of work had to be done e.g. a shaft had to be sunk or a level driven. He would then say that part of this work had been let to (say) John Thomas and his 'pare' ( a gang of between two to eight men ) for the previous period at so many shillings a linear or cubic fathom. John Thomas who acts as the 'taker' would be asked if he were willing to take the work on these same terms for the succeeding period, and if he was willing the captain had then to inquire whether anyone would do the work for less. In this way the work was put up to auction and given to the lowest bidder, although there was usually a 'reserved price' maintained. When the 'bargain' was concluded the men went to work. They were charged for all the materials they used, tools, candles, powder etc., and for the cost of hauling the rubbish to the surface. At the end of the contract period, a balance sheet was prepared and the men credited with the amount of work done and debited with its cost, and frequently also with a subscription for medical attention, and for the maintenance of a club which gave help to the miners or their families in case of injuries.

The rate of earnings in tribute work was extremely uncertain and the employment consequently very speculative. If a set of men working on a poor part of the load which they had agreed for seven or eight shillings in the £., discovered a bunch of ore rich enough to set at two or three shillings, they could earn money very rapidly and there were not infrequent instances where a set of men divided more than £100 per man for two months work. On the other hand, if that load failed or became very poor, miners were still obliged to go on with the contract and in such cases it was possible to have their account in debt.

Cases of extraordinary earnings did not occur often but when they did, they produced great energy and activity not only in those who benefitted directly but also in the others who increased their exertions in the hope of some similar discovery. In this way they encouraged

- (1) L.L. Price - 'West Barbary' or Notes on the System of Work and Wages in the Cornish Mines 1891. in R. Burt ed. Cornish Mining - Essays on the organisation of Cornish Mines and the Cornish Mining Economy - David & Charles Newton Abbot 1969  
P. 134.

competition and often brought neglected parts of the mines into effective and profitable working. Miners willingly sacrificed a certain steady income for the freedom and chance of great profit which this system of employment gave them, but for the employers it was even more beneficial. By forcing the miner to compete against his fellow workers for pitches offered to the lowest bidder the system helped frustrate the growth of trade unionism in the mines and deprived the miner of a collective voice. It also meant that management costs were minimised since, by supplying their own tools and materials and by advancing their labour on credit, the miners themselves supplied a large part of the working capital. Furthermore, by tying the miners earnings closely to their productivity, the system greatly reduced the need for underground supervision of work. Yet another advantage to the employer was the strong financial hold which they gained over a large section of their labour force. Since earnings were frequently insufficient to cover the monthly 'subsists', particularly in periods of depression, many miners accumulated debts which they could rarely discharge and, in doing this, greatly strengthened the employers' position in negotiating contract rates and conditions of work.

The poverty of Cornish miners in the first half of the Nineteenth Century is revealed by the fact that the majority of them earned an average weekly wage of less than thirteen shillings. (1) In normal times this was a bare living wage and nothing more; if a miner made a bad tribute bargain he would be reduced to the direst straits. Many were in a chronic state of indebtedness to local shopkeepers, a situation which arose in some degree from the practice of mine employers keeping a month's wages in arrears.

Whilst the men worked underground, the surface work, for example, that of dressing the ore was chiefly performed by women and children for very low wages. The ages of the children working varied from seven to eight years up to thirteen or fourteen years and though in the majority of cases the work they did was not very laborious, hours were long, usually ten in the summer and nine in winter. Nevertheless, in general, the state of the child worker in Cornwall was incomparably better than in the industrial and mining areas of the North of England at the same time. For one thing, children were not sent underground, their work was done mainly in the open air, it was not usual for them to be employed on the surface at night, no system of apprenticeship was practised anywhere and corporal punishment of children at the mines was unheard of. Both the Commission on Children's Employment in 1842 and Lord Kinnaird's Commission on Mines in 1864 mention the healthy state of Cornish children, but unfortunately this state of well-being did not apply to the older miners.

"It may be affirmed as a general proposition, that the health of copper, tin and lead miners, as a class, is greatly inferior to that of labourers engaged in agricultural and other open air employments.... the delicate condition of the Cornish miner is the more striking when

(1) Ibid. Table IV. P. 149



contrasted with the vigorous health generally presented by the women and children in the same districts." (1)

There is no doubt as to the excessive mortality among Cornish miners, more so than among colliers in any other district of England. This excessive mortality was attributed partly to the carelessness of the men and especially to the practice of racing up the ladders to the pit-head.

The following table indicates the comparative excess of mortality among Cornish miners as contrasted with that among the Northern colliers, over the period 1849-1853 (2)

Average annual number of Deaths per 1,000 of population

<u>Ages</u>	<u>Cornish Miners</u>	<u>Northern Miners</u>	<u>Males in Cornwall.</u>
15 - 25	8.9	8.5	7.12
25 - 35	8.96	8.49	8.84
35 - 45	14.3	10.13	9.99
45 - 55	33.51	16.81	14.76
55 - 65	63.17	24.43	24.12
65 - 75	111.23	65.16	58.61

"The cases of disease' remarked the doctors appointed by Lord Kinnaird's Commission, 'are chiefly asthmatic afflictions, resulting from bronchitis, pneumonia; and diseases of the heart and more rarely, true tubercular consumption. Rheumatic disorders and various dyspeptic symptoms are a common occurrence." The Commission doctors also noted the 'impurity of the air', the heated, draughty and damp atmosphere; the severity of the miners' exertions, and the exposure to cold and damp at the surface and in the shafts. (3)

Facilities for the treatment of injuries were extremely bad and there was also an acute shortage of hospitals. Both maternal and infant mortality rates were also very high. In the parish of St. Just in the decade 1840-1849 six hundred males were buried, their average age was 25 years 8 months. Only fifty-six (9%) were over seventy and 261 were infant boys under the age of five. (4) During the same period 477 females were buried, their average age was 27 years, and 220 of them were under the age of five. The explanation for these tragic figures lay in the overcrowded and insanitary cottages in which the miners and their families lived. In the St. Just area there is evidence of miserable and filthy conditions which resulted in fevers of one sort or another becoming more or less endemic among the labouring population.

It was the custom of miners to build their own cottages which they then held on a lease of three lives. The sort of homes these became depended to a large extent on the character of the miner's wife. In general they were clean and well-ordered although poverty was often attributable to a lack of management on the part of the woman. Overcrowding in cottages however was very general.

- (1) Report of the Commissioners of Mines of Great Britain 1864 pp.VIII.& IX.
- (2) L.L. Price - Op. Cit. Table IX P. 166.
- (3) Report of Lord Kinnaird's Commission Op. Cit. pp. IX & X.
- (4) J. Rowe - Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution (Liverpool 1953) P. 152.

"The miners often marry young, many of them at sixteen although as is frequent in celtic communities the matter is often delayed until the circumstances of the girl with whom they have been keeping company render marriage indispensable." (1)

Desertion in such cases was rare, and prostitution almost unknown in the mining areas. As a result of early marriages, large families were the rule and hence the necessity of sending children to work early.

"It is common here to send boys underground at ten years of age" - stated a St. Just captain in 1842 ' but parents would not send them so early except for their necessities."

Only a very small proportion of the total mining population of Cornwall possessed smallholdings or gardens of any size, so that fishing was the only way in which they could supplement their income. An intermixture of employments, between mining and fishing was commonplace. Miners' hours of work were short in comparison with workmen in other trades, working in six or, at the most, eight hour shifts. Consequently they found themselves free men for a considerable part of the day and many held shares in fishing boats, passing much of their time on the water. " In the maritime districts, during the fishing season, they are wholly employed upon the water, to the great hindrance of the adjacent mines." (2)

In view of the early age at which they were put to work, children received little formal education at school, yet almost every contemporary writer called attention to the high level of intelligence common among Cornish miners.

"How and when a miner found the time to acquire even the slight theoretical knowledge that he possessed is a mystery, seeing that many never went to school in childhood at all, and those who did left at seven or eight."

The 1842 Commissioners reported that "The miners are not only as a class, intelligent for labourers but men of considerable knowledge. They have a character of independence something American." And, on the other hand, " when a man is not only a miner, but a builder, a farmer and a fisherman as well, no surprise will be felt at his being both intelligent and well-informed". (3)

To a large extent the miners' intelligence can be ascribed to the particular system under which he worked and its very speculative character. The terms of employment left the miner with a considerable degree of freedom in arranging his place and hours of work, and tied earnings closely to individual skill and effort. Providing his own materials and receiving payment according to the market value of the ore the miner was something more than a pieceworker, but a 'subterranean stockjobber'. With tribute work especially the miner was taught to live by his wit.

This intelligence surprisingly, was never really channelled into revolutionary activities and the best brains among the miners tended to

- (1) First Report of the Commissioners for inquiring into the Employment and Conditions of Children in Mines and Manufactories 1842 (380) XV. 1.
- (2) Correspondent to the 'Quarterly Review' 1857 in -  
A.K. Hamilton - Jenkin The Cornish Miner (1927) P. 269.
- (3) 1842 Commissioners Report Ibid. P. 273.

remain individualistic rather than socialist. Chartism made but little impression upon the county that had been the birthplace of William Lovett. Chartists arrived in Cornwall in 1839 but could make slight headway against the temperance advocates who were conducting extremely active missions in the mining districts. When the hard winter of 1846-1847 began, Chartism had practically disappeared.

The influence of Methodism in Cornwall can be traced from its first inception by the gradual taming of the mining populations and the consequent falling off of fighting, wrecking, smuggling and drinking. The biographer Samuel Drew states that "the rude manners of the population which had led some to call Cornwall 'West Barbary' were fast yielding to the benign influences of that Gospel, which had been so faithfully and zealously promulgated among the inhabitants by the Rev. John Wesley and his coadjutors." (1) A writer in Knight's 'Penny Magazine' stated in 1836 that the improvement which had taken place in Cornwall during the last thirty years was 'striking' and that Wesleyan Methodism had undoubtedly had a share in 'producing this favourable state of things'. Another writer in the London Quarterly in 1862 said that Wesleyan Methodism had been the chief agency in effecting 'a revolution in the moral and social condition of Cornwall.' John Wesley himself, as early as 1781, had remarked 'it pleased God the seed there sown had since produced an abundant harvest.' (2)

In 1865 another report stated 'Forty-five years ago Sunday in the mining districts was a scene of debauchery with drinking going on from morning till night.' (3) Yet the situation had changed so much that the doctors appointed to Kinnaird's 1864 Commission declared that 'the miners, as a class are well conducted and temperate. Large numbers have taken the pledge and kept it, and whatever may be the causes of the diseases to which they are liable, the habit of intoxication cannot be assigned as one of them.' Even in the most remote parts the once prevailing pastimes of drinking and fighting were giving way to civilising influences, under the guidance of Methodism and Temperance.

The tee-total element first appeared among the miners of West Cornwall in September 1837 and after a visit from James Teare in the following February, a Tee-total Society was formed at St. Ives (4) Within three months, it had more than one thousand members and held crowded meetings alternate weeks in the two Methodist Chapels, one belonging to the Wesleyans and the other to the Primitive Methodists. Within two years nearly three thousand out of a population of five thousand had signed the pledge, and four public houses had closed down. However, the successes were not without strife as the determined body of tee-totallers tried to capture the churches for their own cause. A quarrel between the Wesleyan Minister at St. Ives and the tee-total faction led to the founding of an entirely new chapel - The

- (1) S. Drew - Samuel Drew : The Self Taught Cornishman (1861) P. 57.
- (2) Wesley's Works (11th Edn.) Vol. XIII P. 297 in R. Burt Op.Cit. P.121
- (3) Correspondent to the 'Western Morning News' 1865 in -  
A.K. Hamilton Jenkin Op. Cit. P. 284.
- (4) N. Longmate - The Waterdrinkers Chapter 8.



tee-total Wesleyan Methodists. About two hundred and fifty members seceded from their existing church, followed by one hundred and fifty others in St. Just. By the following year this new sect had built its own chapels both at St. Just and in St. Ives. It had also acquired a new and stricter set of rules which not only merely forbade drinking but also 'the putting on of gay apparel; unprofitable conversation; and the buying or selling of uncustomed goods.' (1) By 1869 the St. Ives circuit reached twenty miles away and would still only accept pledged tee-totallers as members.

The success of the Methodist cause in Cornwall must in some part be attributed to the almost total lack of interest in the population shown by the Established Church. The 1851 Census returns would seem to indicate that attendances at the Church of England were in about the same proportion as its degree of involvement with the community.

The Deanery of Buryan, which comprised the parishes of St. Buryan, Sennen and St. Levan, was a Royal Peculiar belonging to the Duchy of Cornwall. The Deans were nominated and instituted by the Dukes without any reference to the bishop, archdeacon or rural Dean of Penwith. For the most part they were absentee, so that parishioners paid their tithe to an ecclesiastical dignitary they had never seen. The last Dean of Buryan, before the Deanery was abolished in 1864 was the Rev. and Hon. Fitzroy-Stanhope who held the appointment from 1817 (2) The younger son of a noble house, he had fought against Napoleon at Waterloo, lost a leg and applied to the Duke of York, the then Commander-in-chief for a pension. The Duke whose pension list was exhausted discussed the matter with his brother the Prince of Wales, who had nothing to offer but the Deanery of Buryan. At the time of the appointment the Deanery was worth approximately £1,000 per annum, while the duties involved were none, other than the payment of three curates at an annual stipend of £100 or less. Stanhope accepted this 'pension' and as far as is known, never set foot in any of his parishes.

The following statistics show the paucity of support for the Established Church in Buryan and in the separate parish of St. Just.

<u>ST. BURYAN</u>			Free		<u>ATTENDANCES.</u>		
Denomination	Name of Church	Built	Seats	Others	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
		before					
C. of E.	Parish	1800	1000		47	63	-
Wesleyans	Sennen Chapel	1815	110	61	50	-	150
	Wesleyan Chapel	before					
		1800	430	170	-	-	210
	" "	1831	180	40	-	150	-
	Borah Chapel	1817	100	-	-	57	-
Bible Christians							
	Bethel	1832	155	45	-	150	50
	Meeting Room	?	170	-	-	60	-

(1) Ibid. Chapter 8.

(2) A.J. C. Hare - The Story of My Life Vol. VI. P. 177 in -  
C.K. Francis Brown - A History of the English Clergy 1800-1900 P. 14.

ST. LEVAN

Denomination	Name of Church	Built	Free Seats	Others	ATTENDANCES		
					Morning	Afternoon	Evening
C. of E.	Parish	?	?	?	-	22	-
	Sennen Church	before 1800	70	300	100	100	-
Wesleyans	Wesleyan Chapel	before 1800	110	70	-	-	75
	Bottoms Chapel	1831	82	28	-	100	-
	Treen Chapel	1825	95	35	-	-	119
Baptists	Baptist Chapel	?	100	50	?	?	?

ST. JUST

Denomination	Name of Church	Built	Free Seats	Others	ATTENDANCES		
					Morning	Afternoon	Evening
C. of E.	Temporary Church	1849	400	-	240	287	136
Wesleyans	Trewellard Chapel	1815	300	250	400	-	400
	Nanquedno Chapel	1829	120	30	-	-	40
	Botallash	1844	132	28	-	100	-
	Dorran	?	90	-	-	-	40
	St. Just Chapel	1833	400	600	650	-	900
Free-Total							
Wesleyan Methodist	?	1841	-	160	200	-	300
Bible Christians	?	1844	200	300	-	300	400

The 1851 adult population figure of St. Buryan was 1,013, of these 87% were attenders at either church or chapel on Census Sunday, 2,461 sittings were available of which 68% were free, so that free accommodation was available for every adult member of the parish. The church of England alone provided enough seats for almost all but the returns fail to indicate how many of these were free, though it seems unlikely that more than half would have been appropriated. The Wesleyan Church provided seats for 1,091 of which 78% were free and Bible Christians provided a further 370 seats, 89% of which were free.

Only 9% of the total church-going population were attendant at the Established Church, while the majority (64%) belonged to the Wesleyan Methodists; the remainder worshipped at the two meeting places of the Methodist Bible Christian sect.

In the neighbouring parish of St. Levan where the adult population numbered only 306, the Church of England made a somewhat better showing, retaining 37% of the worshipping population while the Wesleyans accounted for the remaining 63%. In all the returns show that almost the entire

population was present at one or other of the churches. Accommodation in this parish was available for 940 according to the returns but this figure does not include the number of seats at the Parish Church as this information was omitted. Nevertheless the population was extremely well provided for, the excess of accommodation being due to the fact that many had emigrated in recent years.

In St. Just the church-going population amounted to only 53% of the total adult number which was 5,886, but this is hardly surprising in view of the fact that accommodation was available for only 51% in any case. The discrepancy between the two percentages arises from the fact that the Tee-total Wesleyan Chapel, while claiming only 100 seats counted 200 members at the morning service and 300 in the evening.

The Church of England with only a temporary building could provide sittings for only a mere 7% of the adult population, though all of these were free. Wesleyans provided for one-third of the population with a total of 1,950 seats, 53% of which were free. The Tee-total Wesleyans provided a further 160 all of which were appropriated and the Bible Christians another 500 seats 40% of them free.

Once again the Wesleyan Methodists counted the majority of the worshipping population (71%) 16% were found at the Bible Chirstian Chapel and 3% at the Tee-total Wesleyan Chapel while the remaining 10% were left to the Church of England.



(2) HASWELL - THE DURHAM COALFIELD.

Mid - Nineteenth Century reports concerning the mining populations of the Durham coal-field show a gradual but definite improvement in their social and economic conditions compared with twenty years earlier, although the extent of this improvement varied very much from one village to the next and depended to a large extent upon the attitudes of the colliery owners. Throughout the first half of the Nineteenth Century a growing interest was taken in the miners and their problems by the government, not only because they now constituted a greater proportion of the labour force but also because, in times of trouble their solidarity in closely knit communities led them to act together, often violently, so that the ruling classes had a vested interest in studying the situation more closely. On the other hand, social reformers were shocked by what they discovered and sought to publicise the facts of the brutality and degradation of the miners' existence. The 1840's witnessed an unparalleled volume of documents describing coal-mining conditions and among the first of these, and the one which caused the greatest furore was the First Report of the Commission on Children and Young Persons in 1842.

In Northumberland and Durham children were in the mines often from the age of four and there was no distinction in the work boys and girls had to do. (1) Their daily hours were anything from twelve to sixteen while the men, on occasions, were in the mines twenty-four, thirty-six and even forty-eight hours at a stretch. (2) The treatment of children was often brutal and the wages received were very meagre. Between five and seven years they earned 2/6d per week, between seven and eight 2/8d and between eight and nine 3/-. (3) There were also some reports of child apprentices who received no wages at all until the age of thirteen. Many could not read or write. Girls were employed in 'hurrying' i.e. pulling baskets of coal along the floor of the mines; having a chain over their shoulders and through their legs they dragged their loads through the pits for twelve hours a day. The report also cites cases of men and women, completely naked, working side by side; examples of immorality in the mines, and women who actually gave birth while underground. Women were a source of cheap labour; they could be made to work long hours for little pay.

The same report also brought to light the appalling conditions underground. Ventilation and safety precautions failed to keep pace with the expansion of the industry and this deficiency led to an overall picture of accidents and ill-health. Nearly all the miners were physically stunted, being either bandy-legged or knock-kneed and suffering from splayed feet, spinal deformities and other physical defects resulting from the cramped positions in which they worked. Added to these physical deformities there were a number of illnesses common to the miners. They suffered particularly from stomach troubles, from diseases of the heart and from painful and dangerous lung diseases, especially asthma. Consequently old age came prematurely. An assistant commissioner said it did not surprise him to be told that "old age comes prematurely upon them and that they were mashed up at forty or forty-five; indeed the careworn countenances, grey hair, and furrowed brows of those I met with at that age were sufficient indications of the fact." (4)

- (1) First Report of the Commissioners for inquiring into the Employment and Condition of Children in Mines and Manufactories. 1842 (380) XV.1. P.26.  
 (2) Ibid. pp. 113-116. (3) Ibid. P. 155.  
 (4) Ibid. P. 63.

Casualties in the Northumberland and Durham coalfields were listed in William Mitchell's pamphlet 'What do the Pitmen want?'; he calculated that in the two counties 1,446 miners had been killed between 1800-1840.

Along with bad working conditions went equally bad social conditions. Miners cottages usually consisted of two rooms, though some had only one and drainage and ventilation were often deficient and the interiors of many were filthy. "Such habits of dirt and neglect must have greatly contributed to keeping the colliers a separate race apart from the labouring masses and to perpetuating the disadvantages of such isolation. There can be no doubt of its injurious consequences to their health, especially of its increasing their liability to those distressing internal complaints to which so many of them fall an early sacrifice. The exterior also of a colliery village too often presents features as unfavourable as the interior of the cottages themselves. Immediately outside the doors up to the very threshold, every species of repulsive filth is scattered or collected." (1)

The Commissioners went on to complain about the prevalence of drunkenness, and pastimes such as dog-fighting, pigeon flying and heavy gambling on races and fights which often accompanied drinking sprees. (2)

As far as education was concerned, conditions around Durham before 1840 were very bad. The employment of children at a very early age meant that for the most part it was totally neglected apart from the opportunities which were provided by the numerous Sunday Schools which were beginning to spring up in the 1830's. The quality of the instruction given in these institutions however was usually very inferior owing to the incompetence of the teachers. Engels reported that few numbers were able to read and still fewer could write. (3)

In the early years of the Nineteenth Century, the only provision for the religious needs of the coal-fields was centred in the parish churches which were very few and far apart. As new collieries were opened and large populations gathered around them the existing churches were quite inadequate but nothing was done and vast numbers of people in these areas grew up without the humanising influences of either religion or education. When the Methodists began to form their societies here, the new members were in no sense dissenters since they had nothing to dissent from. G. Parkinson has described his childhood in the village of New Lambton where the Methodist chapel was the only place of worship and its Sunday School the only place of education for more than sixty years. (4) Other than the chapel the nearest places of worship were, the church at Houghton-le-Spring the church at Chester-le-Street and another church at Penshaw, - all of which were over two miles away from the village, and from none of which were any pastoral visitations conducted. The Methodist chapel was built by the colliery workmen and a pew rent of 9d per quarter was charged for seats in the side gallery. It became the centre of almost all extra-domestic life and had a profound effect upon the population,

(1) Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the State of the Population in the Mining Districts. 1844 (592) XVI. 1. P. 10.

(2) Ibid. P. 11.

(3) F. Engels - The Condition of the Working Class in England 1844 P.284.

(4) G. Parkinson - True Stories of Durham Pit Life (1912)



its only competitor being the public house. " The strenuous life of the pitmen, the general lack of education and the influence of the Methodist services, all combined to produce a special type of character, shrewd in mind, kindly of heart and sincere and simple in spirit ..... Their work in Sunday School and their conversation in class meetings were marked by a deep earnestness and a thorough conviction of the truths of religion. " (1)

On the whole, Chartism was never a particularly strong movement in the coal-fields of the North-East, partly due to the isolation of the colliery villages from the great manufacturing districts, but where Chartist class meetings and camp meetings were held they took on the religious character of the Primitive Methodists. The efforts of the Chartists however were felt in the generating of a united spirit of revolt which began to show itself in 1843, when the miners established a trade union and appointed the Chartist solicitor W.P. Roberts as its 'Attorney General'. Branches of the union were set up all over the county. (2)

This period was one of severe depression in the coal industry; in 1843 annual sales had declined by 65,957 tons and with this declining income the last thing the colliery owners wanted was the prospect of higher labour costs. On the other hand the mines had many grievances. The best hewers working eight hours in the most favourable seams could not earn more than 2/6d or 2/10d per day (3) Moreover, they were not employed every day and it could be proved that during 1843, average earnings after taking off deductions for fines, doctors, coals, picks etc., were not more than 11/- per week. Yearly bonds were drawn up by the masters without consulting the men and by the guarantee clause they were fined 2/6d if they were absent for one day, although they might be laid idle by the coal-owners without any compensation at all.

On behalf of the miners W.P. Roberts drew up a proposed new contract which was submitted to the 'Coal-Kings'. It demanded -

1. Payment by weight ( of coal cut) and not by measure.
2. The amount of coal cut to be determined by ordinary beam and scales; scales and weights to be checked by inspectors.
3. Miners' contracts to run for six months.
4. Abolition of the system of fines : miners to be paid according to the actual amount of coal produced.
5. Owners to agree to find at least four days work per week for the miners whom they regularly employed. In default of four days work in the week miners should receive pay for four days work. (4)

The refusal of the owners to negotiate with the Union led to a nineteen week strike in 1844 which had the effect of laying every pit in Northumberland and Durham idle. On April 5th the miners terminated their contracts and laid down their picks. The workers displayed a remarkable solidarity and determination despite the fact that strike pay was only about 2/6d per week;

- (1) G. Parkinson - Op. Cit. P. 30.
- (2) R. Challinor & B. Ripley - The Miners' Association : A Trade Union in the Age of the Chartists Lawrence & Wishart (1968) P. 85.
- (3) G. Parkinson - Op. Cit. P. 66.
- (4) R. Challinor & B. Ripley - Op. Cit. P. 123.



most of them exhausted their own small savings and then began pawning or selling what personal possessions they had. (1) At many collieries they were led by Primitive Methodists and meetings were often held in their chapels. Religious leaders led their audiences in prayer for the success of the strike and God was called upon to defend the poor oppressed from the rich oppressors. The bulk of religious opinion however, backed the coal-owners. Many ministers applauded the evictions of the miners from their cottages and equally, the decisions to deny the homeless refuge in the workhouse. The Reverend J. Burdon of Castle Eden published a leaflet against the strike and suggested setting up an emigration fund as the answer. Another handbill discussed whether Christians could be trade unionists, claiming that the unions were fundamentally anti-religious. Meanwhile the mine owners brought in miners from other parts of the country, throwing the Durham miners out into the streets to make room for the new influx. They also tried to intimidate local tradesmen against giving credit and ultimately the ruthlessness of the Marquis of Londonderry and other coal-owners forced the strike to close. After eighteen weeks many destitute miners began to break away from the ranks of the union, and return to work, poverty and indigence being unable to cope with the enormous wealth and affluence of the owners. In some cases they were met with tolerance on their return but at others no militants were re-employed. The substitution of the monthly for the yearly bond helped the owners to improve an even stricter discipline as they were now able to get rid of bad characters as soon as they became apparent and the union was eventually smashed. After the defeat of 1844 there was no trade union in Durham for nearly twenty years.

The oppressed miners were greatly admired for the courage, persistence, intelligence and discretion with which they had conducted the strike. Whereas the Children's employment Commission's Report in 1842 had described the miners as coarse and uncouth, only two years later they gave evidence of the miners possessing a remarkable intelligence, strength of character and firmness of purpose. Subsequent reports also stressed the improvement in the conditions and character of the miners.

The 1846 report on the mining districts of Durham gave evidence of the increasing number of Dissenting chapels and Sunday Schools which were springing up and the presence of these religious influences was held to a large extent responsible for the improved moral condition of the population. "As soon as new works are opened and cottages around them begin to be inhabited, or as soon as the populations around old works increase, Dissenting chapels of the Wesleyans, Independents, Baptists and Primitive Methodists spring up. Sunday schools are almost invariably opened in each". (2) It was also reported that during the previous few years the exertions of the Church of England had become more conspicuous; more clergy had been appointed for larger parishes, more schools had been built - particularly since the strike - and better school masters provided.

- (1) P. E. H. Hair - The Social History of the British Coal Miners 1800-50.  
 (2) Report of the Commissioners Appointed to inquire into The State of the Population in the mining districts 1846 (737) XXIV 383.

Speaking of the Hetton, Ellmore and Appleton collieries, it was stated that about 560 miners were employed. Until 1832 the only means of education in the village had been confined to Dame-Schools; since then, two Methodist chapels had been built, with Sunday schools attached and the Church of England had also erected a church and soon afterwards a National School. The present clergyman was said to reside in the village and he apparently took a good deal of interest in the district. The habits of the pitmen had greatly improved as compared with ten years before, they had greatly decreased their drinking habits and had become more religious.

At South Hetton where a colliery had been in existence since 1831, there were three hundred hewers. There was a Wesleyan Chapel and the Primitive Methodists had recently established a place of worship in one of the houses. The Church was built in 1838 as a Chapel-of-Ease to Easington, and shortly afterwards a National School was built which in 1846 was attended by eighty boys and eighty girls each paying 2d per week. (1)

In the village of Haswell where a serious explosion had taken place in 1844 killing seventy, the men were reported to have steady work and to be earning sufficient for them to live comfortably. According to one of the colliery agents, the houses were in a very good condition, drainage was good and all had gardens. Many of the miners kept pigs. The population was stated to be much improved with less drunkenness and swearing. (2) In 1840 a National School was established in Haswell and was now attended by one hundred and twenty boys and one hundred girls. In the neighbouring village of Shotton another National School was opened in 1845. A resident curate had been provided and he performed divine service in the school rooms in both Haswell and Shotton. Mr. J. Scott, an underviewer at Haswell Colliery told the commission that the average earnings of a hewer might be 4/- per day, working eight hours, eleven days a fortnight; a steady collier averaged 21/- to 22/- per week throughout the year, being paid fortnightly. A lending library, belonging to the Company had been opened at Shotton and it was much used by the men. The Company also employed special constables to go around the public houses and beer houses to make sure they were closed at the proper time. (3)

In Haswell, where in 1851 the total population was 4,356, the Primitive Methodists had one chapel which had been built in 1839 and the Wesleyans had one chapel built in 1847. Before 1839 the village appears to have been totally without provision for religious worship. Of the total population of 4,356, 2616 of these people were over the age of fifteen years and could therefore be attributed as the adult population. The total religious provision for this community amounted to four hundred and ninety seats i.e. for only 18% of the adult population or for only 11% of the total population. Two hundred and seventy seats were provided in the Primitive Methodist chapel and the remainder by the Wesleyans; in all, two hundred and ninety-eight were free. The Church of England was totally without representation in the village, her nearest church being at Easington.

(1) Ibid. P. 20.

(2) Evidence of colliery agent at Haswell Colliery. Ibid. P. 19.

(3) Ibid. P. 19.

On Census Sunday a total of seven hundred and twenty attendances were recorded, which after using Mann's calculation of taking half the attendance at the second service of the day and one third of the evening attendance as being new worshippers, represents five hundred and forty attenders or 20% of the adult population (12% of the total). Out of this proportion 63% were worshippers at the older established Primitive Methodist Chapel, where 65% of the seats were free and 37% at the Wesleyan Chapel where 55% of the seats were free.

Denomination	Built	Free Seats	Others	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Primitive Methodist	1839	178	92	-	210	260
Wesleyan Methodist	1847	120	100	-	150	100

The Primitive Methodists almost managed to fill their chapel for the evening service but at the other three services held in the village, a substantial proportion of the available sittings went unoccupied.

The same religious apathy also held true in the larger neighbouring town on Easington, where the adult population was 4,236 and only 24% of these attended any religious service on Census Sunday. The Wesleyans were stronger here with 48% of the total worshippers; the Church of England accounted for 36% and the Primitive Methodists for 16%. Accommodation provided by all three denominations was available for 52% of the adult population, just under half of this being free.

Denomination	Name of Church	Built	Free seats	Others	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
C. of E.	St. Mary's	?	120	400	120	77	-
	All Saints	?	42	358	-	53	-
	Trinity Chapel	1838	250	150	110	-	105
Wesleyan	Wesleyan Chapel	1815	48	57	-	33	-
	Wesleyan Chapel	1836	200	156	73	-	89
	Shotton Colliery School Room	1845	250	-	-	200	300
	Girls' School Room	1845	170	-	-	100	115

It can be seen that only 31% of the seats available in the Church of England were free while, on the other hand the two most well attended services were those where no distinction was made between the sittings -, at the Wesleyan Shotton Colliery School Room and at the Girl's School Room where the Primitive Methodists met.

- (1) The Census of Great Britain - 1901 - 1902
- (2) G.L. Stovell - A History of the British Empire 1800-1900



THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCHES.THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The Church of England, since its creation in the Sixteenth century had been essentially a rural church for a rural society, the Parish Church providing a focal point for every village community in the country. By the beginning of the Nineteenth Century however, the need for some reorganisation within the church was becoming increasingly obvious. With the urban population increasing at a rate nearly twice that of the rest of the country, Eighteenth Century pastoral attitudes and ideals were consistently at odds with Nineteenth Century economic and demographic reality. During the fifty years preceding the first census of 1801 the population of Great Britain had steadily increased from perhaps 7,250,000 to 10,578,000; in the following fifty years the population of England and Wales more than doubled, leaping from 8,892,536 in 1801 to 17,927,609 in 1851. (1) Yet the physical and institutional structures of the church remained essentially unchanged, so that in the new towns where the ever-increasing populace was concentrated she was physically and psychologically at her weakest. English society was rapidly expanding in ways that made the National Church often appear hopelessly archaic and irrelevant to the needs of an industrial urban civilisation.

First and foremost the Church of England was a landed institution, it derived all its revenues from the land and was tightly bound up with the interests of the territorial aristocracy. At the beginning of the Nineteenth Century most clergymen held their livings in rural or semi-rural agricultural parishes and counted upon the support of local gentry not only in terms of their goodwill but, where the living was a poor one, also for supplementations to their income. The Anglican parson was seen as an integral part of the traditionally landed social and political establishment that governed the country throughout the Eighteenth Century and for much of the Nineteenth. The system of advowson - i.e. the right to install a rector or parson into a living of the Church was a right attached to land-ownership; advowsons were largely lay fees which were bought and sold as any other lay property. In the Eighteenth Century, two-thirds of these were in the hands of private landowners.(2) In practice this system was an instrument of the territorial classes whereby they could install into these profitable livings their younger brothers, sons or cousins. "Preferment in the Church is as regular a subject of sale as commissions in the army; and a patron would as soon think of rewarding an individual for his learning and piety with the gift of a freehold estate as a Church living. Hence the door of the Church is open to all whether they have a call or not, provided they possess a golden key; and in the Metropolis, offices are openly kept in which spiritual preferment is sold as regularly as offices in the East Indies,

(1) The Census of Great Britain 1801 - 1851

(2) C.K. Francis Brown - A History of the English Clergy 1800-1900  
Faith Press (1952) P. 20.

medical practice or any other pursuit.... In short, Church patronage is dealt with as a mere commodity, and the produce of tithe and glebe, instead of being employed as the reward of religious zeal and service, is bought like a life annuity, as a provision and settlement for families"(1) The effects of this custom can be seen in the evidence showing the episcopate to be heavily aristocratic. Only thirty-eight of the one hundred bishops already installed at the turn of the century or appointed over the next fifty years, lacked any direct familial relationship with the aristocracy. (2) The church hierarchy closely related to the ruling classes through birth and marriage, was further allied through education. More than half the bishops were educated in one of the seven foundation schools, usually Eton or Winchester, before moving on to Oxford or Cambridge. However the education of the clergy in general left much to be desired. As far as any formal training for taking holy orders was concerned the situation appears to have varied from diocese to diocese according to the views held by the bishops. There was no special training for clergymen and any examinations that might have been held at the time of ordination were usually mere formalities. The Hon. George Spencer, aged twenty-two was informed that the Bishop of Peterborough would hold an ordination in December 1822 and that the examining chaplain thus replied - "As far as I am concerned, in my character of examiner, it is impossible that I could ever entertain any idea of subjecting a gentleman with whose talents and good qualities I am so well acquainted as I am with yours, to any examination except one as a matter of form, for which a verse in the Greek Testament and an article of the Church of England turned into Latin will be amply sufficient." (3) Bishop Blomfield took his responsibilities more seriously, and on going to Chester in 1824 - "One of his first acts was to raise the character of examinations for holy orders. He made it a rule to require three months' notice of the intention of the candidates to present themselves, and to insist upon a personal interview with them; the latter regulation having been suggested to him by his chaplain Mr. Hale, the present Archdeacon of London, though the bishop at first disliked giving the young men so much trouble." (4) He expected his ordination candidates to be university men or to come at least from St. Bees, the theological college founded in 1816. However, the academic standards required by the universities at this time were very low. At Oxford, candidates for ordination could attend lectures given by the five theological professors and, if they wished, they might pass an examination and receive a testamur but "no bishop required, from Oxford candidates, the testamur of the examiners in theology." (5) The Report of the cathedral commission complained of the great lack of systematic preparation and public examination. In terms of advancement however the personal contacts made at school or university could be much more important than any particular gift for scholarship; influential classmates were especially valuable for

- (1) Evidence of Mr. Ancona - in C.K. Francis Brown - A History of the English Clergy 1800-1900 (1952) P. 23.  
 (2) T. Lundeen - The Bench of Bishops (1963) P. 138-9.  
 (3) Father Pius - The Life of Father Ignatius of S. Paul. (1866) P. 99-100.  
 (4) A. Blomfield - Memoir of Chas. Blomfield, Bishop of London (1863) Vol. 1. P. 102-3.  
 (5) C.K. Francis Brown - Op. Cit. Appendix B. P. 255

success in the Church. Thus the history of ecclestatical patronage in the Eighteenth and first half of the Nineteenth Century is more a history of whom one knew and to whom one was related rather than one of rewards for merit or virtue. In this aspect the Church merely reflected the same standards to be found in other institutions of the time. In consequence of this state of affairs there was a very close affinity between the Squire of the village and the parson, who shared the same way of life, the same ideas, the same sports, and very often the same kin. It had become difficult to distinguish between the two, and led to the coining by satirists of the work 'Squarson'. The clerical was easily the profession offering the best and surest rewards to men of some family and influence. The better endowed livings allowed the clergy to rank with the gentry in economic status while their social and political influence gave them added standing in the countryside. A seat on the local branch of magistrates, the possession of a superior house in an age when tithes paid in kind were a real help to the large families of the day, a natural ascendancy over the local doctors and lawyers, the minimum requirements of parochial duty, the prevalence of non-residence and pluralism and the paramount authority of the Church as against Roman Catholics and sectarians all attracted the easy-going. The rank and file clergy of this period were outrageously secular in their habits, seeming to care little for the spiritual needs of their parishes, hunting regularly and generally living the leisurely life of the landed gentry.

Another major feature of the Eighteenth Century Church was absenteeism and pluralism. Eighteenth Century inheritance was an inheritance not characterised by an undue spirituality but more often by sinecures and pluralities. The right to present perhaps three or four livings might rest with one landowner and if he so wished, all might be presented to one man. It was quite possible for the appointed parson, in his turn, to appoint curates at each of his churches and himself to live abroad. In 1810 there were six thousand livings where the incumbent was non-resident. In 1827 a statistical return from the English and Welsh dioceses shows a total number of 10,553 benefices and in these only 42% of the incumbents were actually resident. (1) The two largest dioceses in respect of the number of livings, Lincoln and Norwich had respectively, 503 resident clergy upon 1,273 livings and 360 residents out of 1,076 holders of benefices. In 1831 2,268 clergymen held two or more livings, 352 held three livings, 57 held four and 3 held five.

In many cases however, pluralism was a financial necessity for there were great disparities of income among the clergy. In 1811 there were nearly 2,000 livings of under £100 per annum, whilst at the other extreme stood the Vicar of Halifax with an annual stipend of £1,500 per annum. (2) Even as late as 1835 the average gross and net incomes for all benefices in England and Wales were £303 and £285 respectively for incumbents and £81 for assistant curates. (3) Furthermore a poor incumbent might not in law, lease out the parsonage in order to live in humbler circumstances

- (1) Abstract of the number of classes of non-resident incumbents, according to the Diocesan Returns for the year 1827.
- (2) R. Oastler - Vicarial Tithes (1827)
- (3) First Report of the Commissioners appointed to consider the State of the Established Church in 1835 Table IV.



and augment his stipend, nor could he lease land and undertake farming, nor even sell a cow of his own patrimony. (1) The tithes system of course, provided an additional source of income but the parson whose income depended upon the collection of tithes in kind was placed in a situation bound to cause embarrassment. A strain was also placed upon the goodwill of the dissenting tithe payer which might well have been destructive of any feeling of amity, in the parish.

The same financial inequality applied also to the bishops whose stipends ranged from £20,000 for Canterbury, £11,000 for Winchester, down to £6,000 for Llandaff. (2) On taking up their appointments bishops found themselves heading great landed estates, and as princely landlords in their own right entered the territorial aristocracy, holding rent days and collecting great revenues. These disparities in episcopal revenue led to endless competition among prelates for translation to more lucrative sees, a situation which was deplored by Bishop Watson as early as 1787.

The dominant characteristic of the Church of England at the turn of the century then, was that of a general laxity which applied as much to her doctrines as it did to her structures and personnel. As a spiritual agency the Church came to be thought of as wanting and in the increasingly harsh light of Nineteenth Century conscience the genial tolerant mist which had cloaked the obvious secularism of the Church, began to dissipate. The French Revolution, its ideals and the threat it imposed on the English establishment, had made some churchmen conscious of the many poor people completely separated from the National Church and of the fact that they had lost much of their persuasive hold on the lower orders. In 1800 a particularly disturbing report appeared, based on statistics gathered in seventy-nine of the more than twelve hundred parishes in the diocese of Lincoln. (3) The survey revealed that out of an approximate population of 15,000 people, less than five thousand had anything to do with the Church, and of these, only eighteen hundred could be considered communicants. Since the communicants were drawn from the adult population of the parishes, which was estimated at approximately 11,000, less than one-sixth of those over the age of fourteen could be classified as devoted participants in the life of the Church. The compilers of the report concluded that not only had family religion largely disintegrated, but it was even difficult to get parents to send their children to Sunday Schools when they were available. Furthermore, sick persons rarely called for clerical comfort any longer, at least 'scarcely ever before the last extremity.' (4) Among the reasons put forward for this state of affairs were, "profane, obscene and seditious writings" which were said to flourish in an atmosphere of Sunday drinking, raucous wakes, feasts, dancing, cock-fights and races. Churchwardens were attacked for their slackness, and magistrates for their

(1) Hansard Vol. XXXVI P. 471.

(2) C.K. Francis Brown - Op. Cit. P. 32.

(3) Report from the Clergy of a District in the Diocese of Lincoln, convened for the purpose of considering the State of Religion 1800.

(4) Ibid. pp. 6-7

Failure to enforce legislation against vice. Dissenters and Methodists in particular were seen as a very serious threat, but at the same time, the authors of the report also recognised that much of the problem could be traced to the failures of the Anglican ministry itself. The secularity, neglect and indifference of parsons had done much to diminish any vital interest in religion itself; there was no indication that those who dropped away from the Anglican communion turned to Dissent but rather that they remained outside any organised religion.

Remedies suggested in the report, stressed above all the revival of parochial religion dependent upon a conscientious resident clergy determined to eliminate religious indifference. Only by the re-establishment of responsible clerical influence at the parochial level was it possible once more to impart not only the lessons of the Scripture but those of 'industry' and 'subordination.' (1)

This and similar other evidence collected by reform-minded Evangelicals highlighted the need for something to be done about clerical abuses. Self-criticism within the church was sparked off mainly by the Evangelical party whose object was to regenerate faithful Anglicans. Obsessed with the reformation and salvation of the sinful soul and prone to view outward misery as a sign of inner corruption, they reflected the heightened feelings of dislike and distrust of the labouring classes. Apart from a belief in the irredeemable depravity of human beings, there was no Evangelical theology as such; the creed was intellectually void and theologically barren. They strongly emphasised the failure of the Orthodox clergy but were less interested in changing the concept of religion than in transforming the way of life not merely of church-goers, but of all. The main characteristics of the initiators of the movement were, a distrust of intelligence, hatred of rationalism, an emphasis on the emotions and an insistent preoccupation with death. From Calvinism they drew the concept of the total fall of the human race, and from Puritanism, their condemnation of card-playing, the theatre, dancing and every form of dissipation.

Evangelicalism was swept in on a tide of fear and self-criticism generated by the French Revolution. Once it became obvious that 'the French people, insensible of their own delirium were eager to spread the infection and to render all mankind as miserable as themselves,' it was necessary to launch a national campaign of moral inoculation. The corruption of social relationships brought on by the thoughtless behaviour of the higher orders was a major target for reform. Pious Evangelicals had of course been preaching against the dissolute behaviour of the religiously indifferent rich for many years, but the Revolution provided them with a greatly enlarged congregation although many members balked at their spiritual enthusiasm and Low Church theology. Nevertheless, during the first two decades of the Nineteenth Century, moral, religious, educational, charitable and benevolent institutions under Evangelical auspices, sprang up in an unheard of way and by the 1820's such societies

(1) Ibid. PP 18-22.

(2) M. S. Society - The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1800, London, 1900.

had become so common a feature of life that they were hardly noticed. Except for a few manifestations in spectacularly offensive activities such as those of The Society for the Suppression of Vice, evangelical influence was so huge and slowly pervasive as to be missed by almost everybody. The society for the Suppression of Vice was established in April 1802; its objects were described as being the suppression of Sabbath breaking, of blasphemous and licentious books, prints, drawings, toys and snuff-boxes and of private theatricals, fairs, brothels, dram shops, gaming houses, illegal lotteries and fortune-tellers. The activity that roused the greatest public indignation among the working-classes was that of the Society's attempts to put an end to the amusements and past-times of the labouring population while remaining oblivious to the similar past-times of the well-bred, the greater part of its energies being spent in ensuring the observance of the Sabbath.

"The Savoyard who goes about with his barrel-organ, dares not grind even a psalm-tune upon the sabbath. The old woman who sells apples at the corner of the street has been sent to prison for profanation of the Lord's Day by the Society for the Suppression of Vice; the pastry-cook indeed is permitted to keep his shop window half open, because some of the Society themselves are fond of ice-creams. Yonder goes a crowd to the Tabernacle, as dismally as if they were going to a funeral; the greater number are women - inquire for their husbands at the ale-houses and you will find them besotting themselves there, because all amusements are prohibited, as well as all labour and they cannot lie down like dogs and sleep. Ascend a step higher in society - the children are yawning and parents agree that the clock must be too slow, that they may accelerate supper and bed-time. In the highest ranks indeed, there is little or no distinction of days except that there is neither theatre nor opera for them, and some among them scruple at cards." (1)

Popular Evangelicals such as William Wilberforce and Hannah More joined with High Churchmen not only to decry the uninspiring behaviour of the upper classes but to warn them of the deleterious effect it was having on their social inferiors; But more often than not, these frightened critics of upper-class behaviour were concerned far less with the salvation of souls than with the prevention of lower class revolution. Churchmen were becoming increasingly aware of a feeling of social disintegration, though to many of them the problem was still simply one of restoring the Eighteenth Century ideal of a rational harmonious social balance. What they failed to recognise was that the task now before the Church was that of reconciling the working classes not to the old but to a new society containing large congregations of urban poor.

The Church of England in the early Nineteenth Century had barely begun to adjust to the changes of the Eighteenth Century. Despite population growth the number of parishes had hardly altered, and the

(1) R. Southey - in Andre Parreaux - Daily Life in England in the Reign of George III.

Translated by C. Congreve Allen & Unwin (1969)



number and composition of episcopal dioceses had also fossilized. Church lethargy contrasted sharply with the expansionist efforts of many Dissenting congregations. For example, although the parish population of Sheffield increased from 14,105 in 1736 to 45,758 in 1801, the Church of England erected only one new church. (1) Nonconformists during the same period put up five additional chapels to make a total of eight. Similarly of the fifty-nine new places of worship constructed in Manchester and Salford between 1741 and 1830, forty-one belonged to dissenting denominations. While the Church of England's figures had altered little throughout the preceding century, the Nonconformists since 1740 when they possessed 533 chapels in the area, had provided more than 2,900 additional places of worship. (2)

Visitation returns and studies such as the Lincoln Report of 1800 suggested that the Church was losing ground and the establishment of the decennial census in 1801 provided statistical data which, when compared with diocesan and parochial figures confirmed the suspicion that there was a large gap between the population and church facilities. William Cleaver, Bishop of Chester voiced the implications of such a situation in 1799(3) "If we suppose the population of this Diocese and probably of some others, to exceed the means of accommodation in public worship upon the Establishment nearly by one half and that excess still to receive a constant and rapid augmentation, it is evident that the establishment must by a continued decrease in the proportion, at no very distant period, lose its due weight and influence in the political constitution of these Kingdoms."

In 1809 Archbishop Manners Sutton acknowledged the problem by admitting that the population, particularly in some large towns far exceeded the machinery by which the church's beneficial effects could be communicated. (4)

Parliamentary enquiries largely substantiated the Church's own conclusions. For eleven years, beginning in 1809, Parliament voted £100,000 annually towards 'endowing and augmenting benefices in populous districts and in 1818 a Parliamentary Act granted £1 million 'for building and promoting the building of additional churches in populous parishes.' An additional £500,000 was granted in 1824 and it has been estimated that the Church alone raised at least an extra £1,5000,000 by voluntary effort between 1813-1833. (5)

Existing churches were most numerous where least required i.e. in rural districts and decaying boroughs. In the fast swelling urban areas accommodation provided by the Church of England was hopelessly inadequate. In 1811 the Parish of St. Marylebone, with a population of 60,000 had a seating capacity at the local church for 900! Similarly in 1824, Manchester, with a population of 187,000 had seating accommodation within (6) the established Church for 22,468. Birmingham whose population was 100,000 could seat 16,000 and Leeds with a population of 84,000 could seat 10,000.

- (1) E.R. Wickham - Church and People in an Industrial City (1957) P.47-48.
- (2) H.W.C. Davies - The Age of Grey and Peel (Oxford 1929) P. 151.
- (3) W. Cleaver - Charge Delivered to the Clergy of his Diocese (1799) P.12-13
- (4) Hansard XIV (1809) P. 857.
- (5) Census of Great Britain 1851 : Religious Worship P. 12-14.
- (6) Rev. E. Wyatt-Edgell - 'On the Statistics of Places of Worship in England and Wales' - in The Statistical Journal 1851 XIV P. 343-4.

In 1831 the county of Cheshire had one Church for every 2,355 inhabitants; Lancashire had one church for every 4,578 inhabitants, in the West Riding of Yorkshire the proportion was one to 3,431, in Surrey, one to every 3,059 and in Middlesex one to every 5,522.

At the time of the Reform Bill when the Church was coming under new attack from the middle-classes, the Treasury had expended £1,440,000 on one hundred and eighty-eight new churches accommodating nearly 260,000 worshippers. During the following twenty years 2,029 churches were added at an approximate cost of £6,087,000 of which only £511,385 was contributed by the State. During the 1840's when 1,409 new churches were erected and the building rate reached its peak, the increase in the rate of new sittings (11.3%) nearly equalled for the first time, the rate of population growth (12.6%). By 1851 an additional 836,000 sittings had been added to the 260,000 places provided between 1818-1832. Nearly three-quarters of them were in the larger towns.

However, the efforts of the Church to substantially increase its accommodation were steadily undermined by the much more rapid growth of the population, so that by 1851 the Church of England was actually providing for a smaller proportion of the population than in 1800. (1) Between 1800-1851 accommodation was increased by 24% whilst during the same period the population increased by 101.6%. At the beginning of the century the Church could accommodate very nearly half the population (48.2%), fifty years later it could accommodate less than one third (29.7%). In the larger towns where the rates of increase of both population and church facilities were the greatest, the situation was considerably worse. In 1851 the Church provided for only about one-fifth (21.6%) of urban inhabitants. Although approximately half the population by that time lived in towns, the number of town churches and sittings was still considerably less than that in rural areas. Of the 14,077 churches belonging to the Establishment in 1851 only 3,457 of them were in large town districts; they provided sittings for nearly two million people, as compared to approximately 3,300,000 sittings available in country districts. Twenty years later the situation in those counties already mentioned had improved only marginally. (2)

Cheshire	now	had	one	church	per	1,868	inhabitants
Lancashire	"	"	"	"	"	3,899	"
W. Riding	"	"	"	"	"	2,384	"
Surrey	"	"	"	"	"	2,743	"
Middlesex	"	"	"	"	"	4,658	"

The construction of new churches presented, in itself, no problem but to think that this alone could provide an answer to the Church's ailing condition was to take an over simplified view. The old scandals of non-residence, pluralism and ineffectual clergy remained, together

- (1) Census of Great Britain 1851 : Religious Worship Table 13.  
 (2) Rev. E. Wyatt Edgell - Op. Cit. P. 343-4



with the new scandals of parishes so large in urban areas, that they became totally unmanageable.

In the 1830's, when the campaign for Parliamentary reform was at its height, the Church still stood in a desperately weak position. The clergy were highly unpopular as a body after the troubles over the reform bill had arisen. By failing to champion the Reform Bill the Church confirmed the conviction too commonly held that the leaders of the Establishment were "opponents rather than champions of the great Christian principles of liberty and justice".<sup>(1)</sup> Bishops were hooted and burnt in effigy; Bishops Blomfield and Ryder were warned not to preach in London and Lichfield, the Archbishop was mobbed in Canterbury and in Bristol, Bishop Gray saw his palace burned to the ground by angry rioters, and meanwhile the country clergy in particular were condemned by those anxious for reform, as obscurantists and reactionary Tories. The Church at this time was very nearly disestablished and saved itself only by conceding far reaching reforms of its basic structure. Among these was the establishment in 1835 of the Ecclesiastical Commission which represented the first major public interference with the rights of private property in the Nineteenth Century. It was concerned first with episcopal property. The Commission aggregated the estates of the bishops and set about evening out their inequalities of income; bishops ceased to be independent landowners and became mere stipendiaries receiving monthly amounts. Legislation was also passed in the 1830's against sinecures and pluralities although the commissioners made it very plain in their second report that they could not entirely do away with pluralities in the matter of the poorer benefices. So long as many benefices were miserably endowed or were without vicarages no provision could be made for resident incumbents, and in the case of two small and poorly endowed livings fairly close to each other, a plurality of tenure was not thought unreasonable. Thus the Pluralities Act of 1838 prescribed a ten mile limit within which a second benefice might be (2) held. Sinecure rectories were abolished by the Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues Act of 1840 and their revenues vested in the Ecclesiastical Commissions.<sup>(3)</sup> The Tithe Act of 1836 (4) commuted payment in kind for a fixed sum of money thereby removing a source of petty friction and in the following year the Registration and Marriage Acts took away another grievance of the dissenters.

In spite of an instinctive reluctance to change established institutions in any way, many churchmen were beginning to recognise that this might be their only means of survival in the new, industrial England. In general there was a move away from the Eighteenth Century secularism among them. Evangelical influences together with those of the Oxford Movement had brought about the gradual disappearance of the fox-hunting, absentee parsons and country parsons were now becoming more spiritually conscientious and better educated. By 1850 this

- (1) W.R.W. Stephens - The Life and Letters of W.F. Hook ( 1878) Vol.1.P.149
- (2) Land 2 Vict., C. 106
- (3) 3 and 4 Vict., C. 113
- (4) 6 and 7 Wm. IV. C. 71



improvement was apparent almost everywhere and ten years later Bishop Blomfield's biographer was able to write - (1) " In character, habits, attainments social position and general reputation, the ordinary clergyman of 1860 is a very different being from the clergyman of 1810. Exceptions of course occur in every rule; and in some instances the type of the later epoch may be anticipated in the earlier, or the type of the earlier reproduced in the later; but speaking generally, the remark of Mr. Thomas Granville who died in 1846, at the age of 91 may be taken as true, that no change which had taken place in his life-time was so great as the change in the clergy of the Church of England. The most obvious difference is the low standard of character and duties which then prevailed among clergymen compared to what is now generally expected of them. Fifty years ago a decent and regular performance of Divine Service on Sundays was almost all that anyone looked for in a clergyman; if this were found, most people were satisfied. The clergyman might be non-resident, a sportsman, courtier, but if he performed in person, or by deputy, that which now usurped the name of his 'duty' that was enough. We find bishops of this period in their charges, insisting upon duties and qualifications which are now taken for granted, and deprecating practices which are now unheard of."

As regards any formal education for the clergy little had been done by 1850; voluntary examinations had been instituted at the universities but it was not until 1860 and beyond that any real concern or debate was shown about the supply and training of candidates for holy orders. The theological department of King's College, London had been opened in 1847 but the great age of the foundation of theological colleges did not come until the 'sixties and 'seventies. (2) The clergy were not trained to reach high levels of eloquence and sermons were frequently taken from books or procured from those who conducted a brisk trade in the 'literature of the pulpit.' Flora Thompson describes the sermons preached in her native parish as late as the 1880's. " A favourite theme was the duty of regular church-going. He would hammer away at that for forty-five minutes never seeming to realise that he was preaching to the absent .... Another favourite subject was the supreme rightness of the social order as it then existed. God in his infinite wisdom, had appointed a place for every man, woman and child on this earth and it was their bounden duty to remain contentedly in their niches..... The Holy Name was seldom mentioned, nor were human griefs or joys, or the kindly human feelings which bind man to man. It was not religion he preached but a narrow code of ethics, imposed from above upon the lower orders, which even in those days, was out of date." (3)

The improvements which were apparent in the clergy however did not necessarily mean that they understood their parishioners any better or were any more respected by them. The barrier of class between priest and

- (1) A. Blomfield - Op. Cit. Vol. 1. pp 56-59.
- (2) C.K. Francis Brown - Op. Cit. Appendix B P. 247
- (3) F. Thompson - From Lark Rise to Candleford (1954) P. 229-230.

people was as great and unsurmountable as ever, and the multiplication of services did not alter the basic message of resignation to the established order.

In the ever increasing urban populations the Church was less concerned with refining her message than with actually getting people to her services in the first place. One principle from which Churchmen would not be deterred was that of parochial religion, a principle dear to them both because it gave the clergy a special position in relation to other ministers and because it represented the Church as a living part of the whole community, having a mission at once spiritual and social. But the practice of accommodating the parochial machinery to a new form of society presented enormous difficulties. The ideal community of parochial theory belonged to a rural pre-industrial England; in the stable hierarchical rural community the parish church had an importance which it seldom gained in the towns. In the large industrial towns, where class distinctions took on a geographical character, the parishes could be neither small nor socially heterogeneous.

There was also the problem of staffing the urban churches. They held no tithes and usually very poor endowments so that the only income a clergyman could expect was that provided by the Ecclesiastical Commission and that subscribed by the congregations either in the form of pew rents or in such collections as the Easter Offering, which in the poorer parishes could not amount to any substantial sum. Clergy from the upper-classes were not prepared to take up these livings at £80 per annum and even when suitable men were found, parishes were so impossibly large that they could not hope to impinge on more than a tiny minority of the population. The parish structure of the Church of England presupposed a Christian conformist society, but even from the beginning of the Eighteenth Century this theory had ceased to meet the facts. New concepts and a new language were needed if the church was to capture and recapture the many thousands of labouring people who shunned religion even where accommodation had been provided for them.

One of the greatest obstacles to progress at this time was the Church's own inflexibility and reluctance to implement any new ideas. During the 1820's Dr. Thomas Chalmers of Glasgow, in an effort to cope with the huge population of his ancient parish, established District Visiting Societies employing pious laymen to visit and instruct the poor in the fundamentals of religion, but it was not until the middle of the 1840's that this practice became an accepted feature of overcrowded urban parishes. Many bishops remained sceptical and even Blomfield who early on recognised the need for new methods of approach did not finally consent to accept the presidency of the London Association for District Visiting until 1843. (1) Both Blomfield and Bishop Sumner were prepared to license lay visitors and Scripture readers to assist the harried clergy; they also believed that there might be some advantage to be gained by recruiting some of the lay assistants from among the working-classes. This idea, which many of the clergy viewed with horror, was in part motivated by the recognition that

(1) G.F.A. Best - Temporal Pillars (1964) P. 357

the Methodists had been utilizing the working-class laity with great success for years, and also by the belief that desperate times required desperate measures. However, the attempts by Blomfield and Sumner to enlist the support of lay parochial visitors in urban areas showed how opposed the clergy in general, were, to any innovations impinging upon the parochial status quo. Having for long been harassed by Nonconformist 'fanatics' they were sensitive to what appeared to be an enthusiastic scheme for introducing an organised band of lay preachers and also to what might be the critical implications of employing a pious laity in their parishes. The need for some sort of assistance was well recognised but church leaders would have much preferred a massive infusion of additional clergy properly educated and ordained, to the prospect of enthusiastic laymen discussing Scripture with 'the impressionable poor'. As in the case of church extension and parochial reorganisation however, the question of additional clergy touched the sensitive nerve of proprietary right. Any attempt to tamper with their livings was fiercely protested, while many urban clergymen were still too poor or unwilling to share any part of their income with a clerical helper. A rare exception however, was the dynamic Vicar of Leeds, Walter Hook who in 1844, taking advantage of Peel's Act to Make Better Provision for the Spiritual Care of Populous Parishes which permitted the subdivision of existing parishes, subdivided his huge parish of 152,000 people into fourteen entirely independent new parishes, at a cost of over £400 in annual income.<sup>(1)</sup> He believed the situation justified such drastic action, explaining that only the upper and middle classes supported the church any longer. People in the agricultural districts "are generally indifferent....but in the manufacturing districts she is the object of detestation to the working classes. Workers place party in the stead of the Church and they consider the Church to belong to the Party of their oppressors, hence they hate it".<sup>(2)</sup> For the most part, those innovations which were adopted in the urban areas such as the utilization of lay assistants, were adopted reluctantly by worried clergymen and bishops who could see no viable alternative. The Church was still ruled by a hierarchy of men born and schooled in the Eighteenth Century, whose values were essentially those of the landed ruling classes rather than of the industrialists, merchants and mine-owners whose sprawling towns they had to administer ecclesiastically; only the more perceptive among them recognised that success meant expansion, innovation and change.

Had the structure of the Church been better equipped to deal with the missionary task that now faced it, it had still to resolve what its message to the labouring populations was going to be. While the Non-conformists chased their converts into the new centres of population and spoke to them in a language which they could understand, with doctrines relevant to daily work and thought, the Church of England remained

(1) R.A. Soloway - Op. Cit. P. 323

(2) Written in a letter to Wilberforce July 5th 1843. - in  
R.A. Soloway - Op. Cit. P. 344.



entirely static. Not only was the gulf between parson and people too great to be bridged, but so too were the Church's doctrines hopelessly out of touch with everyday life. The working classes were no longer willing to sit and listen attentively to those who preached the duties of obedience and resignation to the social order. In the countryside the power of the Squire might still be able to instil such deference, but less often was that deference the result of any inward conviction; and once in the towns the working classes had no such pressure to conform hanging over them. On the part of the Church there was no attempt to adapt its theology to the needs of the people; instead its doctrines got into the hands of medieval fanatics. The Oxford Movement, which dominated the scene until 1845 was the Church's response to a crisis, it represented reaction against secular humanism in the form of utilitarianism, but it had no relevance to man's immediate existence or experience. On the other hand, the theology of the Evangelical movement was narrow and naive. The influence of both movements is apparent in the character and spirit of the clergy if we compare 1800 with 1850, but the two were bitter rivals and quarrels brought out the worst in both - the narrow outlook of the Evangelicals and the stiff pride of High Churchmen. At a time when the Church needed more than ever before to present a united spirit, she was split and disabled by internal conflicts and highly intellectual arguments as to what her own theology should be. All this detracted attention away from the actual problem of working-class alienation.

The Nineteenth Century Church was faced, not with the problem of holding the allegiance of the working classes, difficult enough in itself, but of actually winning them over in the first place. The laxity of Eighteenth Century parochial religion meant that generations of labourers had only a very superficial attachment to the Church while many had no attachment at all, and with migration to the industrial towns, what remnants of faith remained were easily shaken off. Workers became part of a new secular culture with religious worship in no way an integral part of their experience. The Church had shown itself ill-prepared to undertake such a missionizing role. Having slowly recognised the problems, it took faltering steps towards modernisation, building thousands of churches and schools, increasing its clerical force, reorganising dioceses and parishes and redistributing ecclesiastical revenues. Gradually and somewhat reluctantly it sanctioned lay visitors, the use of unconsecrated rooms and the employment of detached missionaries. The view that on the whole it conceded too little and too late is endorsed by the returns of the 1851 religious census which show what minimal success these reforms had achieved.

- (1) H. Carter - *The Church in the Nineteenth Century* (1943) p. 100.
- (2) G. H. Dring - *The Church and the Working Classes in Victorian England* (1955)
- (3) See for example - J. H. Clapham - *Origins of Methodism in Britain* (1965)  
 J. Hill - *Methodism in England* (London 1967)  
 J. Inge - *The Revival of Religious Devotion in England* (1864)  
 G. Sturt - *A History of Religious Revival in Nottingham and the Vicinity* (1872).

THE METHODIST CHURCH.

Methodism evolved from what was originally an evangelical revival within the Church of England; an attack aimed at the worldly laxity of the Eighteenth Century Church. This attack was led by John Wesley (1703-1791) a High Churchman and a Tory whose purpose was simply to regenerate the Church of England from within by increasing the number of services and by restoring the primacy of faith. The lethargy and materialism of the Eighteenth Century Church however were such that, in the end, and against Wesley's wishes, the Evangelical revival resulted in the distinct Methodist Church. Opposition from Churchmen who disliked the 'enthusiasm' and itinerant element in Wesley's method of preaching led to a final separation in 1784.

From an estimated 26,000 communicants in 1770 and approximately 71,000 at the time of Wesley's death in 1791, Methodists grew in number to reach nearly two million attenders in the ten Methodist connexions of 1851. (1)

Membership of Major Methodist Denominations 1801 - 1851 (2)

DENOMINATION	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861
Wesleyan Methodist Church	89,529	145,614	200,074	249,119	328,792	302,209	319,782
Methodist New Connexion	4,851	7,448	10,404	11,433	20,506	16,962	22,732
Primitive Methodist Bible Christians			16,394	37,216	75,967	106,074	127,772
Wesleyan Methodist Association				6,650	11,353	13,324	16,866
United Methodist Free Churches					22,074	20,557	
						45,000	52,970

The rapid spread of Methodism, particularly in the manufacturing and mining areas has been well-documented (3) During the third quarter of the Eighteenth Century, Dissent as a whole increased nearly everywhere

- (1) H. Davies - The English Free Churches (1963) P. 140.  
 (2) K.S. Inglis - The Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England (1963)  
 (3) See for example - J. Musgrave - Origin of Methodism in Bolton (1865)  
 R. Allen - Methodism in Preston (Preston 1866)  
 P. Prescott - The Case of Cornish Methodism Concluded (1865)  
 G. Harwood - A History of Wesleyan Methodism in Nottingham and its vicinity. (1872).

(2) Ibid. Table 10.

along a line drawn from Wiltshire almost due north to Northumberland. The war period saw a further remarkable increase in the Methodist following, gains being greatest in the larger towns among the new industrial working classes, and in the mining areas which had been previously neglected by any church. The religious census shows that in Cornwall one-third of the population attended Methodist chapels. In Yorkshire out of a total population of 1,789,047- 329,572 or one-sixth attended the Methodist Evening service on Census Sunday; in the area comprising Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland and Westmoreland 132,622 or approximately one-seventh of the population attended Methodist chapels and in Lancashire and Cheshire the proportion was roughly one-twelfth of a total population of 2,490,827.

This success must in part be attributed to the enormous effort and zeal the Methodists put into providing accommodation for their new converts. Chapel building rose steeply in the last quarter of the Eighteenth Century, reached a high peak in the 1820's and continued on a high plateau through to the mid-century and beyond. In 1801 the total number of Methodist meeting places was reported to be 825 providing a seating capacity for 165,000; by 1851 the number of chapels had risen to 11,000 and that was now accommodation for 2,194,298 or about one-eighth of the total population. (1)

Rate of Increase of Accommodation provided by Methodists of all Branches.

PERIOD	PLACES OF WORSHIP	SITTINGS	% RATE OF INCREASE AT EACH PERIOD.
1801	825	165,000	
1811	1,485	296,000	80
1821	2,748	549,600	85
1831	4,622	924,400	68.2
1841	7,819	1,563,800	69.2
1851	11,007	2,194,298	40.3

The accommodation provided by each separate branch of the Methodist Church is shown in the following table (2)

DENOMINATION	PLACES OF WORSHIP	SITTINGS TO POP.	% OF SITTINGS TO TOTAL NUMBER PROVIDED BY ALL BODIES.
Original Wesleyan Connexion	6,579	1,447,580 8.1	14.1
New Connexion	297	96,964 0.5	1
Primitive Methodist	2,871	414,030 2.3	4
Bible Christian	482	66,834 0.4	0.7
Wesleyan Methodist Assoc.	419	98,813 0.5	1
Independent Methodists	20	2,263 -	-
Wesleyan Reformers	339	67,814 0.4	0.7

(1) Census : Religious Worship Table 17.

(2) Ibid. Table 10.



Wesley took his theology first to the remote areas of ignorance and irreligion; 60% of his converts came from the eleven counties where organised Christianity was weakest; they were Middlesex, Surrey, Cornwall, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland and the West Riding of Yorkshire. The populations who responded most readily were those who knew little of religion, were poorly educated and often illiterate. The main reasons for the success of Methodism among these people must be traced firstly to its religious appeal with which it captured their affections and secondly, and perhaps more important to its collective and democratic customs by which it retained and utilised its converts.

The basis of Methodist theology was its uncompromising world - rejecting ethic that demanded the subordination of secular interests to the total pursuit of perfection under the direction of a total authority. Implicit in this was the notion of personal responsibility as the basis of human behaviour and to exercise this responsibility effectively Wesley held that life must be thoroughly and methodically disciplined. He wished the Methodists to become a peculiar people : he wanted them to abstain from marriage outside the societies, to be distinguished by their plain dress and by the gravity of their speech and manners and to avoid the company even of relatives who were not members.

The great religious appeal of Methodism to the working classes lay in the spiritual egalitarianism of Arminian theology which professed that all were equal before God and that all could achieve the goal of perfection. Equality of opportunity in sin and grace was there for all, rich and poor, but to achieve salvation required the total submission of man to God. Thus, while Methodism laid all responsibility for salvation with the individual, at the same time it emphasised the fundamental evil and powerlessness of man. Only if man was prepared to humiliate himself before God and abolish his individual will and pride, would God's grace descend upon him. The after-life was seen as the only importance; with faith, all men could be assured of ultimate salvation so that, beside this certainty, present sufferings were irrelevant and temporal things such as wealth or poverty mattered little. Obviously such a doctrine could act as a consolation to the poor and at the same time offer some sort of emotional compensation for their grievances.

The actual form that Methodist religious ceremonies took provided a further source of attraction to those who had previously known only the dull monotony of the Established Church. Wesley claimed that Methodism was above all ' a religion of the heart', and as such it acted, in a way, as a safety valve for working class energies and emotions. The endless love feasts, watch-nights, band meetings and revivalist campaigns were held in an atmosphere of tense emotional drama and enthusiasm that even the poorest and most illiterate were encouraged to share. At these meetings it was customary for the preacher to speak first of his own spiritual experiences, temptations and contests with sin, after which, individual members stood up to make their own intimate confessions of sin or temptation, while the rest of the congregation engaged in sighs, groans or ejaculations of praise.

"Sometimes a brother or sister would stand up to 'testify', and then the children opened their eyes and ears, for a mispent youth was the conventional prelude to conversion and who knew what exciting transgressions might not be revealed. A sister confessed that in her youth she had not only taken a delight in decking out her vile body; but worse still she had imperilled her immortal soul by dancing on the green at feasts and club outings, keeping it up on one occasion until midnight. Such mild sins were not in themselves exciting.... but they were described with such a wealth of detail and with such self-condemnation that the listener was for the moment persuaded that he or she was gazing on the chief of sinners. One man especially, claimed that pre-eminence 'I were the chief of sinners', he would cry, 'a real bad lot, a Devil's Disciple. Cursing and swearing, drinking and drabbing, there was nothing bad as I didn't do. Why, would you believe it, in my sinful pride, I sinned against the Holy Ghost. Aye that I did,"and the awed silence would be broken by the groans and 'God have mercy's of his hearers while he looked around to observe the effect of his confession before relating how he 'came to the Lord". (1)

Yet against this view of a religion of the heart, must be reconciled the strict, methodical, disciplined and repressing features of Methodism. Enthusiasm was to be reserved for occasions of the chapel only; in all other aspects of life the Methodist character was rigidly disciplined, avoiding any form of spontaneity. It displayed a rational attitude towards experience, a scepticism towards magic and a strong denial of impulse expression. From Calvinism and from the English Puritan divines of the Seventeenth Century, Methodism took over the joylessness of life. All forms of enjoyment came to be looked upon as sinful, the most sinful of which was sexuality. 'Avoid all manner of passions', advised Wesley. Methodists seemed bent upon uprooting all the old pre-industrial traditions and sports particularly from the manufacturing districts and displacing them by more sedentary occupations, the most Godly of which was work. Labour itself was seen as a pure act of virtue and there were constant goadings to sober and industrious work. A gradual disappearance of all the old forms of working class enjoyment is one of the major characteristics of the Evangelical period and while it would be wrong to view this in purely sentimental terms - the passing of 'Gin' Lane for example could hardly be mourned - their going, left a natural void which Methodism attempted to fill with a depressing work ethic.

Added to the attraction of Methodist theology was that of its organisational structure, undoubtedly a major factor in retaining the support of so many working class people. At a time when the poor had no political vote, no voice in the fixing of wages, no sharing in determining or revising conditions of employment and no opportunity for taking up official positions in even local societies, Methodism offered an exercise in self-government.

Republican in government, the structure rested upon the system of class meetings, initiated by Wesley in 1742. Its original purpose was that members might come together in small groups to discuss matters of common interest, but these groups soon developed into religious meetings

(1) F. Thompson - From Larkrise to Candleford O.U.P. (1954) P.236

(2) H. Bailey - A History of the English People to 1815 (Foglar's Ed.) P. 240



where members related their religious experiences, prayed together and sang hymns. Nevertheless, the meetings were still more than a religious service; they were social gatherings where all who attended were taught their interdependence and were encouraged to assist one another. Each class consisted of approximately twelve members, each paying a subscription of one penny per week. At the head of each group was a leader who acted as the delegate to a local District Meeting which in turn sent delegates to a larger district meeting and so on up to the National Conference in which absolute control was vested. Membership of a class meeting was considered obligatory on every Methodist and by 1831 meetings were being held in most towns and villages throughout the country. The exact number of class leaders cannot be calculated although estimates of 1850 have put the figure around 25,000; (1) at the same time there were over 20,000 laymen occupied in the position of local preacher and to these figures must be added those who exercised the functions of frustees, stewards, exhorters, prayer leaders and Sunday School teachers.

In this seemingly democratic fellowship ordinary men and women were given the religious franchise and made to feel that they had a share in, and a responsibility for, the success of the movement. The vast officialdom of Methodism utilised the talents of laymen and at the same time created an interior social mobility within the chapel community. However, the apparent democracy of the class system is delusive, democracy in no way extended to matters of doctrine or Church government. Wesley held a profound dislike of the self-governing anarchy of Old Dissent and while he was prepared to concede superficial democracy to the classes he imposed a strict discipline upon them and expelled many for their failure to conform. Members could find themselves expelled for levity, for profanity and swearing and for lax attendance at meetings. Wesley's authoritarian rule was continued by his successors and led to the eventual secession of Primitive Methodists, Tent Methodists and Bible Christians all of which were far more democratic in government.

Unlike the later seceding sects, the outstanding characteristic of orthodox Wesleyanism was its political quietism. Its leaders were for the most part High Tories who preached the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance. With the formation of Political Societies in 1816-1817 Wesleyan Methodism openly abandoned any pretence of neutrality, members were expelled for political activities and until the middle of the century opposition to working class societies, including trade unions, became a major feature of Methodist teaching among Wesleyan preachers. In the Durham coal-field especially where the strikes involved a strong religious element, Wesleyans stood in the background. Speaking of the 1844 strike, one witness gave evidence "I am a member of the Wesleyan Body. I am a local preacher.... All our ministers discouraged the strike." (2)

The theory that because of its reactionary and subservient character, Methodism was an important factor in preventing revolution in England during the early years of the Nineteenth Century, is well known. (3)

- (1) R.F. Wearmouth - Methodism and the Working-Class Movements of England 1800-50. Epworth Press (1937)
- (2) Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the State of the Population in the Mining Districts. 1846 (737) XXIV. 383 P. 20.
- (3) E. Halevy - A History of the English People in 1815 (Penguin Edn.) P.49.



Under the influence of Methodist preachers large numbers of the labouring poor were persuaded, or compelled to remain outside the political movements of the time and though they might be suffering unemployment and material scarcity, they were advised to cultivate patience and 'endure with hope'. The statistical evidence as to whether Methodism was effective as an anti-revolutionary force, is equivocal. On the one hand, the Wesleyan connexion always had more members than all the seceding congregations put together, yet on the other, Methodists of all kinds were never more than a fraction of the working-class population. The 1851 Census shows that there were three million Methodists - not all of whom were working-class - out of a total working-class population of England and Wales of fourteen million. At the best estimate, Wesleyans could not have constituted more than one in eight of the working class population. Yet Cobbett and the Radicals singled out Wesleyan ministers as 'the bitterest foes of freedom in England', not only because of their political quietism but also for the way in which Wesleyans undermined working-class radicalism by their wordly success in demonstrating the entrepreneurial ideal of the self-made man. It is impossible to tell how many potential revolutionaries were thus diverted into the path of social ambition.

However, large numbers of men repudiated the Toryism of Wesleyan leadership and severed their relationship with the original connexion, usually joining the more democratic sects which were never hostile to reform, differing from Wesleyanism in that they were religions of the poor, rather than for the poor.

The first important Wesleyan secession was The Methodist New Connexion led by Alexander Kilham in 1797. It's greatest strength lay in the manufacturing centres and among the artisans and weavers tinged with Jacobinism. (1) In Huddersfield members of the New Connexion were known as the Tom Paine Methodists, and the Rights of Man was also read by the New Connexion members of Halifax where at the Bradshaw chapel a reading club and debating society was formed. (2) However the progress of the Connexion was unspectacular and by 1851 it could claim only 17,000 members as compared with 300,000 Wesleyans.

At a time when the Original Connexion was becoming increasingly more respectable and losing some of its former zeal and enthusiasm, Primitive Methodism which emerged in 1807, in particular can be described as a working class association. Its polity which was drawn up in an atmosphere of anti-clericalism amid the political agitation of 1819 - 1820 bears the impress of the age to which it belongs. To guard against any possibility of ministerial dominance, it was layed down that in every church court there should be two laymen to every church minister. (3) Thus legislation and administration, both locally and centrally came under the control of the laity. These democratic tendencies were felt not only within church organisation, but there is no doubt that a close connection existed between the Primitive Methodists and Radicals, even

(1) E.R. Taylor - Methodism and Politics 1791-1851 (1935) P. 81.

(2) J. Blackwell - The Life of Alexander Kilham (1838) P. 339.

(3) O. Chadwick - The Victorian Church Part I. (1966) P. 390.

though this alliance never received official sanction. In the arena of Nineteenth Century trade unionism Primitive Methodists were especially active. Among the Northumberland and Durham miners local preachers organised Trade Unions and led them in strikes. A report in 1831 to the Home Secretary states, "The delegates are chiefly Ranter preachers, who have acquired a considerable fluency and even in some cases proficiency in public speaking. The great mass are exceedingly ignorant and therefore become the ready tools of these designing individuals." (1) This Primitive Methodist strength in the coal-fields was also endorsed by Sidney Webb "From the very beginning of the Trade Union Movement among all sections of wage-earners, of the formation of Friendly Societies and of the later attempts at adult education; it is men who are Methodists and in Durham County especially local preachers of the Primitive Methodists, whom we find taking the lead and filling the posts of influence. From their ranks have come an astonishingly large proportion of Trade Union Leaders, from check-weighers to lodge chairmen up to county officials and committee men." (2) Religio-Trade Unionism led by the Methodists was also found among industrial workers both in the north and south of England and later on among the agricultural labourers led by Joseph Arch, who was a Primitive Methodist local preacher. (3)

Despite Wesley's own abhorrence of working class agitation, while he had preached the virtues of submission, at the same time he had taught democratic processes which, ironically, were carried over into working class radical societies and trade unions. Lay preachers, trained in oratory, initiative and organisation naturally gravitated to the leadership of any movement they joined. As leaders, they saw and taught the value of clear aims, sound discipline and solid organisation creating an institutional framework for a non-violent form of conflict, protest and demonstration, as opposed to the sporadic, unthinking, unorganised riotous violence of the old society. In this way ex-Methodist political and industrial leaders, however militant, made a very important contribution to political and social stability. From whatever Connexion they came, Methodists and ex-Methodists brought great powers of charismatic leadership to the working class political societies and trade unions, together with a sense of earnestness, discipline and dedication.

In another respect, the discipline implicit in Methodism also served to further the interests of middle-class capitalism, in that it was a major pre-requisite of industrialisation. The correspondence between the virtues which Methodism inculcated in the working classes and the desiderata of middle-class utilitarianism cannot be ignored. Traditionally, English workers had preferred to work just long enough to obtain their customary standard of living, and then to spend the rest of the time in drinking and pleasure. Domestic workers in particular

(1) H.O. 40 (1831) P. 29 : in - R.F. Wearmouth - Some Working-Class Movements of the Nineteenth Century (1948) P. 299.  
 (2) S. Webb - The Story of the Durham Miners P. 22.  
 (3) Joseph Arch - The Story of His Life - Told by Himself (1898)

were their own masters and although there was a large element of compulsion in the workers situation, he could always down tools if and when he chose. Men often preferred to work very long hours for a couple of days and then to take the following day completely off, but an industrialised factory system could not hope to exist on this sort of basis. Dr. Andrew Ure's definition of the work factory involved - 'the idea of a vast automaton, composed of various mechanical and intellectual organs, acting in uninterrupted concert for the production of a common object, all of them being subordinated to a self-regulated moving force.' (1) The operation of such a system depended upon a well disciplined labour force and alongside the brute force discipline imposed by manufacturers Methodism provided large numbers of the labouring population with a built-in inner compulsion to work as one of the necessary paths to eventual salvation.

As regards the Methodist contribution to education during the Nineteenth Century, Methodism was a strongly anti-intellectual influence. Intellectual enquiry was very much discouraged; poetry was suspect while philosophy, bible criticism or political theory were taboo. The Methodist teaching of the blessedness of the pure in heart no matter what their rank or accomplishments was regarded by Hazlitt as a carte blanche for ignorance and folly " Those.... who are either unable or unwilling to think connectedly or rationally on any subject, are at once released from every obligation of the kind by being told that faith and reason are opposed to one another." (2) Novels were dismissed as mere frivolity but the acquisition of 'useful Knowledge' could be seen as godly and full of merit.

In the Sunday Schools Methodists were zealously active in the process of indoctrination but it is difficult to know just how far their activities could really be judged as educational. Certainly in the first decades of the Nineteenth Century they gave only a very limited education, the teaching of writing was discouraged and what reading did take place was restricted to the Bible. By the 1840's this rigidity had relaxed into a more softened stage but the emphasis was still upon capturing the soul of the child at the earliest possible age. The books which were now allowed included *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Holy War* and other works by Bunyan and Baxter's *The Saint's Rest*. One Gloucestershire boy recalled the *Dialogue of Devils* as having been ' the cause of my taking more heed to my ways'. (3)

- (1) A. Ure - *The Philosophy of Manufactures* ( 1835) P. 13.
- (2) W. Hazlitt - *Works* IV P. 57, from 'The Round Table' (1817) in-  
E.P. Thompson - *The Making of the English Working Class*  
(Penguin Edn. 1968) P. 811
- (3) A. Platts & G. Hainton - *Education in Gloucestershire* ( 1954) P. 51.



Number of Methodist Sunday Schools and Scholars in 1851 (1).

<u>DENOMINATION</u>	<u>SCHOOLS</u>	<u>SCHOLARS</u>
Original Connexion	4,126	429,727
New Connexion	227	37,943
Primitive Methodists	1,113	98,294
Bible Christians	221	13,812
Wesleyan Association	311	43,661
Independent Methodists	24	3,902
Wesleyan Reformers	141	16,561
<hr/>		
Calvinistic Methodists	962	112,740
Lady Huntingdon's Connexion	53	7,987
<hr/>		
TOTAL	7,178	764,627

In the field of day school education Methodists were slow to assert themselves and until the 1840's its development was left entirely to local initiative and local philanthropy. In 1837 the Wesleyan Conference boasted no more than nine infant schools and twenty-two day schools in the whole country. In that year, however, an Education Committee was set up which, in its First Report declared that the Wesleyan body ought to have a comprehensive and extensive scheme for Infant Schools, Day-Schools and Sunday Schools. By 1839 a fund had been launched and a start made on a national educational programme; in 1840 there were 101 Methodist day-schools and by 1851 this figure had risen to 336 providing education for 38,000 children.

(1) The Census of Great Britain 1851 : Education.

The censuses were the Independents or Congregationalists. In 1851 the census was taken, who were also one of the earliest Methodist societies in the world, dating back to approximately 1500. According to the census returns they made a total number of 1,442,000 attendances, which, using the method of calculation, would amount for an average of 19,127 attendances. In total the church provided accommodation for 1,442,000 of the 21,000,000 of the population. However only 25,211 of 11% of these children were free and

(1) Census of Great Britain 1851 : Religion & Education

OTHER DISSENTING CONGREGATIONS.

In the old and clearly defined hierarchical society of the Eighteenth Century, the religious character of the population was broadly represented in the form of a sandwich with Anglicans at the top and bottom of the structure and Dissenters in the middle. Old Dissent flourished in precisely those groups which both wished and could afford, to be somewhat independent of the paternal hierarchy; hence the original Puritan sects were confined to the middle ranks - the yeoman farmers and more independent craftsmen in the rural areas, and the traders and manufacturers of the towns. In this way religion functioned as a means of expressing social antagonism before overt class attitudes were formed. Meanwhile the Puritan emphasis upon a particular 'calling' together with a strong work ethic which all of these denominations illustrated, involved the 'virtues' of industry and thrift which necessarily tended towards making their congregations even more prosperous and isolated from the poorer classes. By the time the first effects of the Industrial Revolution were beginning to be seen, and the working classes had shaken off their bonds of dependence and were free to choose whatever religion they pleased, the majority opted out of the church altogether. Of those who remained, most gravitated towards the various Methodist sects or to the smaller isolated congregations such as the Mormons which emphasised the hope of salvation for all, while the old Dissenting communities continued to be predominantly middle-class in their following.

The Evangelical Revival of the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Century necessarily affected all denominations, but although the original Dissenting congregations shared in the general expansion (with the exception of Quakers and Presbyterians) at no time did they ever come close to emulating the Methodist example. The Religious Census shows that the worshipping population was divided almost equally between Anglicans and Nonconformists with the Roman Catholic Church accounting for a mere 4% of all church attenders. Out of a total number of Nonconformist attendances of 5,219,885, the Methodist Church i.e. the original Wesleyan body plus all the seceding connexions made up just under half of these - 2,417,353. The remaining 2,802,532, attendances recorded accounted for all the other denominations put together. (1)

Among the largest of these other denominations, at the time of the census were the Independents or Congregationalists as they were sometimes known, who were also one of the earliest Dissenting communities in England, dating back to approximately 1568. According to the Census returns they made a total number of 1,214,059 attendances, which, using Mann's method of calculation, would account for an approximate 793,127 attenders. In total the church provided accommodation for 1,063,136 or for 6% of the population. However only 438,211 or 41% of these sittings were free and

(1) Census of Great Britain 1851 : Religious Worship

in comparison with the other major Dissenting church their rate of growth, as regards accommodation, in the Nineteenth Century was slow.

Table to show Rate of Increase between 1801 - 1851 (1)

PERIOD	PLACES OF WORSHIP	SITTINGS	% RATE OF INCREASE.
1801	914	299,792	
1811	1,140	373,920	24.7
1821	1,478	484,784	29.2
1831	1,999	655,672	25.2
1841	2,606	854,768	30.4
1851	3,244	1,067,760	24.9

At the beginning of the century it was difficult to speak of the Independent Church as a distinct denomination with clearly defined beliefs and aims, since Independents held the axiom that each chapel was sovereign, and all the chapels had different histories. Some could trace existence back to Cromwell, some were once Wesleyan or Presbyterian chapels, while others were once Anglican proprietary chapels where in 1830 the liturgy of the prayer book was still used, and some were the offspring of the Evangelical revival. The doctrine was, essentially Calvinist and relied heavily on the notion of Election as can be seen from the Covenant of a Somerset congregation - "We believe that Christ has appointed particular societies or churches on earth, for his peculiar glory and the good and salvation of his people whom he has called by his grace out of the world:"(2) However, as there was no central authority, individual churches might emphasise certain points of doctrine more so than others. They were all hostile to the slightest interference from external bodies and jealously guarded their independence and right to manage their own affairs. Nevertheless by the 1830's pressures for a National union were widely felt; the need for central funds was particularly important since a new chapel in a poor village could not be built without outside help and furthermore, the example of Methodist expansion also fostered the opinion that central government offered significant benefits. In May 1831 a union was formed but it was rather an agreement among men who agreed not to unite; the union was founded on "a full recognition of their own distinctive principle, namely, the scriptural right of every separate church to maintain perfect independence in the government and administration of its own particular affairs; and therefore that the union shall not, in any case, assume legislative authority or become a court of appeal." (3) It was to be more of a consultative body, to collect statistics, make representations to Government, send on annual letter to the constituent churches and hold an annual meeting where every minister or official of a congregation might attend and vote. Very slowly the county associations joined this body but

(1) Census of Great Britain 1851 : Religious Worship Table 17 CXLIV

(2) H. Davies - The English Free Churches (1963) P. 120.

(3) O. Chadwick - The Victorian Church Part 1.



throughout the 1830's and '40's' its existence remained very fragile, bearing little relation to the anarchic facts of Independent life and causing a great deal more dissension than it did unity.

The ministry provided a more substantial national link, Independents were proud of their old colleges and of their education but this perhaps did more to alienate the working classes from their congregations than any other factor. Independents came mainly from the middle and lower middle classes - shopkeepers and tradesmen and sometimes rising to aldermen, mayors and city manufacturers. What 'enthusiasm' of the Evangelical Revival had rubbed off on the Independents tended to thin the ranks of the upper and educated classes but at the same time, there is no evidence to show that their place was taken by labourers or operatives. It was often complained that the poor could not be expected to come to chapel when the sermons were addressed to a level of education above their heads; sermons were usually long and often very profound and indeed Independent congregations received more instruction in theology than any other denomination. And while this was looked upon with pride by the ministry the Independent Church was unlikely to make any significant progress among the working-classes. This charge of intellectualism can also be levelled, though to a much greater extent, at the Presbyterians who not only proved themselves unable to attract working class people but, by their own internal arguments and splits, lost support even among their middle and upper class congregations.

Unlike the Independents, who thought in terms of the gathered church of true believers, Presbyterians thought in terms of the Parish and were prepared to admit to communion not just those who could give a satisfactory account of their religious experience but all those in the neighbourhood who had some understanding of the Christian faith and had not disqualified themselves by evil living. Thus there was no clear demarcation between members and non-members.

At the beginning of the Eighteenth Century the Presbyterians in England had been the largest and most influential of the Dissenting denominations drawing their support almost entirely from the middle classes and from that section of middle class people who, on the whole, tended to be better educated and of a higher social standing than those who made up the Independent congregations. Presbyterianism was looked upon as the religion of the enlightened, its ultimate authority being vested not in the tradition of the Church but in free enquiry and reason. At a time when, to the middle classes in general, this seemed to be the best of all possible worlds, the central idea of orthodox Christianity as embodied in the Evangelical Revival - that man was a weak and wretched creature in a doleful world, in dire need of being rescued and assured of a better world to come - was difficult to accept. Whereas the Arminian doctrine with its optimistic view of human nature and its emphasis on practical morality seemed much more reasonable. As a result Presbyterians tended to disassociate themselves from the Revival. More sceptical in outlook than other Dissenters, they were suspicious of spiritual experiences and out

of sympathy with 'enthusiasm'; they looked down upon Evangelicals as "folk with a vast zeal, little knowledge and violent attachment to a set of words and phrases which they have been used to look upon as orthodox." (1) As a result of this detachment however, they cut themselves off from the main stream of religious life and by the beginning of the Nineteenth Century were numerically lagging a long way behind the Independents and Baptists. Quite apart from their inability to attract new converts, throughout the Eighteenth Century they had been suffering a real decline. Previously at their strongest in the cloth-making districts of the West Country, the decline in trade brought with it, financial stringency which had a serious effect upon the denomination particularly as they were averse to using lay preachers and insisted upon paid and highly-trained ministers. The preoccupation of the prospering middle classes in general, with secular affairs, has also been cited as a principal factor contributing to the decline, and this might also hold true for the Quakers who were suffering a similar decline, whereas the Methodist and Baptist converts of the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Century were hardly ever from the middle classes.

By 1800 then, the Presbyterians were in a very much weakened state and their liberal ideals and support of the French Revolution only served to isolate them further. Most congregations remained in existence only by the continuing force of habit and by strong family ties, although in the West of England, as wealth was being drained away from the smaller towns, some disappeared altogether. In London a group composed largely of the professional class who valued Unitarianism (as it was now being called) as a banner of enlightenment, manned committees, managed trust funds, entered Parliament and thus kept the movement alive. Nevertheless the numbers attending worship were said to be very small.(2)

New leadership in the Nineteenth Century to some extent helped revive the ailing Church, but internal controversies between old and new Unitarians together with external controversies on theological grounds, with the more orthodox Dissenters, did not make for any great progress. Not all within the Church welcomed the new zeal which was being injected by the new leaders, several of whom had come over from the Baptist Church. Two main parties within the Church arose; on the one hand were the followers of Priestley - scriptural and rational tending towards radicalism in politics, eager for propaganda, organisation and new definite theology. They founded missionary societies and new congregations and exalted the Unitarian name. On the other hand were the followers of Martineau who looked towards an idealised Puritanism, not interested in propaganda and opposed to the name Unitarian as a badge of sectarianism. Tradition and social acceptance were important to them and they tended to move closer and closer towards the Established Church, while their attitude to the poor was aristocratic and paternal rather than radical.

(1) Benson MSS. J. Smithson of Harleston to Benson April 1755 - quoted in - C. Bolam, J. Goring, H.L. Short, R. Thomas - The English Presbyterians Allen & Unwin (1968) P. 26.

(2) Ibid. P. 236.

The Unitarians established domestic missions in many towns, although at first no provision was made for public worship, on the principle that there was to be nothing resembling Methodist evangelism. This did come eventually, but at the beginning, the stated objects of these missions was to help the poor to help themselves by providing advice, penny-banks, reading-rooms, allotments etc. Although in some places, working class men were put at the head of these missions, the philosophy upon which all of these provisions were based was essentially middle-class. All were in accordance with the principles of Victorian political economy based on materialist, individual and competitive self-help, to be nurtured with paternal generosity by the middle-class to those below them on the economic scale. By the middle of the century the institutional church had arrived. A variety of philanthropic activities were to be conducted by the minister during the week, activities financed by the wealthier members of the congregation and carried out with the additional help provided by the ladies. The social gulf between the two classes however, remained as great as ever and was not likely to be bridged by such works as these, which, however good, smacked heavily of charity.

More beneficial to the Unitarians in their effort to reach the working classes was the incorporation into its ranks of a new and popular religious movement in 1841, called the Christian Brethren. This movement scattered over the north of England was founded by Joseph Barker, an ex-New Connexion Methodist who had been expelled for heresy. He, like Martineau rejected the name Unitarian as sectarian, but contrary to Martineau's principle, his was a poor man's church of protest which tended to be rationalist and radical in biblical terms, and he attracted support from the older type of Unitarian. In 1846 there were about two hundred Christian Brethren congregations, (1) but as Barker became more and more involved in radical politics and secularism, his movement collapsed and he eventually returned to the Methodist fold. He left behind him a few new working-class congregations and a new impetus towards popular Evangelism, but the old conflict between the two parties was still there and continued throughout the fifties and into the sixties, when a third party, representing the anti-supernatural force emerged to bring further dissension into the ranks.

These internal controversies concerning ceremony as much as actual theology had done much to inhibit any serious attempts at Evangelism that might have won over working-class support. Added to these handicaps was the intellectual atmosphere of old Dissent which Unitarianism retained in a much greater degree than any of the other denominations. Intellectual, liberal but above all, transparently middle-class ideals, which provided the basic tenets of a church unwilling to be drawn into the wave of popular Evangelicalism of the Revival, were no match for the principles of 'enthusiasm' exploited by other Dissenters, by which they carried their message outwards to the labouring population, for a time, with substantial success.

(1) Ibid. P. 265



In direct contrast to Presbyterians, of all the old Dissenting congregations, the Baptist Church was the most plebian in its following while, at the same time, remaining the most Calvinist in its theology. As an organised community in England Baptists date from 1608 when they emerged as a secession from within Congregationalism. Under the Stuarts they suffered rigorous persecution but they were relieved of most of their oppressions by the Toleration Act of 1688 and during the Eighteenth Century, as persecution gave way to greater tolerance, their congregations tended to become less zealous and more prosperous. In many ways the Baptists retained their affiliations with Independents, except that they rejected infant baptism and practised the baptism of believers. The more educated Baptist congregations particularly, were barely distinguishable from the Independents and there was frequent co-operation between them. In 1833 for example, the Baptist and Independent chapels at Bristol joined in common celebration of the Lord's supper, and at Bedford and Luton, Baptist chapels were used in common with the Independents. (1) But on the whole, Baptist ministers tended to be less educated, their followers more illiterate and their Calvinism more rigid.

According to the doctrines professed, Baptists were divided into three groups. General Baptists were Arminian, believing that Christ died to save all men, but their numbers had dwindled during the Eighteenth Century as the majority of them faded into Unitarianism. The orthodox Arminian faith was preserved however by the New Connexion of General Baptists formed in 1770. Leading the denomination in numbers and learning were the Particular Baptists who based their belief on the Calvinist doctrine of election, i.e. that one particular portion of mankind has been, from all eternity, predestined to be saved. This would seem in itself to prevent the propagation of the sect but a formula had been offered in 1770 by which Evangelism and the doctrine of election were reconciled. Particular Baptists had issued a circular letter stating that "Every soul that comes to Christ to be saved need not fear that he is not elected, for none but such would be willing to come." (2) The third faction within the Church was formed by those who practised a much more rigid Calvinism - and were known as the Strict and Particular Baptists.

The effects of the Revival were at first slow to be seen among the Baptists and it was not until the last decade of the Eighteenth Century that any great expansion took place. In 1790 there were 332 Particular Baptist Chapels in England and approximately one hundred belonging to the General Baptists; by 1832 this had grown to 926 chapels for the Particular Baptists and approximately two hundred for the General Baptists ( of Old and New Connexions) and in 1839 there were 1,276 Particular Baptist Chapels. (3) The following table shows the precise rate of growth during the first fifty years of the Nineteenth Century for Baptists of all persuasions. (4)

- (1) J. Bennett - The History of Dissenters during the last 30 years 1808-38 (1839)
- (2) D. Mervyn Himbury - British Baptists - A Short History Carey Kingsgate (1962) P. 81.
- (3) H. Davies - The English Free Churches P. 38.
- (4) Census of Great Britain 1851 - Religious Worship Table 17 CKLIV.

PERIOD	PLACES OF WORSHIP	SITTINGS	% RATE OF INCREASE.
1801	652	176,692	
1811	858	232,518	31.6
1821	1,170	317,070	36.4
1831	1,613	437,123	37.9
1841	2,174	589,154	34.7
1851	2,789	752,343	27.7

In the last decade of the Eighteenth Century a Baptist Missionary Society had been formed to help spread the gospel among the heathen people abroad and, in common with other denominations concern about the heathens at home followed on only as a secondary consideration. In 1796 P.J. Saffrey and William Steadman were sent on a preaching mission to Cornwall and in the same year a number of London Baptists formed The Baptist Society in London for the encouragement and Support of Itinerant and Village Preaching. (1) In 1814 a national society, The Baptist Home Missionary Society was founded which gave help to ministers in the form of providing them with Bibles, tracts and other religious publications. After 1817 auxiliary societies were formed in different parts of the country and in 1825 a small periodical, 'The Quarterly Register' of the Baptist Home Missionary Society was published to bind these local societies more closely to the parent body. By this time, the Society was sending itinerant preachers into villages all over the country and in 1826 it had approximately four hundred preaching stations with one hundred and twenty-five Sunday Schools. (2) In spite of this extensive work however, it was not until 1865 that a full-time secretary was appointed.

The need for a general union among Baptists existed in the same way as it did for Independents but its actual creation was made more difficult because of the three-way split. An embryo General Union had been formed in 1813 and this was re-organised in 1832 as a meeting for mutual acquaintance and support of missionary work but it was at first confined to Particular Baptists who were divided even among themselves over the question of open or closed communion. The more moderate Calvinists were prepared to admit those who shared the evangelical faith but had not been baptised as adult believers; during the 1830's this view was held by only a small minority of ministers but during the next thirty years open communion became increasingly common until it dominated London and the South. This was necessarily accompanied by a steady decline of Calvinism within the denomination while those who still believed that communion should be restricted only to the baptised withdrew towards associations of Strict Baptists, and remained outside the General Union.

(1) A.C. Underwood - A History of the English Baptists

Kingsgate Press (1947) pp. 174-5.

(2) D. Mervyn Himbury - Op. Cit. P. 82.

Meanwhile as the Particular Baptists modified their Calvinism, their relations with the General Baptists became more cordial but the Union was little more effective and even in 1863 its then President, Howard Hinton said gloomily that there was no union among Baptists, there never had been and never would be. (1)

In the Church as a whole, the General New Connexion Baptists appear to have been the most zealous in providing for the needs of the increasing population, particularly in the lace and hosiery towns of the Midlands and in the woollen and cotton towns of Yorkshire and Lancashire. By this time the Connexion was exhibiting certain peculiarities arising out of the persistent tendency of the sect-type of Christianity to separate itself from the world in general. In 1828, for example a decision of the Annual Association held that it was wrong to receive into the church fellowship any person whose employment required him to be engaged in secular business every Lord's Day until one-o'clock; the following year it was stated that marriage with an unbeliever was to be discouraged though not made an offence meriting exclusion, and in 1832 it was held to be contrary to the Scripture to invite unconverted and immoral persons to take the lead in singing'. Further restrictions came in 1835 and 1837 when it became, according to the Association 'anti-Christian and un-scriptural for a church member to join the 'Orange Clubs', Ancient Druids, Oddfellows or any other secret orders that of late have so much prevailed'; forbidden for church members to keep beer-shops and unlawful to use musical instruments in the congregation." (2)

In matters of church government the rights of the laity and the autonomy of local churches were the major principals. "The churches composing the New Connexion of General Baptists wrote Taylor, were in their discipline, strictly congregational... They believed that each society was competent to manage its own concerns, and allowed of no foreign control, not even from their own conferences or Association. The executive power of a church they conceived to be lodged in the members regularly assembled.... and while they disclaimed all external authority, they were equally jealous of undue internal influence, holding their rights as church members sacred against the encroachment of their own officers." (3)

At the time of the mid-century religious census, the old Puritan sects which originated in the Sixteenth Century together with the main body of Methodism had become well-established, institutionalised denominations, accepted in the wider society and with only marginal issues of difference between them. The proliferation of sects in the small religious group sense of the word did not appear in England until the

(1) A.C. Underwood - Op. Cit. P. 212

(2) E.A. Payne - The Baptist Union : A Short History

Carey Kingsgate (1959) P. 158.

(3) A. Taylor - History of the General Baptists (1918) Vol. 11. P. 468



latter half of the Nineteenth Century and beginning of the Twentieth. One or two however were already in existence in 1851 and in terms of their influence upon the working classes the most significant of these was the Mormon Church, or the Church of the Latter Day Saints as it was otherwise known.

A relatively new phenomenon in England, by the time of the census Mormon activity was spread over large parts of the country and at the actual count a total of 35,626 attendances were recorded, of which the majority, according to Horace Mann, came from among the working classes. From the total number of attenders however, there is no means of assessing how many were actual members. There were two hundred and twenty-two Mormon places of worship, mostly rooms, which at any one time provided accommodation for 30,783.

The history of the Church begins in America in the early 1820's when it was founded by a certain Joseph Smith who claimed to have had two visions from God, thus establishing a charismatic leadership which was to continue until his murder in 1844. Despite his own claims to be the mouth of divine revelation Smith established an elaborate hierarchy of lay priesthood able to carry on after his own disappearance from the scene.

The distinctive teachings Mermonism consisted of a doctrine of life before as well as after this earthly existence, but more important in the immediate sense was the suggestion of a life of happiness and progress. 'Men are, that they may have joy' said Smith, by which he meant not joy in the frolicsome sense but a general feeling of well-being and deep happiness. The Lord's purpose according to Mormon doctrine, is held to be one of goodness and joy - if man is obedient this purpose unfolds quickly and easily; if he does not co-operate the process is slower and more difficult but nonetheless inevitable and bound in the end to prevail since God has all eternity for his purpose to work out. In this way, all members of the Church are made to feel that they have a role to play for participation in God's plan is inescapable.

Perhaps of even greater importance was the doctrine which held that salvation comes to all. Although this would come in a higher degree to some than to others Joseph Smith taught that even the meanest sinner would receive a greater gift in heaven than he could possibly imagine; while those whose works here in mortal life had been outstanding would receive a higher place in the after-life. When this is contrasted with the more orthodox doctrines of other denominations which threatened 'be good or burn forever' it is not difficult to see what attractions this might have held to those whose chances of success in this life were small. The idea of a small fraternity of God's children, referring to each other as brother or sister, which provided a stable pattern of order, plus norms and values which were indisputable, meant a point of orientation for those who found themselves dispossessed and floundering in the Nineteenth Century social chaos of industrialisation; and although American in origin the sect could function equally well in Britain.

The Group Catalogue of the British Museum, London, 1901, p. 100.

(1) G. Chubb - The City, p. 100.

Mormonism first appeared in England in 1837 when seven missionaries landed at Liverpool, made their way north to Preston and received from the outset an enthusiastic welcome. (1) After this, those ports which had regular services to and from the Eastern Seaboard of America became centres of Mormon activity and a two-way traffic existed between American missionaries on the one hand, and on the other, English emigres to the Promised Land of Utah. Bristol, Southampton and Liverpool became focal points of the movement linking English Mormons with their prophets in the United States, and the geographical distribution of Mormons in the Nineteenth Century represents lines of penetration out of these three centres. From Southampton they spread over Hampshire and north-westwards into Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire, while from Bristol they travelled to Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire and into Nottinghamshire. Mormon arrivals in Liverpool fanned out into Lancashire, Cheshire and the West Riding. (2). Taking the total number of attendances recorded at the census almost 75% was made up by the following counties or groups of counties: (2)

1. Lancashire (11.6%) Cheshire (5.2%) West Riding (7.2%)	- 24%
2. Dorset (2.2%) Somerset (2.5%) Wiltshire (2.8%) Hampshire (8.7%) Gloucestershire (7.3%)	- 23.5%
3. Metropolitan London	- 12.8%
4. Warwickshire	- 7.5%
5. Nottinghamshire	- 5.7%

No Mormon attendances were recorded in Cornwall while the five northern counties of Cumberland, Westmoreland, North Riding, Northumberland and Durham accounted for only 1.9% of the total attendances. Over the whole country attendances at Mormon places of worship accounted for 2 per one thousand.

In judging the success of Mormonism however, it is necessary to take into account not only the number of attendances recorded in England on Census Sunday, but also the number of Mormon converts who had been persuaded to emigrate to North America and the promised land. In the early years of the movement, Mormon prophets had preached that the Kingdom of Christ was shortly to appear at Nauvoo in the state of Illinois, and that it was the duty of true Christians to gather there and 'fulfil the ordained number of Zion.' (3) As this was painted by them as a garden of Eden, a land flowing with milk and honey where wages were high and prices low, it is not difficult to imagine what an attraction this must have seemed to the English poor living through the hungry 'forties'. Emigration was organised by a special Mormon shipping office which chartered ships and established agencies in Liverpool, New Orleans and St. Louis. In the winter of 1841-1842

- (1) F. Mullen - The Mormons W.H. Allen (1967) pp. 37-41  
 (2) J. Gay - 'Some Aspects of the Social Geography of Religion in England The Roman Catholics and the Mormons in D. Martin Ed. - A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain S.C.M. (1968) P. 47.  
 (3) O. Chadwick - Op. Cit. P. 437.

it is recorded that approximately 1,190 English Mormons sailed from Liverpool; in the following winter the number was 1,199, but after the death of Joseph Smith in 1844 and the resulting schisms in leadership the number of emigrants fell sharply and by the winter of 1847 -48 barely two hundred were recorded. (1) Almost all of these emigrants were poor; of the recorded trades of emigrants during the years after 1840 the largest in terms of numbers were 457 labourers, 226 miners, 120 farmers, 96 cobblers and 74 tailors.

In February 1846 Brigham Young began the great exodus of Mormons from Nauvoo and for a time all emigration was suspended but on 23rd December 1847 the twelve apostles issued an epistle to all the saints urging them once again to emigrate to Zion, which was now in Salt Lake City, Utah. In 1849 Brigham Young established a perpetual emigrating fund to assist the poor and between late 1848 and early 1854 Mormon agents helped nearly 11,000 converts to get to America.(2) Mormon statistics of January 1850 showed that, in all, nearly 17,000 converts had emigrated while the number of members in England and Wales was 30,747. (3) The following year the census returns showed attendances of 7,517 at the morning service, 11,481 in the afternoon and 16,628 in the evening which, in relation to the youthfulness of the sect in England, represented a position of some strength and prompted Horace Mann to write in his report - "Mormon preachers are far from unsuccessful in their efforts to obtain disciples; the surprising zeal and confidence with which they promulgate their creed - the prominence they give to the exciting topics of the speedy coming of the Saviour, and his personal millennial reign - and the attractiveness to many minds of the idea of an infallible church, relying for its evidences and guidance upon revelations made perpetually to its rulers - these, with other influences have combined to give the Mormon movement a position and importance with the working - classes."

Also with significant support among certain sections of the working-classes was the Roman Catholic Church, In England, Roman Catholics formed a social pattern almost exactly opposite to that made by the Nonconformists. Among shop-keepers, tradespeople and the middle ranks of society they were few and among the nobility and landed gentry they were but a tiny minority. The vast majority of Catholic worshippers in 1851 were made up of unskilled urban labourers and their families. In the countryside they were no more than isolated families but in the large industrial towns they often accounted for a considerable portion of the worshipping population. In the Nineteenth Century the Roman Catholic Church grew more by immigration than conversion; it never claimed to be winning over many converts from among the English working class but in the decades following the great famine in Ireland, Irish peasants were coming into this country in their thousands and providing a steady increase of worshippers for Roman Catholicism.

(1) J. Lindforth - Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake City (1855)  
in Ibid. P. 437

(2) Ibid. P. 437

(3) Ibid. P. 438

(2) G. L. Dick - The English Catholics 1850-1854 (1970) P. 21



In the years 1841 to 1851 it was estimated that over 400,000 Irish had entered Great Britain and, according to the Census Report of 1851, 519,959 inhabitants of England and Wales had been born in Ireland. The needs of England for cheap labour brought Irishmen in an ever swelling stream, first to Liverpool and Manchester, then to the other great towns, then as navvies to build embankments or dig tunnels for the railways. The great majority of these were Catholics, they were also among the poorest paid labourers and they were found congregated together in distinct Irish quarters in the cities. By language, religion and social habits they were separated from the English and not easily assimilated. 'The Irish' said one Catholic, 'are congregated together in the poorest, most squalid, most neglected and most destitute corners of our towns.' (1) As the immigrants and their children seldom acquired the income, the skills, the manners, or even the desire to lift themselves out of the lowest stratum of English society, this pattern changed very little for many decades, so that the classes where Catholicism had most support were those having the least mobility.

Together with the many primitive habits of peasant life which they carried with them from Ireland, was the habit of regular church going, one of the few familiar and comforting things available to them in industrial England, which in all other respects was a totally alien life. The census returns give proof of this devotion to religious worship which is even more pronounced when compared with the general apathy displayed by the English working classes to the other denominations. The proportion of worshippers to the sittings provided, at the most numerous attended services of the Church of England was 33%; for the Wesleyans (who made up 14.1% of the total number of worshippers) the proportion was 35%, and for the Independents (10.5% of the total number of worshippers) it was 38%. For the Roman Catholics however, their attendances greatly exceeded the number of sittings available; there were only 186,111 sittings for 252,783 worshippers, who accounted for 3.6% of the total number of worshippers in England and Wales. (2)

Despite the great lack of Roman Catholic churches in England, where the Irish went, their priests were quick to follow. The Irish priesthood was poorer and closer to the peasantry than any in Europe; their average income was £65 per annum which meant that they were to a large extent dependent upon the goodwill of their flock, often taking all their meals in the homes of their parishioners. In England, the priest was often the only authority to whom the Irish labourers showed any deference, a Catholic cannon could quell a Saturday night riot in Bolton, where the magistrates failed. When Henry Mayhew accompanied one priest on the round of his flock in London - "Everywhere the people ran out to meet him....women crowded to their door-steps and came creeping up through

- (1) 'Dublin Review' 1856 December - 'The Irish in England' in -  
K.S. Inglis - Op. Cit. P. 120.  
(2) G.A. Beck - The English Catholics 1850-1950 (1950) P. 21

the cellars and through the trap-doors merely to curtsey to him....even as the priest walked along the street, boys running at full speed would pull up to touch their hair." (1)

For these people the Church offered the last point of orientation with the old way of life, which was fostered and held together by the great authority of the priest. However, the sudden invasion of migrants in the late 1840's had almost overwhelmed the Catholic clergy in some places. In Gateshead, for example, in 1851 one priest had to cope with 3,000 Catholic parishioners and had only a derelict warehouse, which could hold three hundred, for all his services. The Church in 1851 was as ill-equipped in the great towns as were the Protestant denominations but as more and more priests came over from Ireland after 1850 new churches began to be built and in Liverpool alone, ten were built between 1850 and 1856.

(1) H. Mayhew - London Labour and the London Poor 1 - P. 12.

In effect the churches merely extended the social hierarchical realities of life. In the Church of England free sittings, where available were usually for in the back of the church, in galleries or along the sides of the nave, where all too often the poor were effectively cut off from the sight and sound of the service. Rents charged varied from church to church and according to the position of the pews within the church. E.A. Rickman quotes an example of a Methodist Chapel in Sheffield completed in 1871. (2) Originally the entire lower floor was to have been free but owing to the demand for seats was so great that it was decided to make only the two top corners at the back of the gallery and five pews in the middle free and unappropriated.

Rents for gallery seats per half-year were -

1/6	to 1st first row
1/4	" " " " " "
1/2	" " " " " "
2/6	" " " " " "
2/-	" " " " " "
1/6	" " " " " "

(1) Parliamentary Papers 1850 (4) Education, Free Seats in Churches P. 1. - in E. Tooley - Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England (1963) p. 54-55.  
(2) E.A. Rickman - Church and People in an Industrial City ( 1962 )

PEW RENTS.

In an effort to find one single simple cause of working class abstinence in the Nineteenth Century much emphasis has been laid upon the practice of charging pew rents by both Anglicans and Non-conformists. Nineteenth Century Churchmen who were anxious about the spiritual condition of the labouring population siezed upon this factor as the major cause and genuinely believed that once it was removed all would be well and that the churches would immediately be full to overflowing. However, this utopia never materialised. By 1900 the abolition of renting and appropriation had gone far enough for whatever effects it might have on the religious habits of the working classes to be discernible. (1) Nowhere was it claimed that a general flow of working class people to church had occurred as free and open principles spread. Reform may well have come too late but even had the system been banished earlier, to think that working class alienation would disappear along with it was to mistake a symptom for a cause. What the pew rent system did do was to transplant into the church the same barriers of social inequality that existed outside. The question of appropriated sittings was merely symptomatic of the general malaise.

Pew rents were supposed to be charged only where Parliament specifically allowed them, which meant on the whole, only in churches built since 1800. To some extent this was inevitable, the new urban churches of the Church of England had no endowments and no tythes attached while the Nonconformist voluntary church system depended entirely on public subscription. But not only was the rental of pews a necessary source of clerical revenue but it had become intricately entangled in questions of proprietary right and social status so that by the Nineteenth Century appropriated sittings far outnumbered available free spaces.

In effect the churches merely extended the social hierarchical realities of life. In the Church of England free sittings, where available were usually far in the back of the church, in galleries or along the sides of the nave, where all too often the poor were effectively cut off from the sight and much of the sound of the service. Rents charged varied from church to church and according to the position of the pews within the church. E.R. Wickham quotes an example of a Methodist Chapel in Sheffield completed in 1831. (2) Originally the entire lower floor was to have been free but apparently the demand for seats was so great that it was decided to make only the two top corners at the back of the gallery and five pews in the bottom free and unappropriated.

Rents for gallery seats per half-year were :

	4/9d	in the first row
	4/-	" " second row
	3/3d	" " third row
	2/6d	" " fourth row
	2/-	" " fifth row
and	1/6d	" " in the corners.

- (1) Parliamentary Papers 1890 (a) Return, Free Seats in Churches P. 1. - in, K. Inglis - Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England (1963) P. 54-55.
- (2) E.R. Wickham - Church and People in an Industrial City ( 1962 )



The rent for seats in the bottom of the chapel was 3/-. These do not appear to be very large sums but for a poor family it could mean half a working man's weekly wage twice a year.

In addition to this, people who subscribed towards the building of a church, especially among Nonconformists, were often given pews in return as their private property.

The practice of appropriation without a rent being asked was also fairly widespread although illegal. In many older parish churches pews were appropriated for the use of particular worshippers. The census returns do not differentiate between those pews which were actually rented and those which were merely appropriated so that it becomes impossible to establish how important the monetary factor may have been in keeping the poor out of the churches. What is evident however is that the interior of most churches came to reflect the same distinctions of wealth and class as were found in the surrounding environment. There could be no feeling of equality before God when half the congregation sat in the privacy of their own carpeted pews, their eyes shielded from the common people who sat at the back on wooden benches.

"Working men it is contended cannot enter our religious structures without having pressed upon their notice some memento of inferiority. The existence of pews and the position of the free seats are, it is said, alone sufficient to deter them from our churches and religion has thus come to be regarded as a purely middle-class proprietary luxury." (1)

After the war when some church leaders set about trying to bring the workers back to the fold they interpreted the problem largely in terms of providing physical rather than spiritual space. The Church Building Act of 1818 and the voluntary Church Building Society both emphasised the construction of churches in which at least half the seats would be free. In addition the bishops, with some hesitation, began to encourage pew-holders to leave their seats open and urged the clergy to keep proprietary restrictions to a minimum. Caution however was well to the fore in the mind of every parson fearful of angering the wealthier members of his congregation. Many wealthy Anglicans believed that a minimal pew rent would actually help in the re-establishment of the basic virtues of responsibility among the working classes. Samuel Butler doubted the value of free seats - "Experience has taught me," he confided, "that the poor will come much more thankfully to church when they have a seat which they can bona fide call their own, than when they are accommodated with entirely free ones." (2)

By 1836 Parliamentary grants and voluntary contributions had provided for over 600,000 new sittings of which 400,000 were free and open, most of them being in urban areas. Nevertheless, despite these extensions many of the open pews apparently remained unoccupied week after week, which led some of the more perceptive of Churchmen to the suspicion that the problem was not simply one of providing more seats and galleries for the poor. They began to understand something of the psychology of poverty and to recognise the demoralising effects of parading poverty and rags alongside the wealth or splendour of the upper class members of the congregation.

(1) H. Mann - Report to Registrar General : Census of Great Britain 1851  
Religious Worship.

(2) 12th Nov. 1838 : Butler Papers, Add. M.S. 34592 f. 153 Quoted in -  
R.A. Soloway - Prelates & People Routledge (1969)

Bishop Sumner advocated the use of school-rooms or lecture halls as places of worship for the labouring people so that they would not be ashamed to attend services. (1) No doubt this would also have suited the wealthier classes very well, who felt that any extension of free seats for the poor was an encroachment upon what they regarded as their rights in worship. Bishop Blomfield confessed that the Church Building Commissioners had been repeatedly thwarted in their efforts to intermingle the seats of the rich and poor, "on account of the objections which were made by the richer classes to too great an intermixture of the poor among them, objections which it was absolutely necessary to attend to because the whole income of the Minister depends on the pew rents accruing exclusively from the richer classes." (2)

What, in the early years of church reform had been an embarrassment, was, by the 1840's a compelling and critical issue, but many incumbents still believed that pew-rents were indispensable in poorly-endowed churches. Would-be reformers replied that an offertory would yield as much income as rents but many clergy were not convinced. Even those who recognised the abuses, seeing that the question of mixing was an extremely sensitive one within the church, stopped short of demanding total abolition. Wilberforce repeatedly moderated his pleas for common worship and in 1843 assured protesting critics that he did not mean to advocate open pews and agreed that rank and station were transient and external realities that in no way interfered with the divine truths of spiritual equality. (3) "To insist on intermixing all is to aim at an artificial equality which we do not feel and which would not be maintained by its most strenuous advocates in dress or manners." To attempt to advocate it in church would be "to bring affectation into the house and worship of the Lord." It might also have brought in more of the poor but this would have been at the expense of the rich, too great a sacrifice to be demanded of the Church. The opinions of the reactionaries were expressed even as late as 1865 by a layman who said that the worshippers must be protected against "being placed too near or even next to those whose habits are wanting in the ordinary decencies of life." (4)

While sincere efforts had been made since 1818 to correct the deficiency of free places for the poor, yet only about one third of the seats provided by the Church Building Act were free, although the proportion was higher in the larger towns. At the time of the census only about four and a half million of the approximately ten million sittings available in England and Wales were clearly unappropriated. (5)

It is impossible to generalise about the practice of renting or appropriating pews, since the proportion of free seats available varied from church to church and from parish to parish. The system was used by all the major denominations; on the other hand, the only churches where, with one or two exceptions all the accommodation seems to have been free,

- (1) J.B. Sumner - A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of Diocese of Chester (1838) P.62 - 63.
- (2) A. Blomfield - Memoir of Chas. Blomfield, Bishop of London (1863) P. 325.
- (3) S. Wilberforce - A Charge Delivered..... November 1843 P. 6-7.
- (4) Census of Great Britain 1851 : Religious Worship.
- (5) A Barrister in 'The Christian Observer' May 1865 quoted in -  
K.S. Inglis - Op. Cit. P. 51.



belonged to the Quakers and to other minor sects such as the Latter Day Saints, the Christian Brethren and the Mormons.

In 1851 returns from 31,943 places of religious worship give an aggregate number of sittings of 9,467,738. 2,524 places of worship omitted to return their number of sittings, so estimates were made for these and were added to the above figure, giving the total number of sittings reported to the Census Office as 10,212,563. Of these ten and a quarter million sittings, 8,390,464 were distinguished in the returns into two classes - free and appropriated - the remaining 1,822,099 were not distinguished at all.

3,947,371 were described as free, 4,443,093 were described as appropriated, although it should be borne in mind that some sittings were returned as free, meaning that no money payment was received for them, while they were often appropriated to particular persons and therefore not available indiscriminately to the poor. If we assume that the remaining 1,822,099 were apportioned in the same degree this presents a rational picture of 4,804,595 free sittings and 5,407,968 appropriated sittings.

The element of distribution, however, is important; obviously certain free sittings would be unavailable as being beyond the reach of those requiring them. The proportion of free seats in town districts was, over all, lower than that in rural districts.

Proportion of Free Sittings in Town and Rural Districts.

	Population	No. of Sittings			Proportion % of Sittings which are -	
		Free	Approp.	Total	Free	Appropriated.
Urban Districts	9,229,120	1,799,879	2,327,365	4,127,244	43.6	56.4
Rural Districts	8,698,489	3,004,716	3,080,603	6,085,319	49.4	50.6

This fact is borne out especially in the Northern industrial towns, but does not necessarily apply to all populous areas; many country districts shared the same low proportion of free seats.

The following table shows the percentage proportion of free sittings to total in ten urban districts and ten rural districts.

Registration District	Population	No. of Places of worship	SITTINGS.				
			Free	Approp.	Total	% Free	% Approp.
St. Georges's London	73,230	25	7,130	13,788	20,918	30.9	69.1
Shoreditch	109,257	35	9,383	8,431	18,489	50.7	49.3
Bethnal Green	90,193	41	13,232	6,071	22,613	58	32
Bristol	65,716	68	19,564	20,463	42,177	46.3	53.7
Nottingham	58,419	38	11,624	16,163	28,487	40.8	59.2
Birmingham	173,951	70	25,441	28,646	53,987	47	53
Bolton	114,712	92	14,793	24,751	41,904	37.4	62.6
Manchester	228,433	106	29,904	45,913	75,817	38.2	61.8
Eradford	181,964	159	23,115	46,629	72,360	33.1	68.9
Sheffield	103,626	62	12,250	23,863	36,863	33.2	66.8



No. of Places SITTINGS.

Registration District Population of Worship Free Approp. Total % Free % Approp.

Parish	Population	No. of Places	Free	Approp.	Total	% Free	% Approp.
Romney Marsh	5,437	20	1,690	922	4,346	64.7	35.3
Ringwood	5,675	16	1,855	2,318	4,173	44.4	55.6
Banbury	29,769	105	9,416	8,304	22,206	52.4	47.6
Marlborough	10,263	39	2,586	1,266	6,321	67.7	32.3
Tetbury, Glos.	6,254	22	2,030	2,063	4,885	41.4	58.6
Weymouth	22,037	49	5,960	6,025	13,335	49.6	50.4
Chepstow	19,057	70	5,409	4,537	11,054	55.3	44.7
Bishops Stortford	20,356	42	4,128	3,560	11,707	53.7	46.3
Hemsworth	8,158	39	2,455	3,176	6,712	43.6	56.4
Alston	6,816	19	2,460	2,099	4,759	51.6	48.4
Sedbergh	4,574	18	2,473	1,884	4,357	56.1	43.9

When the percentage of free accommodation in each parish is compared with the percentage of the adult population who attended church on Census Sunday there appears to be no direct correlation. People would not seem to be more religious in those parishes where free accommodation was plentiful or necessarily irreligious in those where it was denied them. This is revealed in a sample of sixty parishes drawn from all parts of the country

PARISH	Population	% Free Accommod.	% Adult Population at Church.
Swaffham Prior	638	48	84
Isleham	1,389	51	73
Exning	967	84	100
Steeple Aston	441	100	36
Deddington	4,133	48	33
Bladon	454	52	64
Arnold	2,961	65	43
Wallsend	3,552	60	54
Long Benton	5,555	76	29
Stennington	600	33	18
Gosforth	1,508	68	35
Bolam	412	38	12
Stanfordham	1,139	60	74
Newbun	2,765	87	23
Thornley	1,644	86	53
Haswell	2,616	75	21
Painshaw	1,272	90	43
Easington	4,236	49	24

Parish	Population	% Free Accommodation	% Adult Pop. at Church.
Shipton	1,806	60	86
Finstock	323	66	24
Shorthampton	183	100	55
Little Dole	1,773	39	29
Cricklade	1,178	43	63
Lydiard Tregooze	496	66	40
Purton	1,296	63	61
Ashton Keynes	843	36	96
Bosham	706	68	72
Westborne	1,373	30	30
Heyshott	271	100	55
Slindon	378	70	91
Weare	455	69	73
Loxton	126	71	45
Worle	605	60	69
Shipham	384	90	31
Blagdon	712	89	75
Axbridge	618	23	50
Cheddar	1,402	75	40
Spettisbury	429	50	100
Winterborne Stickland	260	68	100
Winterborne Kingston	377	80	93
Hilton	494	64	35
Milborne St. Andrew	217	54	89
Charlton Marshall	299	75	59
Sydling	435	32	50
Cerne Abbas	871	28	78
St. Ives	3,915	42	51
Ludgvan	2,153	64	46
Lelant	1,397	56	60
Towednack	636	65	40
Marvah	222	70	64
Sancreed	834	63	85
St. Just	5,886	60	53
St. Levan	306	51	100
St. Buryan	1,013	68	87

PARISH	Population	% Free Accommod.	% Adult Population at Church.
Turton	3,156	53	23
Sharples	2,849	77	17
Farnworth	3,962	40	58
Little Bolton	12,573	29	57
Great Bolton	25,562	39	19
Bowling	8,530	55	18
Bradford	65,381	32	23
Shoreditch	70,795	55	17

When these statistics are broken down to distinguish the different denominations, the same wide variations persist with the Church of England showing itself to be the most inconsistent in the proportion of free seats it provided. Among the Methodist Connexions the Primitive Methodists show the highest proportion of free accommodation, at least two-thirds of almost all their churches being free. Provision of the Wesleyan Methodist however, varies wildly but appears particularly low in the manufacturing areas of the North. In the same areas the Baptist and Independent Churches also show a very low percentage of free sittings though in most other parts of the country the opposite was true.



PARISH	CHURCH OF ENGLAND		WESLEYANS		PRIMITIVE METHODISTS		BIBLE CHRISTIANS		BAPTIST		INDEPENDENT		ROMAN CATHOLIC	
	% of Free pop.	Seats Church	% of Free pop.	Seats Church	% of Free pop.	Seats Church	% of Free pop.	Seats Church	% of Free pop.	Seats Church	% of Free pop.	Seats Church	% of Free pop.	Seats Church
<b>CHICHESTER</b>														
Slindon	64	62												90
Bosham	69	66												31
Heyshott	100	100												12
Westbourne	50	20												
<b>NEWMARKET.</b>														
Exning	89		11											
Swaffham Prior	51	51	21											
Isleham	62	20			80	18			71	40	62			
<b>CHIPPING NORTON</b>														
Shipton	47	66			64	9			87	24				
Finstock			66	100										
Shorthampton	100													
<b>WOODSTOCK</b>														
Steeple Aston	100													
Bladon	60	69	29	31										
Deddington	55	50	38	37										13
<b>CRICKLADE</b>														
Cricklade	30	64			59	15			100	16				5
Purton	57	59			75	27								14
Ashton Keynes	30	51			60	41								8
<b>AXBRIDGE.</b>														
Worle	53	49	59	44			100	7						
Loxton	56	35	90	65										
Shipham	89	50	82	21					100	29				
Blagdon	100	53	71	25					100	21				
Axbridge	22	50	33	50										
Cheddar	86	25	57	24					67	51				
Weare	62	32	47	19					100	16				

PARISH	CHURCH OF ENGLAND		WESLEYANS		PRIMITIVE METHODISTS		BIBLE CHRISTIANS		BAPTIST		INDEPENDENT		ROMAN CATHOLIC	
	% of Free pop. at Seats Church	% of Free pop. at Seats Church	% of Free pop. at Seats Church	% of Free pop. at Seats Church	% of Free pop. at Seats Church	% of Free pop. at Seats Church	% of Free pop. at Seats Church	% of Free pop. at Seats Church	% of Free pop. at Seats Church	% of Free pop. at Seats Church	% of Free pop. at Seats Church	% of Free pop. at Seats Church	% of Free pop. at Seats Church	% of Free pop. at Seats Church
<b>DORSETT</b>														
Winterborne	58	37	100	19	72	44								
Stickland			37											
Winterborne			43	21								100	36	
Kingston	79	43	68											
Milborne	54	100												
Charlton														
Marshall	63	51				17								
Hilton	64	100												
Spettisbury	17	35			76	16								
Sydling	10	56	31	18										
Cerne Abbas	16	56	50	17										
<b>PENZANCE</b>														
St. Ives	0	0	40	55	41	31	60	10						
Marvan	70	32	70	68										
Sencreed			68	67	44	16	73	17						
Towed-Naok			65	100										
Ludgvan			66	76	69	16	42	8						
Lelant	37	31	60	52	68	17	54	16						
St. Just	100	10	53	74			89	27						
St. Buryan	?	9	78	64										
St. Levan	18	37	68	63										
<b>DURHAM</b>														
Thornley	100	22	61	27	74	21								
Easington	31	36	70	48	100	16								
Haswell			55	37	65	63								
Painshaw	100	40	84	59										
Holbon-le-Hole	73	30	51	20	44	44							29	6

PARISH	Church of England		Wesleyan		Primitive Methodist		Methodist New Connexion		Baptist	Independent	Roman Catholic	United Presbyterian	Mormon	Unitarian
	51	16	71	37	65	18	0	13	0	7	0	7	0	7
<u>NORTHUMB.</u>														
Wallsend	61	24	80	44	85	21	100	7	51	4				
Long Benton	17	63	100	37										
Stennington	0	57	89	43										
Ponteland	51	60	90	24	77	16								
Gosforth	38	100												
Balham	54	40	78	17	66	10	100	23						
Stanfordham			86	84	90	16								
Newbun														
<u>LANCS.</u>														
Turton	100	60	71	16	100	4	22	33						0
Sharples			0	36			36	24						43
Little Lever	26	36	69	64			33	64						
Halliwell	9	64	22	6	100	4	21	26						
Horwich														
Little	29	50	13	16	40	1	35	11						6
Bolton														
Great	51	13	60	22	65	8	7	20						
Bolton							100	0.9	30	8	0	26	0	1.9
<u>W. RIDING</u>														
Bowling	68	60	37	40			30	2	25	16	71	21	2	2
Bradford	30	16	15	36					7	10	7	21	2	100
														3



SOCIAL INFLUENCES.INDUSTRIALISATION AND URBANISATION.

For Horace Mann and his contemporaries the overwhelming conclusion to be drawn from the Religious Census was the existence of "an alarming number of non-attendants", the majority of whom came from the working-classes. Mann claimed that while the Middle-classes had augmented rather than diminished their attention to religious services and while regular church attendance was now also fashionable among the upper classes, in the cities and large towns an absolutely insignificant proportion of the congregations was composed of artisans. The census showed that the worst proportionate attendance at church was in the working class parish of Bethnal Green where, out of a total population of 90,193, only 6,024 attended and also that in the industrial areas north of a line through Gloucester to Grimsby only six out of thirty-seven towns contrived to reach the national average of a 58% church attendance.

"They fill perhaps in youth our National, British and Sunday Schools and there receive the elements of a religious education but no sooner do they mingle in the active world of labour than, subjected to the constant action of opposing influences they soon become as utter strangers to religious ordinances as the people of a heathen country. They adopt a negative, inert indifference; unconcious secularists ignorant or careless of the future." (1)

The opposing influences to which Mann referred were obviously many and varied and not confined solely to urban areas but there is much historical evidence to suggest that it was with the transfer of populations from the countryside into the towns, that the unchurching of a large part of the population took place. This is not to present an over simplified picture, comparing a one hundred per cent devout rural population against a heathen urban civilisation, since it is clear that there were pockets of irreligion among many agricultural communities and fervent religious feelings among many town workers, but on the whole the census returns do show that non-attendance was very much higher in the towns. Subsequent research also points to a significant relationship between the size of a given city and the church membership and attendance; in general, the larger the population the smaller the proportion of church membership. Nor was this simply a matter of the non-provision of church accommodation in the new towns of the early Nineteenth Century, since even where churches were built in distinctly working class areas they were often reported to be only half-full.

Mid Nineteenth Century cities provide examples of secularised societies in which the existence of alienation from the church in the massed slums derived chiefly from the urban structure consequent on large-scale industrialisation, and the sharpness of the transition from the values

(1) H. Mann - Report to Registrar General - 1851 Census : Religious Worship.

of a rural pre-industrial society. The Industrial Revolution broke the organic unities of English life and at the same time did nothing to replace them with adequate substitutes.

The most important feature of the period was the revolutionary rise in the scale of the communities in which most people lived. Between 1801-1851 the population of Great Britain almost doubled itself, from under eleven millions to twenty-one millions in 1851, by which time approximately half lived in towns. One third of the total population lived in towns of over twenty-thousands and more than one-fifth in towns of over one hundred thousands. At the census of 1801 just over one third of all the families in Britain ( 35.9%) had been allocated to agricultural, forestry and fishing occupational classifications; fifty years later this proportion had fallen to just over one-fifth ( 21.7%). Meanwhile the proportion of the population in the manufacturing and mining industries increased at a steady rate from well under one third in 1801 ( 29.7%) to two-fifths in 1831 ( 40.8%) and then, at a decreasing pace to 43.5% in 1881. This process of industrialisation however, did not entail massive rural depopulation; the agricultural population in spite of its relative fall continued to grow absolutely from 1.7 million persons in 1801 to a peak of 2.1 million persons in 1851, and only thereafter did it begin to decline absolutely to 1.7 millions again, in 1881. In 1851 those who worked on the land, farmers, graziers, labourers etc., still represented the largest single group in the labour force with 1,563,000 men and 227,000 women; domestic servants made up the second largest group with 134,000 men and 905,000 women. At the same time the textile industry was comparatively small and accounted for 255,000 men and 272,000 women cotton workers and 171,000 men and 113,000 women wool workers. But whereas the agricultural population was thinly spread over the country in relatively small communities, the Industrial Revolution involved the throwing up of vast new concentrations of workers in cramped and dismal surroundings, offering a way of life totally alien to anything that had gone before.

Urbanisation meant the break up of the old society and the destruction of the older forms of community particularly the destruction of those features to which religion had given symbolic expression. Rural pre-industrial society had been an open aristocracy based on property and patronage, a hierarchical society in which men took their places in an accepted order of precedence. It was not a feudal society based on military or labour services nor a class society divided into mutually hostile layers. Men were acutely aware of their exact relation to those immediately above and below them in the pyramid structure, but differential status was part of the given unquestioned environment, a largely unalterable natural order within whose limits men of different social ranks

food from the clover.

(1) \* The Morning Standard \* 5th July 1853.

all had to live. This communal type of society presupposes a conception, on the part of the labouring population, of a higher and unapproachable status group of leaders who exercise their authority paternalistically. There is widespread consensus as to the rank order of status groups in the community so that those at the bottom of the pyramid regard their position less as an injustice than as a necessary and acceptable part. Eighteenth Century rural society exhibited these features and while in the Nineteenth Century traditional deference to the established order came increasingly to be challenged, the basic communal character of rural areas has remained.

The habitual respect which the upper classes and in particular the landed classes were accustomed to receive from the community at large was being gradually broken down from the late Eighteenth Century onwards, under the impact of ideas of equality filtering in from abroad and under the growing weight of economic expansion which steadily curtailed the aristocratic monopoly of wealth, education and experience, but this process was much slower in the countryside than in the towns and even in some small agricultural communities today has not been completely eroded.

Deference to the landed classes had a general social basis in the habitual acceptance of aristocratic authority and a particular economic basis in the dependence of farmers, servants and the labouring poor on the patronage or benevolence of individual landowners. The intimate relationship between employer and worker entailed binding obligations and loyalties from which it was difficult to escape. This was even more marked in 'closed' parishes where villagers were kept under close control and although there might be certain benefits, such as model cottages or a National School the price was an even greater pressure to conform exerted by the squire or the parson. Sir William Heathcote for example, would have no dissenters among his tenants and insisted that all should worship at the same church. Although there are of course more positive explanations for the relative strength of religion among rural populations, pressure from those in authority should not be excluded. It is impossible to tell how many went to church from a genuine sense of conviction or how many meekly took their seats each week simply because they feared the reprisals consequent upon their staying away. A correspondent to the Morning Chronicle July 6th 1843 reported the following conversation: "But my good friends said I, 'you surely don't go to church always and come out of it with such bitter dislike to parsons as you've expressed now, if you do, why go at all?'"

"Why go at all? said the woman, 'we be like to go, and we wouldn't lose everything, work and all: we be like to go.'" (1)

For some poor labourers attendance at church was obviously considered a small price to pay for the few privileges they received in return such as extra fuel, ground for potatoes and occasional gifts of clothing or food from the vicarage.

(1) 'The Morning Chronicle' 6th July 1843.



In rural parishes communal custom was another important factor underlying religious observance and social pressures to conform were implicit in the personal relationships of the group. Individualism or any breaking away from the accepted conventions in compact and relatively isolated communities has always tended to be frowned upon. People were highly integrated into their respective local societies and their attitudes and behaviour were to a large extent influenced and controlled by means of direct face - to - face encounters. The established norms were common to all and religion gave expression to this social and moral unity and also expressed the stability and continuity of the community.

Other than these secondary factors, one of the traditional motivations for religious practice is the need to reconcile oneself with a mysterious and uncontrollable natural element, and this was much more apparent for those living in the countryside. Clearly the fortunes of agricultural communities were very much affected by the natural elements over which man had no effective control. The ultimate success of every harvest, for example, lay not so much with the efforts of labour as with the good or bad prevailing weather conditions. The proximity of village life to nature gave religious belief a much greater relevance whereby it provided a framework within which metaphysical questions could be asked and answered. And having established the God-given natural order in one aspect of life it could intelligibly be held to apply to all the other norms which governed social life. In the new industrial towns it was difficult to apply the same argument. Workers found themselves in obviously man-made surroundings of the unhealthiest type, often not seeing daylight for, six days out of seven, where the officially endorsed norms were of utility only to certain sectional and partisan interests and not applicable equally to men of all rank.

The process of industrialisation must necessarily entail the break up of older and valued ways of life and in England, this included, for the majority of workers the destruction of those traditional motivations for religious worship. What had vanished was the sense of community and the bonds of connection and dependence which had previously held rural societies together; in their place were feelings of isolation, helplessness and bewilderment which the churches were powerless to calm. Under the old society, the labourer, though lacking an individual freedom had been rooted in a structuralised whole which offered stability and relative security through a system of primary ties; industrialisation severed these ties and left the individual floundering upon his own resources.

The intimate relationship between master and servant was replaced by an impersonal contract based purely upon economic considerations. Those in authority were only too willing to abdicate their roles as

paternal protectors, whilst at the same time demanding even greater industry and subordination from the working classes. They came increasingly to rely on paternal discipline and force rather than the traditional inner sanctions, and the harsh discipline they imposed allowed no values to working people. The working man was to be industrious and attentive, not to think for himself, to owe loyalty and attachment to his master alone and to recognise that his proper place in the economy of the state was the place of a slave in the economy of a sugar plantation! The sheer scale of industrial enterprises meant that the worker was physically isolated from his employer and not only did they not come together at work, but neither were they likely to meet at any other time since the different areas in each city came to represent clearly defined class divisions. Lack of public transport meant that the labouring classes had necessarily to live close to their place of work in the centre of the city; their employers on the other hand preferred the more wholesome environment of the surrounding suburbs, moving their residences further and further away from the centre of production. Consequently parishes were no longer socially heterogeneous in composition and from then on the religious life of the different social classes took different forms, a development which has led to the present day picture in which the geographical distribution of church going correlates well with the geographical distribution of social class.

In the turbulent ever changing social environment that characterised Nineteenth Century towns, faithfulness to custom was no longer a spur to religious worship. Tradition and continuity of order were continually being eroded by the complex processes of social mobility and social differentiation, and basic instability among the new working classes was increased by feelings of exploitation and distrust of those who invoked religion to justify the norms which supported that exploitation. Initially many workers had found refuge in the Methodist Chapels but these congregations were becoming increasingly more middle-class as the century wore on. The personal sacrifice and discipline which Methodism demanded was often unacceptable to those who wanted relief after a working week and were looking for earthly rather than heavenly rewards. Religion seemed to offer no immediate alternative to the miserable home and work conditions under which most were forced to live and which, in themselves offered no opportunity for solitude or reflection.

After the initial chaos of the Industrial Revolution and its resulting urbanization the working classes began to develop a distinct culture of their own and one in which religious observance at church played no part. Secularisation however did not result in the acquiring of a new and more rational set of beliefs about the nature of man and the world. In general working men did not turn to atheism, but their attitude towards the church was simply one of indifference. The majority believed in God and they continued to participate in the baptism, marriage and burial rites but as for regular Sunday attendance, they lost the habit.

The process of urbanisation and its development along class lines transformed the churches into class institutions and by the working classes they were seen as middle-class strongholds. The churches themselves were slow to realise this trend and by the time they did the process was so far advanced that they were powerless to reverse it.

The minority of the five million 'unconscious secularists' who stayed away from Church services on Census Sunday. The appeal lay chiefly among the radical self-educated artisans of London with a sprinkling of the more intellectually alert elements among factory workers and artisans from other parts of the country; but as a working-class phenomenon it was no more characteristic then, than it is to-day. The majority of the working-classes remained both outside the Church and outside the organized secular societies.

As a viable movement - radical, intellectual, social and political - secularism was not officially established until the late 1840's; the first avowedly atheist periodical, Southey's *Organ of Reason* appeared in 1841 (1) which was surprisingly late in view of the scepticism of Biblical authority and anti-clericalism prevalent in radical literature since the 1790's. Nevertheless free-thought was not a new concept and had been present, though mostly in opposition fashion, in various forms throughout the century. In England it emanated on the one hand from the scepticism and rationalism of scientifically minded scientists and the more radical views of W. B. E. and J. P. and on the other, from the strong denunciations of politically and economically under-privileged groups whose spokesmen were demanding a rational and convincing doctrine proving the possibility and necessity of radical social change. After 1830 there was a growing feeling among the more educated of the working class that not only the dogmas of the religious imagination, but also the basic teachings of Christianity were strengthening the position opposed to reform. The whole content of the Christian faith and morality was brought into question and vehemently attacked in the radical press which was read in the coffee-houses, restaurants and reading societies. Among the most popular radical periodicals and pamphlets were Shelley's *Black Dwarf*, the *Political Register*, Darwin's *Political Register*, Gaskell's *Weekly Political Register*, *The Infants' Repository*, *The People* and the *Manchester Guardian*. (2) Although there were not specifically irreligious, anti-clericalism was a recurrent rallying point and the reaction of the parson magistrate to the radical press played an important part in the dissemination which covered his territory to extend the range of the Church to radical areas.

The circulation of this radical press fluctuated widely. Gaskell's *Weekly Register*, at its peak between October 1836 and February 1837 was running at something between 10,000 and 20,000 copies a week - a figure very close to anything of any sort. In 1837 the circulation of the leading daily newspaper *The Times* was 1,700 and that

(1) J. Bras - *The Rise of Organized Free Thought in Mid Victorian England*  
 18 - Sociological Review 1934

(2) R. P. Tompkins - *Some Working Class Movements of the Nineteenth Century* (1943) pp. 26-27



FREE - THOUGHT.

As a direct rival to organised Christianity the Free-thought movement, as it stood in the middle years of the Nineteenth Century had a relatively unimportant impact, never capturing more than a tiny minority of the five million 'unconscious secularists' who stayed away from Church services on Census Sunday. Its appeal lay chiefly among the radical self-educated artisans of London with a sprinkling of the more intellectually alert elements among factory workers and artisans from other parts of the country; but as a working-class phenomenon it was no more characteristic then, than it is to-day. The majority of the working-classes remained both outside the Church and outside the organised secular societies.

As a viable movement - radical, intellectual, social and political - secularism was not officially established until the late 1840's; the first avowedly atheist periodical, Southwell's Oracle of Reason appeared in 1841 (1) which was surprisingly late in view of the scepticism of Biblical authority and anti-clericalism prevalent in radical literature since the 1790's. Nevertheless free-thought was not a new concept and had been present, though mostly in haphazard fashion, in various forms throughout the century. In England it emanated on the one hand from the scepticism and rationalism of scientifically educated deists and the more radical views of D'Holbach and Tom Paine, and on the other, from the strong dissatisfaction of politically and economically under-privileged groups whose spokesmen were demanding a rational and convincing doctrine proving the possibility and necessity of radical social change. After 1800 there was a growing feeling among the more educated of the working class that not only the spokesmen of the religious denominations, but also the basic teachings of Christianity were strengthening the powers opposed to reform. The whole concept of the Christian faith and morality was brought into question and vehemently attacked in the radical press which was read in the coffee-houses, newsrooms and reading societies. Among the most popular radical periodicals and pamphlets were Woolter's 'Black Dwarf'. The Political Litany, Sherwin's Political Register, Cobbett's Weekly Political Register, 'The Reformers Repository', The People and the 'Manchester Observer'. (2) Although these were not specifically irreligious, anti-clericalism was a favourite rallying point and the reaction of the parson magistrates to the radical views advanced and to the disturbances which occurred did nothing to endear the image of the Church to radical eyes.

The circulation of this radical press fluctuated wildly. Cobbett's 'Twopenny Register', at its peak between October 1816 and February 1817 was running at something between 40,000 and 60,000 each week, a figure many times in excess of any competitor of any sort. In 1822 the circulation of the leading daily newspaper The Times was 5,730 and that

- (1) J. Eros - The Rise of Organised Free-Thought in Mid Victorian England  
in - Sociological Review 1954.  
(2) R.F. Wearmouth - Some Working Class Movements of the Nineteenth  
Century (1948) pp. 26-27

of the Weekly 'Observer' was 6,860. (1) In 1819 the circulation of the 'Black Dwarf' stood at about 12,000. The stamp tax together with a decline in the radical movement, as a whole, cut back circulation after this period although Carlile's periodicals ran into thousands through much of the Twenties.

The early radical movement was further augmented by the existence of political class meetings organised on the same lines as the Methodist class meetings which had proved to be so successful. The first Political Protestant Union was founded in 1818 in Hull and similar societies were set up soon afterwards at Crediton, York, Leeds, Wakefield, London and Coventry. The Association of the Friends to Radical Reform also had the same organisation and objects as did the Political Societies for the Promotion of Human Happiness. (2) These were essentially political gatherings, born out of the Government's banning of public meetings and political clubs, where small groups of reformers were brought together and could pool their ideas. In addition they were often schools of education offering instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic and as such, some for example, The Stockport Political Society, were open every evening and on Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon. Besides the periodicals mentioned above, other works recommended to be studied at these meetings included Cartwright's Bill of Rights : Bentham's Reform Catechism and Cobbett's Paper against Gold. (3) All were very much anti-Establishment and therefore anti-Church of England and increasingly anti-Wesleyan Methodism as it became more reactionary and middle-class. The point is that these class meetings and the political unions which followed afforded a meeting place for the dissatisfied elements of society, nurtured feelings of hostility towards the Church and its clergy and at the same time offered a sort of substitute sense of community for those who shunned religious worship.

The link between the early Radical culture of the Nineteenth Century and the battle for the Charter which was to follow is to be found in the Owenite movement. This also embraced secular ideas - Robert Owen came to reject all religions at a very early age - but the success of the movement among the mass of the working classes depended more upon the remedies it proposed for political and economic hardship. Owen offered an alternative system of society based on community and co-operation but his theories were never fully developed into credible plans and this very imprecision meant that they could be adapted to meet the various needs of differing groups of working people. The organisations and individuals who came under Owen's influence stressed different parts of his gospel. Many Owenists particularly after 1834 emphasised the moral side of his teaching, the development of character and education and the rational or scientific approach to questions which religion had hitherto

- (1) E.P. Thompson - The Making of the English Working Class (Penguin Edn. 1968) P. 789.
- (2) R.F. Wearmouth - Op. Cit. P. 33.
- (3) 'The Newcastle Chronicle' 11th December 1819.

declared to be taboo; politicians were chiefly interested in the promise of ending pauperism but the majority of support for the movement came from those attracted to its proposal to create mixed agricultural and industrial communities 'of united labour and community of property'. Owen became, despite himself, the leader of a new working class socialism because his ideas were the one coherent expression of a widespread sentiment. The basic concept of Owenism, the right of every man to happiness, the right to the whole produce of labour, the right to work, to knowledge, to social equality, the desire for a social system that would encourage man to help man instead of competing against him, were ideals which had appeal to almost every labourer and artisan in the first half of the Nineteenth Century. The vehicles set up to bring these ideals into practice however were often at variance with Owen's paternalistic outlook and after 1834 he turned his back on many of them, particularly the attempts to form trade unions. (1) From this point on Owenism lost much of its working class support, men like Hetherington, O'Brien and James Watson were rejecting Owen's dismissal of all political means and turned instead towards developing political theories and universal suffrage. By the end of the decade mass working class support shifted from the Owenite movement over to Chartism. The Owenite socialists increasingly turned their attention to the reformation of religion, morals and education and to building Halls of Science and in this way they became more and more involved in religious controversy. In 1838 the Owenite Society was renamed the Society of Rational Religionists with sixty branches in various centres in England. (2) Its sermons, hymns and tracts all aimed at raising the millenarian expectations of the working man and spreading the Owenite gospel of redemption through science, co-operation and community building. Outraged by these heterodox ideas, the clergy in 1840 invoked the Sunday observance and blasphemy laws to demand that these activities should be permitted only if the lecturers professed on oath, the Protestant religion. Although Owen had at first declared himself an atheist, the Central Board of the movement advised its lecturers to give the required undertaking while at the same time, developing its anti-religious denominations. This hypocrisy however was too much for many of the militants and they subsequently broke away from the movement; among these was Charles Southwell who in 1841 founded the atheist Oracle of Reason.

The other force to precede the free-thought movement and which embraced secular ideals was Chartism, which in origin was purely political and carried on from the earlier political associations and Radical agitation, although it attracted large numbers of the working classes to its ranks by its ultimate objective of economic amelioration. It was not the philosophic radicalism of men like William Lovett and Francis Place

- (1) A. Briggs & J. Saville - Essays in Labour History - S. Pollard -  
Co-operation from community building to Shopkeeping  
Macmillan (1967) P. 88.
- (2) H. Grisewood - Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians (1949)  
The Atheist Mission.



that endeared the Six Points of the Charter to the working classes but the squalid poverty and living conditions under which they were living. Chartism was hailed as a means of salvation and a path of escape from destitution; when economic conditions were bad Chartism flourished while in periods of relative prosperity the movement floundered. Although economic considerations were perhaps the most important factor in deciding the success or failure of Chartism, the movement has also been generally associated with irreligion despite the fact that in certain parts of the British Isles it was regarded as a religious movement and Chartist Churches were formed. This was particularly apparent of Chartism in Scotland and also in Birmingham. (1)

Mark Hovell writes that "to the timid folk....Chartism meant irreligion even more than it meant revolution." And it is clear that to most Chartists, organised middle-class religion was anathema. 'More pigs, fewer parsons' was a famous cry of Chartism on its most material side. Chartist leaders like Hetherington and Cleave handed onto Lovett and Holyoake the uncompromising free-thought of Revolutionary France until under the latter's auspices it crystallized into the working-class secularism of the later Nineteenth Century" (2).

Nevertheless, Chartism in its organisation took on much of the character of Methodism and also among both its leadership and rank and file were to be found many who still held on to Methodist connections. Firstly in 1839, Chartism adopted the class meeting, classes being formed in Bolton, Manchester, Bradford, Barnsley, Birmingham, Bristol, Huddersfield, South Shields, Sheffield and in various places in Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire. (3) One Sheffield newspaper viewed this as "a practical political parody upon a description of private religious assemblies which have so long been known among our Wesleyan friends....As however, it is said, there are some renegade Methodists among the Chartists in this town we should not be much surprised to hear that some of the forms of religion to which they have been accustomed were prostituted to give colour to their proceedings the more so as they proclaim their purpose to be holy." (4)

Secondly, Chartists took over the system of camp meetings and from 1839 - 1850 over five hundred camp meetings were organised by the Chartists who had been impressed by the success of the Primitive Methodists in using this method to attract immense crowds. The first Chartist camp meeting was held on Sunday 22nd September 1839 at a place mid way between Sheffield and Barnsley. (5) This was reported to be a religious meeting and indeed a sermon was preached by the Reverend Thornton of Bradford though the content of this was not what would have been found in any church on that day.

- (1) H.U. Faulkner - Chartism and the Churches (1916)
- (2) M. Hovell - The Chartist Movement (Manchester 1918) P. 308.
- (3) R.F. Wearmouth - Op. Cit. pp. 126-143.
- (4) Ibid. P. 140.
- (5) Ibid. P. 145.

(1) 1916. ...  
 (2) 'The Chartist' 16th November 1839.  
 (3) A. Briggs - Chartist Studies (1939) p. 72.

The Sheffield Mercury gave reference to the noisy gathering, the abuse of the clergy and the shocking mockery of devotional exercise. Despite the criticisms of the press, Chartist camp meetings became very popular and during the remaining months of 1839 similar politico-religious meetings were held in Yorkshire, Leicestershire and Nottingham. After a period of relative quiet in 1840 and 1841 Chartist activity revived again in 1842 and camp meetings were once again widespread and continued to be held right up to 1850. Meetings, which were always held on a Sunday, usually took the form of a Chartist hymn to open with, then a series of political speeches some of which were sprinkled with religious references, followed by Chartist prayers and another Chartist hymn to close the meeting. Attacks against the Established Church were the usual practice but these meetings do not appear to have been advocating atheism, their quarrel was not with religion itself but with its organisations and those who upheld these organisations. Mr. J. Arran a local preacher of Barnsley moved a resolution at a camp meeting in 1839 to the effect that it is the opinion of this meeting that civil liberty is in perfect agreement with the precepts held forth by the founder of the Christian religion, Jesus Christ; and that all ministers who are faithful and true to their calling will uphold the same.....The founder of Christianity was the greatest and purest democrat that ever lived." (1) Not only was this politico-religious element to be found in the Northern industrial areas but in the South-west of the country also. At Trowbridge Chartists had a chapel of their own and in Stroud they had a house licensed for preaching. (2) In London however, the religious sentiment was insignificant and the movement had more the character of philosophic radicalism. It was here that the elements of free-thought in Chartism were to be found amongst the radical artisans and men such as Hetherington, Holyoake, Cleave and Carlile. Asa Briggs has pointed to the existence of four groups of Chartists within the movement. (3) Firstly a hard core of radical reformers devoted to political protest movements and secondly a group of new recruits to working-class politics, often consisting of young men. In these two groups most of the free-thinkers would be found. Thirdly a body of loyal supporters eager not only to sign petitions and attend meetings but to participate in the social activities which provided the fellowship of Chartism; and lastly, a fluctuating rank and file capable of being stirred to enthusiastic activity, but just as capable of remaining silent. To this latter group who made up the bulk of Chartist support the movement's chief attraction was its promise of a better standard of living; this is borne out in the evidence of the fluctuating support which varied with the economic climate. Local Chartist societies drew their own individual characteristics from those of their most prominent leaders. Where Primitive Methodist preachers were active in the movement, Chartism took on a religious colouring and where political radicals took the lead the doctrines of free-thought were dominant, but the

(1) Ibid. P. 186.

(2) 'The Northern Star' 16th November 1839.

(3) A. Briggs - Chartist Studies (1959) P. 292.

but the ultimate dwindling of Chartism resulted from neither of these considerations but on the improving economic conditions and better wages which ensued after the depression of 1847 and 1848.

The drawing together of all the old elements of free-thought into one movement was largely the work of George Jacob Holyoake, an almost entirely self-educated man, he attended evening classes and then taught mathematics at the Birmingham Mechanics Institute. In 1831 he joined the Birmingham Reform League and in 1837 the Owenite movement. Soon after this he began teaching in the Socialist Sunday School, an activity which was frowned upon by the Directors of the Mechanics Institute and in 1840 he left the institute and became instead station lecturer to the Worcester Owenites. (1) The following year he moved to Sheffield and after refusing to take the religious oath advised by the Central Board he severed his association with the movement for a time. At the same time Charles Southwell who began editing the Oracle of Reason in 1841 was imprisoned shortly afterwards for blasphemy and Holyoake accepted an invitation to take over the editorial chair firmly committing himself on the side of atheism. His period of editorship however was not a success in terms of circulation; under Southwell the Oracle had sold 4,000 copies but as it became more refined under Holyoake, the circulation fell to nine hundred. (2) Following the failure of the Oracle in 1843 he tried again to revive the secular press with a journal which was to be both political and anti-theological called 'The Movement' which bore Bentham's motto 'Maximise morals; minimise religion', and later in 1846 he founded and edited 'The Reasoner'. These papers preached that man's concern lay only with the world around him; they emphasised the improvement of man through education and in this respect remained thorough going exponents of Owen's educational theories; they also called for the increase of liberty but their immediate quarry was religion. However neither 'The Investigator', 'The Movement' nor the earlier volumes of 'The Reasoner' ever sold more than 1,500 copies which is in striking contrast to the circulation which twenty years earlier ran into tens of thousands for Carlile's 'Republican' or Hetherington's 'Poor Man's Guardian'. (3) During the 1850's sales of 'The Reasoner' rose from 3,000 in 1852 to about 5,000 at the end of the decade but at no time did it ever pay its way, (3) which indicates the inability of the secular movement in its early years to capture the imagination of more than a miniscule proportion of the population.

Besides his earlier connections with Owenism, Holyoake had also been very much associated with the Chartist movement, particularly in the late 1840's and it was by founding his own movement in 1851 that he hoped to unite the scattered Owenite groups with the Chartists and the followers of Carlile into a universal organisation of free-thought, which was to be called the 'Secular Society'. A hand-bill was drawn up for the First

- (1) D. Tribe - 100 Years of Free Thought      Elek (1967)      P. 16.  
 (2) H. Grisewood - Op. Cit.      P. 68.  
 (3) E.P. Thompson - Op. Cit.      P. 789.  
 (4) J. Eros - Op. Cit.



Free Discussion Festival in connexion with the Secular Society' on 29th December 1851 at the Hall of Science, City Road, London. The movement came into nominal existence with the following principles - Science is the true guide of man; Morality is secular, not religious, in origin; Reason is the only authority; Freedom of thought and speech are basic rights; Owing to the uncertainty of survival, man should direct his efforts to this life only. (1)

In 1854 Holyoake established an ambitious Free-thought Institute, a combination of editorial office, book-shop and so-called 'political exchange' which was intended to be a meeting place for English radicals and foreign republican refugees. He also organised eight branches of his secular society in London and seventeen in provincial centres and these local societies maintained Sunday schools and improvement classes in competition with the Churches. Nevertheless the movement hardly existed outside the industrial towns and cities and nowhere did it receive mass support. In its aims to replace the old bonds of society that had been lost and to give man, living in industrial society a higher purpose and a new morality, the free-thought movement of the middle Nineteenth Century was a failure. Having lost the habit of church-going working class people did not appear anxious to participate in any ethical movement.

for the poorer classes alone. At the beginning of the Eighteenth Century a nationwide network of charity schools was set up by Churchmen as a philanthropic response to the anxiety which was being voiced about the moral as well as material well-being of poor children. (1) These schools, founded and maintained entirely by benevolent subscription, aimed chiefly at providing a very elementary form of education and, secondly, religious instruction that would enable the weekly unteaching of children in church to become general practice once again. The movement however was not confined to the poorer classes alone. The distribution of charity schools was very uneven and provision was particularly bad in rural areas where the clergy were often handicapped by poverty and plurality of livings. The standard of teaching also varied from one area to another and some rural areas suffered most, while in London the situation appears to have been very good. However after the first thirty years of the century the movement lost its initial enthusiasm and began to decline. Even in London only a further forty-seven schools were added in the next seventy years. (2) This decline was due partly to increasing industrialisation which stepped up the demand for child labour and partly to criticisms from certain quarters, particularly the High Church party, that charity school children were being raised above their betters, and given ideas above their station. (3) After this decline of interest in charity schools there was an attempt to set up industrial schools where the children were taught useful occupations and their produce sold, with the idea of making the schools self-supporting.

(1) H.S. Jones - The Charity School Movement in the Eighteenth Century (Cambridge 1938) P. 29.

(2) H.J. Burgess - Enterprises in Education - The Story of the Work of the Established Church in the Education of the people prior to 1870. S.P.C.K. (1958) P. 11.

(3) R. Hans - Educational Traditions in the English Speaking Countries (1951) P. 43.

EDUCATION

Having dealt with the failure of free-thought to obtain any significant hearing among the working-classes and with the failure of the socialist movements to attract more than a fluctuating support, one is left with the conclusion that intellectual ideas of any sort had very little appeal to the masses. When the state of Nineteenth Century popular education is examined however, it will be seen that very few were in fact equipped with the tools necessary to evaluate these ideas for themselves and that the Churches were in an overwhelmingly strong position to inculcate their own doctrines at a very young age.

Insofar as education was provided at all for the working class population this was almost entirely in the hands of religious agencies. Church education was not a new phenomenon in the Nineteenth Century; education in England had always meant Christian education and until the Reformation that meant Church education solely in the hands of one body. Even after the Reformation education continued to be both religious and ecclesiastical, and was regarded as an integral part of the church system. Prior to the Eighteenth Century however, Church education had been in terms of universities and grammar schools or classical schools for the upper classes; there had never been a widespread system of schools catering for the poorer classes alone. At the beginning of the Eighteenth Century a nationwide network of charity schools was set up by Churchmen as a philanthropic response to the anxiety which was being voiced about the moral as well as material well-being of poor children. (1) These schools, founded and maintained entirely by benevolent subscription, aimed firstly at providing a very elementary form of education and secondly, religious instruction that would enable the weekly catechizing of children in church to become general practice once again. The movement however was not confined solely to the Established Church but also gained support from many Dissenters. The distribution of charity schools was very uneven and provision was particularly bad in rural areas where the clergy were often handicapped by poverty and plurality of livings. The standard of teaching also varied from one area to another and once again rural areas suffered most, while in London the situation appears to have been very good. However after the first thirty years of the century the movement lost its initial enthusiasm and began to decline, even in London only a further forty-seven schools were added in the next seventy years. (2) This decline was due partly to increasing industrialisation which stepped up the demand for child labour and partly to criticisms from certain quarters, particularly the HighChurch party, that charity school children were being raised above their betters, and given ideas above their station. (3) After this decline of interest in charity schools there was an attempt to set up industrial schools where the children were taught useful occupations and their produce sold, with the idea of making the schools self-supporting.

- (1) M.G. Jones - The Charity School Movement in the Eighteenth Century  
(Cambridge 1938) P. 29.
- (2) H.J. Burgess - Enterprise in Education - The Story of the Work of the  
Established Church in the Education of the people prior to 1870.  
S.P.C.K. (1958) P. 11.
- (3) N. Hans - Educational Traditions in the English Speaking Countries  
(1931) P. 43.

Self-sufficiency however, proved impossible to achieve and so this scheme too was gradually abandoned. (1)

The third attempt to solve the problem of educating the masses was the Sunday School Movement which rose up during the last quarter of the Eighteenth Century. The paucity of accommodation in existing day schools and the fact that with an increasing demand for child labour many children were unavailable, in any case, for daily education, made the Sunday schools appear the next-best medium for instructing, and perhaps more important, disciplining the children of the poor. The beginning of the movement has generally been attributed to Robert Raikes who, influenced by the wild and lawless behaviour on Sundays, of those children employed in the pin industry in Gloucester, opened his first Sunday School in 1780, to bring them under the Christian influence. The idea spread rapidly and at first the movement was supported by all denominations, a co-operation which was remarkable in view of the bitter rivalry which developed later. In some places undenominational schools were set up and at Stockport children gathered at the school house, were led off either to Church or Chapel for worship and then returned for instruction when their respective services were over. The progress of the movement may be seen in the increase of the Sunday School Society from 201 affiliated schools with 10,232 children in 1787 to 1,086 affiliated schools with 69,000 children in 1799, and by 1803 when the Sunday School Union was formed with a Committee half Churchmen and half dissenters, there were 7,125 Sunday Schools with 88,860 teachers and 844,728 pupils. (2)

Apart from the growing number of Sunday schools at the end of the Eighteenth Century there were also isolated instances of clergymen who were active in the support of popular education on a day school basis. For example William Gilpin, Vicar of Baldre founded parochial schools for boys and girls in 1791 and Gurney, Vicar of St. Giles, London opened large parochial day schools in 1802; (3) but it was not until the growing signs of secularism within the population began to be realised by all denominations that the significance of education was fully appreciated. In the Nineteenth Century the field of education became a battleground for the various denominations, each seeking to capture in youth, the new generations and hoping to retain them in later life through means of early indoctrination. Although in terms of church membership, by the middle of the century, religion in general was losing its hold on the majority of the population it was still possible that if the churches could reach enough people in childhood they might be able to stem the tide away from secularism.

The educational conflict of the Nineteenth Century developed around two men - Dr. Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster each of whom thought he had discovered a new, cheap and efficient method of education for the working classes. Although, educationally, their differences were small ( their methods were almost identical), conflict developed as a result of their

- (1) S.J. Curtis & M.E.A. Boulwood - An Introductory History of Education Since 1800 pp. 4-5.
- (2) S.J. Curtis - The History of Education in Great Britain ( 4th Edn.1957) P. 199.
- (3) ' Of the Education of the Poor' 1809 pp. 105,124,150. in - H.J. Burgess Op. Cit. P. 19.



religious principles. Bell stood for the Established Church, against the undenominational scheme of Lancaster who was a Quaker. At first the two men co-operated with each other exchanging views but the rift between Churchmen and Nonconformists arose out of a pamphlet published by Mrs. Trimmer in which she stated that Bell had originated the monitorial system and Lancaster had copied it. (1) From then on the movement for popular education was split into two warring camps. In 1808 the Royal Lancasterian Society was formed, to be re-organised four years later as the British and Foreign School Society. The founding meeting of the National Society took place on October 16th 1811 with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Charles Manners Sutton as Chairman. The aim of Lancaster's scheme was not to promote the religious education of any particular sect, but "to instruct youth in useful learning, in the leading and uncontroverted principles of Christianity and to train them in the practice of moral habits, conducive to their future welfare as virtuous men and useful members of society." (2) While the defined purpose of the National Society was "That the national religion should be made the foundation of national education and should be the first and chief thing taught to the poor, according to the excellent Liturgy and Catechism provided by our Church." (3) These aims were reiterated one year later in the first annual Report of the Society -

"The sole object in view being to communicate to the poor generally, by means of a summary mode of education lately brought into practice such knowledge and habits as are sufficient to guide them through life in their proper stations, especially to teach them the doctrines of Religion according to the Principles of the Established Church and to train them to the performance of their religious duties by an early discipline." (4) Thus the motives of the church were made abundantly clear. The declared aims show a certain underlying fear of what might be the results of providing ordinary labourers with, 'too much' education and giving them ideas above their station' which would make them discontent with their lot; this was to be counteracted by a firm discipline and an insistence upon religious obedience. Meanwhile Lancaster's scheme came under heavy attack from many Church of England clergymen. Archbishop Daubeny called it "deism under the imposing guise of philanthropy" Elsewhere Lancaster's Schools were viewed as training schools for the army of the approaching revolution. And in 1814 the Bishop of London proclaimed "every populous village unprovided with a National School must be regarded as a stronghold abandoned to the occupation of the enemy." (5)

The National Society aimed at setting up a Church school in every parish in the country and this was to be achieved through a system of

- (1) Mrs. Trimmer - A Comparative View of the New Plan of Education 1805.
- (2) J. Lancaster - Improvements in Education as it respects the Industrious Classes of the Community 1806.
- (3) Minute Book of General Committee of National Society Vol. 1. pp. 1-2
- (4) First Annual Report of the National Society 1812 P. 19.
- (5) Quoted in E. Halevy - History of the English People in 1815 (1913)

grants which were used to stimulate local efforts. The religious basis was secured by the proviso that the school must be 'in union' before assistance of any kind could be given. i.e. "it is required that children received into these schools be, without exception instructed in the Liturgy and Catechism and do constantly attend Divine Service in their Parish Church or other place of worship under the Establishment wherever the same is practicable on the Lord's Day, and that no religious tracts be admitted into any school but which are or shall be contained in the catalogue of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge." (1)

The S.P.C.K. catalogue consisted exclusively of religious and theological books of Anglican extraction such as 'The Catechism broken into Short Questions, Ostervald's Abridgement of the Bible and the Chief Truths of the Christian Religion. (2) Despite many calls from clergymen for a more liberal approach this rule regarding books remained unchanged for thirty years. On the other hand the curriculum of the British Schools was based upon a teaching of the Bible without doctrinal explanations.

The success of the National Society and of the Church of England as a whole in providing schools for the poor before the first state grant to education can be seen in the Annual Report of 1832. An inquiry had been sent to every parish in the country and of the 8,588 places from which returns had been received 6,730 were provided with some sort of Church school, though only 3,058 were in union with the National Society. (3)

The first State grant towards education came in 1834 when £20,000 was set aside, to be administered by the Treasury to both the National Society and the British and Foreign Schools Society. (4) Even this was opposed by the Nonconformists because, as they saw it, although both societies were equally qualified to claim and obtain the benefits the Church of England stood to gain more, since it had more schools and less objection to subsidies. The individualistic spirit of Nonconformity disliked any form of State intervention.

After a short period of expansion following the introduction of government grants the activities of the National Society subsided and in the Church of England the initiative passed to party groups. The Evangelicals with their strong belief in child conversion took the lead in the foundation of infant schools and with the co-operation of Dissenters, also established a training college for teachers - The Home and Colonial Training College in Gray's Inn Road. (5) Meanwhile the National Society which had consistently refused grants to infant schools, decided in 1834 that grants could now be given provided 'that such infant schools are auxiliary to Sunday or Sunday-and-day schools in union, existing at the place, and that

(1) National Society Annual Report 1812 pp.27-28

(2) H.J. Burgess - Op. Cit. P. 33.

(3) National Society Annual Report 1832

(4) C. Bircenough - A History of Elementary Education in England and Wales 1800 to the Present Day (1930)

(5) Quarterly Educational Magazine of the Home and Colonial School Society 1848.

if such National schools do not exist it will be a condition of the grants that the infant school-rooms shall be used on the Lord's Day for the accommodation of schools to be formed and conducted for children above six or seven years of age. (1)

Initiative in other aspects of Church education came from men associated with the new Tractarian Movement and this group, which included certain members of the National Society became known as the Committee of Inquiry and Correspondence. By the provision of 'middle schools' it made the first approach towards selective secondary education which was to be a follow on from the primary stage provided by the ordinary National Schools; However these schools became mainly for the middle and lower-middle classes.

Whatever differences the various parties within the Church may have had; as far as the defence of Church education against State invasion was concerned, they were remarkably united and all solidly behind the National Society. They were particularly opposed to the Committee of Council on Education, set up in 1839 and whose mere existence indicated that from now on the Government's role was to be more than that of paymaster. The committee's proposals for the Normal School with its unsectarian character were vigorously opposed by the Church, which still believed in the indivisibility of education and religion and in the inalienable right of the Established Church to provide it, and by the Nonconformists who were likewise jealously guarding their own rights. The strength of this opposition in Parliament led to the eventual abandonment of the scheme, although the Committee of Council survived. (2)

The question of state inspection of Church Schools was another area of conflict which arose with a Minute of the Privy Council dated June 3rd 1839 announcing that all building grants would in future carry with them the right of inspection. Hitherto the Church had had sole control over its schools and the State had subsidised the building of Church schools on conditions which had reference only to the cost of the building. Now the State was demanding the permanent right of inspection without supplementing its grant and without contributing anything towards the maintenance of these schools. The National Society already had its own system of inspection and decided to proceed with this and refuse the State grants. With the financial support of Churchmen they were able to do this but obviously, such a state of affairs could not be tolerated by the Committee of Council, and it was they who offered the compromise. The controversy was eventually settled when the National Society agreed to accept the Committee's proposals that the appointment of an inspector for either province should be submitted to its Archbishop. (3) In this way the Church was able to retain the principle of unity between religious and secular education and preserve the tradition that schools were Church territory and therefore not liable to State interference.

- (1) National Society - Minute Book of General Committee Vol. 111. P.254.
- (2) F. Smith - The Life and Work of Sir James Kay Shuttleworth (1923) P.147.
- (3) Minute Book of General Committee Vol. 1V. P. 266.



The education provided in both the National Schools and the British Schools depended upon the monitorial system which was common to both Bell's method and Lancaster's. Grants from the parent societies and from the Privy Council provided help to build the schools but the task of supporting them was left to the local promoters, and the chief asset of the monitorial system was its low maintenance cost. The salient feature was mutual instruction by children to children and the terms 'teacher' and 'assistant teacher' described children sometimes as young as seven who were responsible for instructing a class. Monitors received the lesson they had to teach from the master and then passed it on to the pupils. Apart from the taint of cheapness the monitorial system was essentially mechanical and, in an age when machinery had revolutionised industry this was not generally regarded as a bad thing. By 1840 however a wide consensus of opinion had begun to declare that 'neither learning to repeat by rote, nor reading are sufficient to convey definite ideas or to impress any real information upon the minds of children' but that 'both these exercises must be accompanied by constant extemporary questioning on the meaning and scope of what has been read or repeated by heart.' (1)

Lack of adequate income was also responsible for the inadequacy of school furniture, the deficiency of books, maps and slates, and ultimately for the exclusion of some children altogether because fees had to be fixed at a level beyond their parents means. This dearth of means meant that educational standards suffered. The minutes of the Committee of Council in 1844 indicate that 75% of scholars were then leaving school unable to read the Scripture with tolerable ease and correctness; 50% left without any instruction in writing and 80% without any knowledge of the compound rules of arithmetic. (2)

Anxiety over this situation led to the development of a replacement of the Madras system by the National Society by a pupil-teacher plan which involved a scheme of apprenticeship for a much older person than the monitor. This in fact was the same system adopted by the Privy Council in 1846. A lack of resources on the part of the Church however meant that this scheme could never entirely supercede monitorialism and the problem of annual maintenance remained. By the middle of the 1840's it was becoming increasingly obvious that only the State could provide the necessary income to support a nationwide system of education. This came about with the issue of Minutes in Council in 1846 which had as their basic idea payments to recognised pupil teachers and proficient masters and mistresses, but only on the condition that school managers provided a contribution twice as large. (3) In the following year another Minute offered grants for school equipment on the same basis of one-third of the total cost. Some schools however were so poor that they were unable to claim these benefits, and others had teachers who were incapable

- (1) Minute Book of Committee of Inquiry and Correspondence P. 58.
- (2) Minutes of Committee of Council on Education 1844.
- (3) H.J.Burgess - Op. Cit. P. 101.

of obtaining one of the new certificates necessary to attract a salary grant. The monitorial system could not be abandoned everywhere immediately but by 1859 so many Church Schools had managed to comply with Government conditions that Tufnell's Educational Paper commented - 'We may observe that about two-thirds ( of the Parliamentary grant) invariably go to the Church of England, and one-third to all other denominations, showing how influential and effective the Establishment is, notwithstanding the attacks levelled upon it. (1)

The success of the Church of England in providing schools may be seen from the report of the Church School Enquiry 1846-1847. By this time the Church was educating nearly one million day scholars in 17,000 Day Schools and in addition there were then nearly 500,000 children in Sunday only schools. Of the 17,000 day schools over 7,000 were free schools, the rest being pay schools. Moreover, schools and scholars were increasing at a higher rate than the population : in the preceding ten years day schools had increased from 10,000 to 17,000 (70%) and day scholars from 555,000 to 955,000 (72%) while the population had risen from 15 million to 17 million (13%). It was also claimed that only 3,000 parishes were without a Church day school and only 1200 parishes lacked any form of Church education. (2) In 1850 Kay Shuttleworth estimated from their several reports that the British Schools then contained 200,000 children, Wesleyan Schools 38,000 children, Roman Catholic Schools - 34,000 and Congregational Schools 6,000. (3)

This does not mean however that the Church of England had a superior strength in all forms of education. The 1851 Census shows that although the Church possessed more than four-fifths of the day schools it was responsible for considerably less than half the Sunday Schools while Dissenters generally threw into the Sunday Schools that energy which Churchmen put forth in the more expensive task of raising and sustaining day schools. (4) Once again the underlying motives and assumptions of those who set up these Sunday Schools under the guise of educational agencies may be questioned. The Methodist London Sunday School Society for example pointed out that it was "principally engaged in superintending the formation of children's minds and that spelling and reading are but trifles when placed in competition with that discipline and these instructions where-by.... the heart may be amended, the understanding enlightened, the life reformed." (5) Whereas the early Sunday Schools often gave rudimentary instruction in reading and writing, at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century protests began to be voiced against the teaching of writing and arithmetic on the Sabbath, and the spread and prestige of

- (1) Educational Paper of Home and Colonial School Society July 1859 P. 58.
- (2) The Church School Enquiry 1846-7
- (3) J. Kay Shuttleworth - Public Education 1853 P. 36.
- (4) Census of Great Britain 1851 : Religious Worship.
- (5) J. Telford - Two West End Chapels P. 242

the Sunday School Movement became closely identified with the thinking and examples set by the Evangelical movement. The Evangelicals were particularly interested in Sunday schools as a form of disseminating from above knowledge and piety and their image of popular education was closely associated with the preservation of 'orders' & 'ranks' and 'degrees'. Yet even their intentions could be looked upon by some as highly suspect; the letters of Hannah More for example show in detail the nature of the attacks against her schools as hotbeds of Methodism and subversion. (1) In 1814 the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, under the leadership of Bunting who was an uncompromising Sabbatarian, prohibited the teaching of writing on Sundays though this was not entirely wiped out and in the more democratic Methodist sects such as the New connexion and the Primitive Methodists the approach was more intellectual.

When parliamentary reform was achieved in 1832, the Sunday School Movement had been flourishing for over fifty years, and was now suspected by many reformers of hampering the cause of national education. Some deplored the use of Sundays for instruction other than the inculcation of morals and religion by voluntary enthusiasts. Valentine Ward wrote that not only was writing taught but also in some instances arithmetic, if not geography also, and he felt that the fact that so many middle as well as poorer class children were attending Sunday schools, was causing a decline in the attendance at day schools. In this way many children were being sent to work much sooner than they would have been if Sunday schools had not been there to provide a substitute education. (2) However, with the introduction of State grants the day school system grew to be much more widespread and from this time the Sunday school movement lost much of its significance and by the middle of the century had become, for the most part supplementary to day school education.

The 1851 Census shows that on Census Sunday there were 23,514 Sunday schools in England and Wales providing for 2,407,642 scholars and that 1,817,499 actually attended their schools on that day. (3) According to Mann these were mainly, though not exclusively composed of the working class, and mostly upwards of six years of age.

As a general rule it was reported that Sunday school scholars were most numerous in localities where opportunities for day school education were most wanting. Thus, in Wales Sunday scholars were very numerous; in Sussex, Kent and other counties they were considerably fewer. But there were many exceptions to this rule and various other circumstances were found to operate in causing a greater or lesser attendance, for example, the prevalence or otherwise in any district of Dissent. Evangelical Sunday schools were ever-active, exerting an energy which churchmen put forth in the more expensive task of raising and sustaining day schools. In 1851 the Church of England possessed more than four-fifths of the day schools while having considerably less than half the total number of Sunday Schools.

- (1) Ed. Brinley Johnson - The Letters of Hannah More (1925) pp.176-7.
- (2) V. Ward - Observations on Sunday Schools 1827
- (3) Census of Great Britain 1851 : Religious Worship



Table to show proportion percentage of Sunday Scholars to population by counties.

Counties	No. of Sunday Scholars	As % of pop.	Counties	No. of Sunday Scholars	As % of pop.
North Wales	132,967	32.9	W. Riding.Yorks.	224,018	16.9
South Wales	136,411	22.4	Cornwall	58,005	16.3
Bedford	24,753	19.8	Nottingham	43,938	16.2
Derby	55,305	18	Bucks.	26,085	16
Monmouth	26,622	16.9	Lancashire	323,173	15.9
Northants.	33,614	15.8	Hampshire	44,828	11.6
Leicestershire	36,282	15.7	Norfolk	50,182	11.3
Cheshire	71,270	15.6	Berkshire	18,972	11.2
Staffordshire	93,572	15.4	Suffolk	37,470	11.1
Dorset	27,676	15	York City	3,972	10.9
Wiltshire	37,624	14.8	Essex	39,601	10.7
Huntingdonshire	9,444	14.7	E. Riding Yorks.	23,267	10.5
Lincolnshire	57,120	14	Warwickshire	49,411	10.4
Rutland	3,038	13.2	Cumberland	20,365	10.4
Cambridgeshire	24,006	13	Devon	58,408	10.3
Westmoreland	7,516	12.9	Shropshire	22,705	9.9
Gloucestershire	59,154	12.9	Northumberland	29,687	9.8
Somerset	56,090	12.7	Kent	57,987	9.4
Worcestershire	35,221	12.7	Sussex	29,570	8.8
Hertfordshire	20,584	12.3	Hereford	9,150	7.9
Durham	47,771	12.2	Surrey	44,422	6.5
North Riding					
Yorks.	26,412	12.2	Middlesex	111,595	5.9
Oxfordshire	19,776	11.6			

Thus while the northern industrial areas were shown by the religious census statistics to be rather more irreligious than the agricultural south, this does not apply to the younger element of the population found in the Sunday schools.

Many schools sustained week evening classes and many also had libraries, but opinions as to the value of Sunday schools in general appear to have been varied. There was a growing belief in the 1850's that the increasing amount of money spent on popular education was not being used to the best purpose, and the view that religious controversy was a fatal obstacle to reform cannot be ignored. After the religious census was published in 1854 The Times was moved to point out to fierce sectarians that though they had held back educational reform they had not helped religion. An intelligent person was invited to enquire into his own district. " He will see that the working people are not in his church and if he goes to the next parish church and the nearest chapel of ease and the proprietary chapels about him and to the Dissenting chapels and to every place where God is worshipped in any manner whatever, he will still find the working classes are not there; the working classes who when we first began to talk and write of these things were boys and girls learning Crossman's Catechism and thumbing Mrs. Trimmer's

Scripture History, if indeed they were receiving any education at all... the classes who now have been dosed and drilled for two generations, have been dosed and drilled with the multiplication table, catechism and penmanship in mystic and inseperable alliance, are now grown up ill-educated and almost wholly irreligious." (1)

Even Churchmen were forced to the conclusion that their own aims had not entirely been fulfilled and some were severely critical. In 1850 Richard Dawes for example took the view that the National system had been 'an entire failure'. " It has neither produced that improved moral conduct in the recipients of education, nor that attachment to the Church which was expected to result from it." He condemned the inadequacy of the curriculum, the low standard of instruction and the limited conception of education which saw it only as a means of inculcating religion and of 'forcing children into the Church ' and which failed to see in education 'a great good in itself.' At the same time the Bishop of Norwich condemned the purely mechanical nature of the teaching.(2) But in spite of such criticisms Flora Thompson who was at school during the 1880's, was still able to comment upon this method.

"Every morning at ten-o'clock the Rector arrived to take the older children for Scripture....His lesson consisted of Bible reading, turn and turn about round the class, of reciting from memory the names of the Kings of Israel and repeating the Church Catechism... From his lips the children heard nothing of that God who is Truth and Beauty and Love; but they learned for him and repeated to him long passages from the Authorized Version." (3)

The problem of providing good education in the first half of the Nineteenth Century was also hampered by financial inadequacies and poor attendance. Lack of money inevitably lowered the standard of education, the average length of schooling amounted to about four years and even then attendance was often irregular, particularly in rural areas where farming duties often kept away the boys. But the attitude of the Churches was also an important factor.

In the days before the State began to show any interest in the provision of popular education, the work of the various denominations in giving some sort of rudimentary education, however unsatisfactory it may have been, was invaluable, but the petty squabbles which developed among them proved a serious drawback. With the introduction of State intervention the area of conflict was expanded with all the denominations pitting themselves against the Government. The basic problem of providing a good educational system over the whole country became submerged in a mesh of interdenominational quarrels with each side desperately trying to preserve its own rights and principles not only against each other but also against the state.

- (1) ' The Times' 29th January 1854 - in J.L. & B. Hammond - The Age of The Chartists 1832-54 (1930)
- (2) Report of Annual Meeting of Home & Colonial School Society 1848
- (3) F. Thompson - From Larkrise to Candleford P. 191.

By the middle of the Nineteenth Century Mechanics Institutes were well established. It was estimated that in 1850 there were seven hundred Mechanics Institutes, Literary Institutes, athenaeums, Mutual improvement Societies and kindred organisations in the British Isles and that they had a membership of over 120,000 (1) Their libraries contained over 800,000 volumes with an annual issue of books of over two million. Between five and six thousand lectures were delivered during the year and over Eighteen thousand members were attending evening classes.

In England alone, there were over six hundred Mechanics Institutes and about one hundred thousand members. Over one third of all the Mechanics Institutes were in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Yorkshire claimed one quarter (151) of the total number in England and over one fifth (21,090) of the total membership, while Lancashire had one-ninth (68) of the institutes and over one-eighth (13,399) of total membership. However, by this time, while they varied greatly in character and achievement and some had a more proletarian membership than others the institutes had nearly everywhere ceased to be regarded as a medium for the instruction of the masses and had become select rather than popular institutions. The majority of their support came from the lower middle-classes and from the 'superior order of the working-class' - defined by Samuel Smiles as those earning between twenty to thirty shillings per week. (2) From a list drawn up by J.B. Langley for the Select Committee on Public Libraries in 1849 it would appear that of two hundred and four institutes in England and Wales, forty-three were mainly supported by operatives and mechanics and ninety-six by gentlemen, ladies, tradesmen, shopkeepers and clerks; the remaining sixty five had mixed support. Most of those which were of a proletarian character were found to be in Lancashire and the West Riding.

Although there is evidence that several isolated societies devoted to adult education were in existence in the Eighteenth Century such as the Spitalfields Mathematical Society which was founded as early as 1717 and the Birmingham Sunday Society established in 1789, the wider movement of Mechanics Institutes did not appear until the 1820's.

The foundation of the London Mechanics Institute in 1823 was the beginning of a national movement; the example, combined with effective propaganda carried on by Brougham led to an immediate outburst of activity and the foundation of innumerable institutes up and down the country. However, it must be emphasised that the movement, although related to the actual wants and inspirations of the working classes was not initiated by them. The impetus behind the movement was predominantly middle-class reflecting the unqualified enthusiasm for educational progress which prevailed among social reformers of the time. The desire for knowledge among sections of the working class was not lacking but, according to Lord Brougham the chief impediments to obtaining this were money and time. His solution lay in the cheap publication of educational literature and in 1826 the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was established specifically for this purpose. The Society however was not such a success

- (1) T. Kelly - A History of Adult Education in Great Britain P. 112.
- (2) Evidence of Samuel Smiles to Select Committee on Public Libraries 1850.



as had been anticipated and it was eventually forced to wind up having failed to accomplish what it set out to do. After a modest start it suffered a startling decline, there was no regularity of publication, it was found difficult to produce the right treatises and at 6d for a thirty-two page treatise, many thought the price too high. Subjects included natural philosophy, political philosophy, ethics, history and biography. Later activities such as the Penny Mag. the Penny Encyclopaedia produced booklets for farmers, a series of maps and a series of almanacs, though these were circulated largely among the middle classes.

Individual publishers also set out to cater for the demand for popular educational literature. For example William and Robert Chambers ran three series, all of which reached a circulation equal to the S.D.U.K. tracts; "Information for the People"; "A miscellany of Useful and Entertaining Tracts"; and an "Educational Course." "The Plain Englishman" founded by Locker and Knight ran from 1820 - 1822. Each issue contained sermons, moral tales, poems, some entertaining articles and a few scientific items and was designed to make a strong appeal to patriotism. However, its fifty pages made it too large, and at one shilling, its price was too high so that it could have reached down no further than to the highest ranks of artisan.

Towards the late 1820's technical advances had made cheap quantity printing possible and with the spread of railways and the reform of the Post Office, distribution was also made easier. In 1832 three weekly magazines were founded - Chambers Journal which sold for 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d and at the beginning of 1845 had a circulation approaching 90,000. The S.D.U.K.'s Penny Magazine which came out in weekly numbers and monthly parts soon reached a sale of 200,000 but by the mid 1840's sales had fallen off to about 40,000. The third venture was the S.P.C.K.'s Saturday Magazine whose regular sale in 1833 was reported to be 80,000 but which closed down in 1844. All three failed to a certain extent in their object and instead of going into the cottages went into the drawing rooms. W.E. Hickson told the Select Committee on Newspaper Stamps that he thought Chambers circulation lay chiefly among small shopkeepers and certainly not among those of the working class earning under sixteen shillings per week. Of the three, Chambers Journal did maintain a modest but steady circulation. It always included a tale, sometimes poetry and sometimes political and economic matters of current interest, though never any news. On the other hand, the other two journals were largely compilations of quaint facts and descriptions of animals, buildings and natural phenomena. They all reflected a middle class Whig view of what the working classes should read.

It was the same middle class utilitarian view that was behind the setting up of the Mechanics Institutes. It was the disinterested desire to raise the status and broaden the outlook of life of the industrial worker which assured to the movement the support of the philanthropists;

- (1) Report on the State of Education, 1820
- (2) T. Kelly - The State of Education in England, 1821
- (3) J. Kay - The State of Education in England, 1822
- (4) Report on the State of Education, 1823

but at the same time there were other interests involved for the upper classes.

A chronicler of the early history of Mechanics Institutes pointed out that at the time of their origin "there still prevailed, in many quarters, a strong jealousy of any political discussions by the people and still more of any society which proposed to assemble periodically several hundreds of the labouring classes; nor had the prejudices against all education beyond the miserable teaching of the charity school yet died away." (1)

The St. James Chronicle wrote of Mechanics' Institutes - "A scheme more completely adapted for the destruction of this empire could not have been invented by the author of evil himself. It is nothing to the purpose to tell us that Mr. Brougham and Dr. Birbeck or Mr. Huskisson, cannot design the ruin of the country....every step which they take in setting up the labourers as a separate or independent class, is a step taken, and a long one too, towards that fatal result." (2)

On the other hand the promoters of Mechanics Institutes believed that education, far from being the means of arousing agitation among the working classes, was the one method of allaying it.

"If the higher classes are unwilling to diffuse intelligence among the lower, those exist who are ever ready to take advantage of their ignorance; if they will not seek their confidence others will excite their distrust.... their misery, vice and prejudice will prove volcanic elements, by whose explosive violence the structure of society may be destroyed." (3)

The spread of knowledge could also have a beneficial effect upon the attitude of labour towards capital. 'Violence for the redress of grievances, said a speaker at a Mechanics' Institute, 'unlawful combinations for the destruction of property, or the injury of obnoxious individuals; absurd and impolitic regulations interfering with the free exercise of trade and commerce, are never the consequences of sound knowledge diffused among the people at large!' The people were to be persuaded that they were deeply interested in the maintenance of order and the enforcement of the law as any other class.

However the early association of the movement, in some parts of the country, with political radicalism was sufficient for many Anglicans and Wesleyan clergy to hold aloof. A Yorkshire vicar in 1826 saw the Institutes as agencies of universal suffrage and universal free-thinking which would in time degenerate into Jacobin clubs and become nurseries of disaffection. The Established Church particularly objected to the fact that "some of Mr. Brougham's leading co-operators are Unitarians and consequently members of a hostile sect". (4)

The exclusion of party political and theological subjects was usual and generally felt to be quite essential to success but this was a further cause for alarm among those who feared the study of science developing without any formal connection with religious teaching. It was felt by

- (1) Report on the State of Literary, Scientific and Mechanics' Institutes 1841
- (2) T. Kelly - Op. Cit. P. 123.
- (3) J. Kay Shuttleworth - The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes Employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester.
- (4) Rev. G. Wright in J.F.C. Harrison - Learning and Living  
Routledge (1961) P. 173

many that the establishment of an educational system on a purely materialistic basis that 'the more widely science is diffused, the better will the Author of all things be known',

In a number of places special Church institutes were set up to offset any possibility of irreligion; The Sheffield Church of England Instruction Society described itself as ranged against Socialism, Chartism, Popery and Rationalism. According to Hudson these institutes were comparatively successful where dissenters were few in number, but in Leeds, Sheffield and Bury where religious feeling was more divided, antagonism to them involved clergy and managers in heavy losses and in Bradford the tendency for the dissenting churches to ally themselves with the Mechanics Institutes, in opposition to the Church of England, was most marked.

By the middle of the century it had become clear that Mechanics Institutes had failed in their object as a medium for the scientific instruction of the masses and, in the main, had been taken over by the lower middle classes and those skilled artisans at the top of the working-class hierarchy, though still a very important section of industrial society and the influence of adult education upon these people cannot be over emphasised. But Mechanics Institutes were not proletarian in the sense that they were part of a conscious effort of working people to shape their own lives and destinies. They preached middle-class doctrines and virtues but they also served the spread of general knowledge and ideas and through the provision of a number of cultural and social activities such as newsrooms, concerts and exhibitions which were thrown open to a wider public they actually achieved a much greater local influence than membership figures alone would imply. In the new industrial towns where they were more specifically working class in character they offered almost the sole means of access to new experience and educational endeavour, and by providing the most elementary skills of learning, for many working men they opened up a whole new world of possibilities.

Public Schools	1,000	100,000
Others	1,000	100,000
Other Public Schools (Non-Religious)	1,000	100,000
Regged Schools	100	10,000
Factory Schools	100	10,000
Total British Schools (Whether connected with Religious Associations or not)	2,200	220,000



## LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES

TYPE OF SCHOOL	NO. OF SCHOOLS	SCHOLARS (1)
Total Day Schools	44,836	2,108,592
Private Day Schools	29,425	695,422
Public Day Schools	15,411	1,413,170
Supported by General or Local Taxes	610	48,826
Supported by Endowments	3,125	206,279
Supported by Religious Bodies	10,595	1,048,851
Church of England National Schools	3,720	464,975
Church of England Other Schools	4,851	336,532
Independent	431	47,406
Baptist	115	8,665
Roman Catholic	311	38,583
Jewish	10	1,234
Undenominational British	514	82,597
Others	4	1,064
Other Public Schools (Non-Religious)	1,081	109,214
Ragged Schools	123	22,337
Factory Schools	115	17,834
Total British Schools (Whether connected with Religious Denominations or not )	852	123,015

(1) D. Martin - A Sociology of English Religion, S.O.S. (1951) - P. 206.

(1) Census of Great Britain 1851 : Education - in The Encyclopaedia

(3) J.A.S. Fildott - The Englishman's Holiday - Faber (1947) P. 19.

LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES.

Another influence which might be thought to have had a great effect upon the numbers who attended Church on a Sunday was that of alternative leisure-time activities. To-day formal religious worship can no longer be regarded as an institutional force in modern Britain and certain sociologists have come to liken it to other forms of social activity particularly leisure activity. The view has been put forward that mid-Twentieth Century religion has become just one more type of club for the 'clubbable classes' (1) which largely means the middle classes. Religion is now on the open market, free from state support and free from state persecution, and has tended to become simply one other voluntary activity among the multitude of alternative leisure pursuits now available to all. At the beginning of the Nineteenth Century however opportunities for leisure, particularly among the working classes were desperately few and it was not until the century wore on that more and more alternatives to organised religious worship became available, as the necessary conditions for leisure were established.

The word 'leisure' has been defined as 'the freedom from activities centering around the making of a livelihood.' (2) To indulge this freedom certain prerequisites are involved, prerequisites which in the early years of the Nineteenth Century did not exist. The first of these is a margin of time over the working day, which meant a limitation of the hours of employment. The Factory Acts from 1833 onwards began this process. Lord Althorpe's Factory Act of 1833 set legal limits to the working hours of children and young persons; this led on to the famous Ten Hours Bill of 1847, which in itself only limited the daily work of women and youths in textile factories, but in effect, compelled the stoppage of all work after ten hours since the men could not carry on the processes alone. However, the ten hours referred to by the Act meant ten full working hours, not inclusive of breaks or time spent in travelling. In the years following 1847 the principle of factory regulation was extended by a series of Acts to other manufactures besides textiles, but conditions of work and hours of labour were known to be much worse under the old system of domestic work which was still fairly widespread in the 1840's. No legislation could effectively be brought to bear in these industries, nor did the Acts apply to coal mines, shops, brick-works, agricultural labourers or domestic servants. Further restrictions in the working day came through the agitation of the Trade Unions but this was not until the 1870's and beyond. In 1871 engineers secured a nine-hour day by strike; it was not until 1914 that the eight-hour day was a common feature but even then it was by no means universal.

As regards the provision of holidays, before the 1871 Bank Holidays Act it would appear that three days per year was the usual. (3) However,

- (1) D. Martin - A Sociology of English Religion. S.C.M. (1967) P. 106.
- (2) I. Craven - from an article on 'Leisure' - in The Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences - (New York 1935)
- (3) J.A.R. Pimlott - The Englishman's Holiday Faber (1947) P. 79.

in the early days of the Industrial Revolution the working man's year was still punctuated with local feast days, known variously as 'Wakes', 'Rushbearings' and 'Revels'. Against these the Methodists waged a fierce campaign claiming that although in origin they might have been permissible they had since become "Dreadfully prostituted to the most diabolical purposes." Time was spent in "eating and drinking imtemperately; talking profanely or at least unprofitably; in laughing and jesting, fornication and adultery." Gradually these festivities and other traditional sports were abandoned as the average working man became more disciplined, less violent and less spontaneous, and more subject to the productive tempo of the clock.

It was not until the 1870's that firms began to allow one week's holiday and then only to long service employees, and it was not until the 1880's that the crucial question of holidays with pay began to arise.(1) At the time of the religious census the provision of leisure time for the working classes was hardly a common feature of daily life and if anything, was less than it had been in the Eighteenth Century. Whereas before, employees had taken time off without causing any great detriment to efficiency, the factory system required a rigid discipline where all must work in concert.

A second pre-requisite for most leisure activity is a margin of income over necessary expenditure, since almost all forms of leisure involve some cost. However, it was not until the 1870's and 1880's that working-class families began to have some margin of income with which they might indulge in leisure pursuits; this was associated mainly with the falling price of food and rising real wages. (2) Skilled workers were able to command these things much earlier but for most workers during the first half of the Nineteenth Century, incomes were barely enough for subsistence. One has only to look at working class family budgets for the period to see that money for anything but the necessities of life was just not available.(3) And while unemployment provided men with plenty of spare time, it did not provide them with income.

So far it is clear that neither the necessary margins of time or money were readily available to the working classes in the first half of the Nineteenth Century. The third pre-requisite for leisure is the provision of amenities and here again the picture was bleak. For the greater part of this period virtually the only amenity provided for working-class leisure was that of the public house. The Beer House Act of 1830 made it much easier to establish beer houses without a licence and after a period of only four years 40,000 had sprung up. In the 1840's and 1850's various estimates put working class expenditure on beer at £15-£20 per annum, per family, out of average total incomes of between £60 - £80 per annum. (4) This meant that between one-quarter to one-third of income was being spent on drink, a proportion that aroused widespread national concern. The success of the Temperance Societies, which were started in the 1830's and 1840's, in attracting large followings meant that according to the statistics

(1) Ibid Chapter 8 pp. 141-159

(2) J. Burnett - A History of the Cost of Living (Penguin Books 1969)  
Chapter 4 : The Nineteenth Century.

(3) J. Burnett - Plenty and Want : A Social History of Diet in England  
From 1815- to the Present Day Nelson (1966)

(4) J.L. & B. Hammond - The Age of the Chartists 1832-54 P. 156



of expenditure on drink some families must certainly have been spending as much as half of their total income in the public house. The temperance advocates were not helped in their efforts to reform drinking habits by the practice in many areas of paying wages in the pub and by the system of drinking usages which had grown up in many trades. (1) In the country free drink was due 'at putting on the rims or tyres of cartwheels at sharpening or plough-shares and of sickles.... at milling of grain.... at weighing of hay'; in Scotland miners were given a gallon of whiskey when a workable seam of coal was discovered, and masons received a founding pint, of from a sovereign to ten guineas, when a foundation stone was laid. Carpenters too, collected 'joist money' for laying the first joist. Nevertheless the public house often provided the only form of social centre in working class communities, where a man could meet to discuss local events, wrangle over politics or sing a few songs, and although they were constantly decried from the pulpit they were rarely the dens of iniquity that some people claimed. The Temperance Movement, which began in the 1830's was initiated by the Evangelicals; in the beginning it drew support from businessmen, clergy and the more prosperous section of the middle-class, while working men, who were the chief victims of drink, were barely affected. (2) Afterwards however, when the movement spread and the great temperance crusades were carried all over the country, much of the work was with the poor. Meetings held either in the Methodist chapels or in the open air attracted great support and the northern industrial areas in particular became strongholds of the movement. By 1840, the tee-total message had been carried as far south as Cornwall and local societies were in existence in most areas. The majority of their support came from the Nonconformists; tee-totallers were inspired by a conviction that their work was God given and the language used by the secretary of the Warrington Total Abstinence Society was typical. (3)

" Though we are but a few youths we hope in the strength of our God to stay, like David, the lion and the bear and to rescue the lambs from the lion's mouth. And though we have but our slings and stones yet we feel confident that Goliath, the great and daring monster, Drunkenness, will verily be slain."

Nor were the young to be left out of this battle - by the early 1840's there were flourishing juvenile societies in several places and in 1847 the Band of Hope was formally founded. (4) Membership was open to all children under the age of sixteen and based on the simple pledge - 'I do agree that I will not use intoxicating liquors as a beverage'. The cause made remarkable progress and by 1874 there were at least 5,500 Bands of Hope in the United Kingdom with 800,000 members. For both adults and children the local temperance societies with their regular meetings, jamborees and 'harvest suppers' provided a source of leisure time activity but their heavy religious overtones must have meant that support came largely from those people who were already regular chapel-goers. They were not therefore, an alternative to religious worship.

- (1) N. Longmate - *The Waterdrinkers* Hamilton (1968) P. 17.
- (2) *Ibid.* P. 42.
- (3) *Ibid.* P. 53.
- (4) *Ibid.* P. 124.

(5) Report from the Select Committee on Public Houses 1839 (1839) XLI.

Concern about the extent of drinking among the working class population led also to the establishment of the Movement for Rational Recreation but the effects of this were not really felt until the later 1850's and beyond. The movement took the form of provision of public parks, libraries, museums and art galleries. Often local charities and sometimes manufacturers gave financial help in setting up these amenities. However rational recreation never really touched the lower working-class strata; most of its support came from skilled artisans on the fringe of the working class. In any case, amenities were not usually open on Sundays, the only day when workers had any free time, and even nominal charges often proved prohibitive.

Public libraries did not appear in any number until well on into the 1850's, following a Parliamentary Report in 1849 and Ewart's Public Library Bill of 1850. Nevertheless some large institutions opened their libraries to the public for a small charge; these were often found in factories, army barracks, police stations, churches and chapels. While middle-class libraries charged approximately one and a half guineas per year plus a heavy entrance fee, there were others used by the lower classes where between 1d and 3d was charged on each volume. In 1838 a survey of three London parishes found thirty-eight such libraries in existence, generally attached to tobacco or stationery shops. (1)

It was for long assumed that before the 1870 Education Act the majority of the working class could not read; however from recent studies it now seems probably that during the early part of the century two out of three working men could read, after some fashion, though they could not necessarily write. (2) Reading could not always have been easy and was probably not habitual but the effect of day schools and Sunday Schools was becoming increasingly felt, as well as of self-improvement societies and Mechanics' Institutes, all making for the development of a reading public.

In London especially, coffee-houses were extremely popular as suppliers of literature, where workers could take their own food. In the 1830's they became centres for radical discussion and men like John Cleave and William Lovett ran them specifically for this purpose. By 1840 there were between 1,600 - 1,800 coffee-houses in London; all provided periodicals and by 1849 at least 500 also had libraries attached. In the North of England their place was taken by 1d Reading Rooms such as the one in Manchester which was open from six in the morning until ten at night. Periodicals available covered a wide range from Pickwick and Chambers Journal to lower class fiction such as the 1d storyteller.

Besides making use of these libraries, working men were also beginning to buy books. A survey of a working class parish of London in 1848 showed that each family possessed on average, eleven books. (3) Novels were often sold direct through the publishers canvassers who called on town subscribers weekly or monthly.

- (1) T. Kelly - A History of Adult Education in Great Britain  
Liverpool University Press (1962) P. 175
- (2) R.K. Webb - The British Working Class Reader 1790-1848 (1955)  
J.F.C. Harrison - Learning and Living (1961)
- (3) Report from the Select Committee on Public Libraries 1850 (655) XV111. 1.

The 1820's and 1830's saw a phenomenal growth in popular periodicals, though many were often short-lived and disappeared almost as quickly as they had sprung up. Nevertheless they had created a number of publishers and a network of newsagents who turned to other literature. These new lower-class publishers were centred mainly on London, but all provincial towns had their own political and social magazines.

In the 1840's, when economic depression in the country as a whole meant particular hardships for the labouring population, the whole wave of enthusiasm for learning and political self-betterment subsided as bread-and-butter issues became their chief concern. The masses who read the early numbers of the 'ld Magazine' turned now to the growing number of sensational periodicals, among them Renton Nicholson's 'The Town' which was semi-pornographic and ran from 1837. During these years there was a growing desire for fiction, and from reprinting earlier fiction the popular press moved into fiction written specifically for the new working class public. In 1846 two independent surveys made of the literature circulating among the lower class of London revealed approximately eighty cheap periodicals, none costing more than 2d., of these, only four were political; nine were scientific; five were considered licentious, four were devoted to drama, sixteen to biographies and memoirs and twenty-two contained nothing but romances and short stories (1) The mass of this literature in ld numbers was designed to please for a few hours, and make few demands on the comprehension of the tired worker. The desire for this type of fiction meant the need for a constant stream of material which eventually tended towards a lowering in quality.

The first illustrated story magazine - 'The ld Storyteller' began in 1832 and from then onwards cheap magazines grew in importance. Sunday papers too increased in popularity and were 'Essentially the papers of the poor'. (2) In 1840 Edward Lloyd began The ld Sunday Times and People's Police Gazette which ran until 1849 and consisted entirely of fiction and fabricated police reports. Bell's Weekly Dispatch was another popular paper which like others of its type gave no news, on account of the prohibitive stamp duty.

'The Family Herald' started by George Biggs in 1842 led to the Family Journal, The Home Circle, The Family Friend etc., but these found more support among the middle classes as they had somewhat higher prices. Cheaper periodicals such as the Family Portfolio were generally not very successful though one exception, surprisingly since it was produced by an upper-class concern, was 'The Family Economist....devoted to the Moral, Physical and Domestic Improvement of the Industrious Classes.' This was a monthly magazine which contained practical cheap recipes and hints on housekeeping on a small budget, as well as the usual two stories in every issue.

(1) R.K. Webb - Op. Cit. pp. 72-3

(2) T. Kelly - Op. Cit. P. 163.



From John Wesley's early days the influence of the Methodists had also been brought to bear against the theatre. Theatres were regarded by them as being 'peculiarly hurtful to a trading city, giving a wrong turn to youth especially, gay, trifling and directly opposite to the spirit of industry and close application to business. (1) The phenomenon of the music-hall however was just beginning to appear in spite of all Methodist efforts to suppress any form of enjoyment. They began simply with songs and drinks in the bar parlour and developed later into Harmonic Meetings. 'Free and Easies', and 'Catch and Glee Clubs'. (2)

Another means of relaxation for the working classes which flourished particularly in many northern towns was the Friendly Society. Although its primary aim was to help thrift and insurance and to act as a sick and burial club it also provided social entertainment. These societies were created mainly by workers under their own leadership and for their own ends. Small village clubs and trade friendly societies had been frequent from about 1700 but in the Nineteenth Century they became National in scale or extending over a large area, of which the great 'Orders' represent the dominant type. The Oddfellows, Foresters, Druids and several other of the Orders had originated well back in the Eighteenth Century but it was not until 1793 that they were given any form of legal recognition. (3) The 'Rose' Act of that year was passed mainly for the encouragement of societies under upper-class patronage and in the hope of checking the growth of bodies of a less 'respectable' type. Friendly Society Membership at that time was estimated at approximately 648,000 (4) From 1799 the Corresponding Societies Act made illegal the creation of societies with branches and thus placed the Orders strictly beyond the pale of the law. However, this prohibition was not rigidly enforced and by the beginning of Victoria's reign the Act had commonly become a dead-letter. In 1812 the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows had led the way towards reorganisation on modern lines; the Ancient Order of Foresters reorganised in 1834 and in the same year the Oddfellows underwent a similar process. In 1846 the Registry of Friendly Societies was formally constituted. Both the National Orders and the independent local societies represent in the Nineteenth Century the basic collective idea of the emerging working-class culture. By method of mutual insurance, members were able to provide for themselves certain benefits in case of sickness, death etc., but, more than this, the secret rituals and ceremonies usually employed provided a function similar to that of religion, whereby members expressed their faith and solidarity as a group. Added to this, was the strong element of social activity which included convivial club nights and annual outings or feasts.

As regards sport, all games were virtually excluded from the working man's week. Towards the end of the Eighteenth Century, football playing, which was first mentioned as a sport in England in 1175, was on the wane and from 1820 up to the middle of the century had almost disappeared. It

(1) Quoted in - J.L. & B. Hammond Op. Cit. P. 257.

(2) F. Alderson - View North (1968) P. 63

(3) G.D.H. Cole - A Short History of the British Working Class Movement 1789-1848 (1925) pp. 161-2.

(4) E.P. Thompson - The Making of the English Working Class P. 460.

was not until 1847 that the Saturday half-day was granted and then this did not apply to all workers; on the other hand The Lord's Day Observance Societies saw to it that they certainly did not play any sports on Sundays. Quite apart from that there was the gradual erosion of public spaces, as commons and open pieces of land were fast disappearing. Bolton with a population of 45,000 in 1845 had no public open spaces at all. Concern over such situations led to the eventual setting up of a Select Committee, in 1833, to enquire into the deficiency of Public Walks and Places of exercise, which resulted, after six years agitation in the introduction of a Standing Order with Enclosure Bills 1844. Its provision was that "an open space should be left sufficient for the exercise and recreation of the neighbouring population," when wastes and commons were enclosed interpretation of this however, was frequently farcial. When the one hundred and seventy acres of Fairweather Green at Bradford were enclosed, only three acres were reserved for people to play cricket and the local game of 'spell and Knur' - this for a total population of over one hundred thousand.

In the towns it was made as difficult as possible for a man to exchange the discipline of a week in the factory for anything else other than the discipline of Sabbath observances. William Hewitt in a contribution to the 'Literary Souvenir' in 1836 pleaded that mechanics' caged by their imperious necessities in shops and factories during the week and toiling amid the whirl of machinery and greedy cravings of mercantile gain 'should not be coped up by the bigots on Sunday also and made to walk with 'demure steps and downcast eyes.' The working classes found Sunday the weariest day of all with no prospect of any acceptable form of entertainment being open to them, while even some of the clergy complained that many church services were 'blank, dismal, oppressive and dreary.' The rigid discipline within the fold caused many to spend their Sunday outside it and this reaction often took the form of bawling, hustling and beer. Contemporary newspapers were full of complaints about town youths spending their Sunday playing pitch and toss at street corners, or in drunkenness or dog-fighting.

The development of socio-religious activities in later years in the form of 'Bright Hours', Mothers' Unions and Sunday School Anniversaries, suggests that the churches regarded themselves as being in active battle for people's attentions, with the ever increasing forms of leisure. By offering such activities it was hoped, on the one hand to hold on to existing members and on the other, to attract new membership. At the time of the 1851 Census however, the Church, as a source of social entertainment was unknown. In an age when opportunities for organised leisure activities were most needed by the working classes the churches stood by and did nothing but condemn the immorality and rowdyism of the masses. It was not until these opportunities were developed through other channels and the people were quickly seen to be responding to them that any direct threat to religion was recognised.

As the central piece of evidence regarding mid-Nineteenth Century religious behaviour it is unfortunate that the 1851 Census should have been conducted in so haphazard a manner. The failure to establish an accurate count, plus the vague assumptions upon which the processing of the data was based are serious drawbacks which must be remembered when interpretation of the results is attempted. In particular the method of weighting employed by Horace Mann, in order to arrive at the number of attenders, as opposed to the number of attendances is questionable, on the grounds that practices of religious worship were subject to local variations based on custom as well as to denomination variations, so that to adapt the same standard over the whole country would obviously add to the inaccuracies. It is also possible that the weighting was, in fact, too high since in a few parishes - all of them agricultural - the calculated number of attenders actually exceeds the adult population; this situation applies not only to Exning which is already quoted, but also to East Marden, in Sussex, Winterborne Stickland, Winterborne Whitchurch and Spetisbury in Dorset and to St. Levan, Cornwall. However, since no distinction was made on the returns between children and adults present at each service, it may be that these discrepancies can be explained by the presence of a number of children in the congregations, but one can do no more than surmise. Although a greater precision of accuracy would obviously have been desirable, these inadequacies, provided they are not totally ignored, do not discount the census as being of great historical and sociological value. When all the returns have been processed, broad patterns do emerge which provide a useful basis for comparative study.

The main finding of the Census was that only 40% of the total population were present at either church or chapel on the chosen Sunday and that this represented seven out of every twelve of those who were able to attend. By modern standards this would be a remarkable proportion, but by those who, in 1851, were in anyway connected with the Churches, it was viewed with alarm and even panic, particularly when it was realised that the greater proportion of the non-worshipping population was to be found among the working-classes. Clearly, the picture of the Victorian era as being characterised by excessive devotion to religious duty is a fallacy when applied to this section of the population.

The second major conclusion to be drawn is that, over the country as a whole attendance at religious worship was at its most accentuated in small rural, or semi-rural communities and lowest in urban industrial areas. From 100% attendances in certain agricultural parishes of the South, the proportion of the worshipping population falls to under 20% in many of the Northern industrial towns, to reach its lowest point in the working-class parishes of the Metropolis, where, in Bethnal Green for example the percentage of church-goers was only 6.6 of the total population and in Shoreditch, only 12%. Since these results suggest that there was



a definite relationship between socio-economic factors and religious observance I have used the sample of individual parishes to represent the different forms of community structure which affected working-class life.

Taking the agricultural parishes of Wedmore and Exning first, these can be said to represent the older and fast disappearing society of pre-industrial England based on small, hierarchical and socially heterogeneous communities. Above all they were stable communities regulated by direct face-to-face relationships in which each man knew his place and acted in accordance with his position as defined by the implicit norms of the society, understood although never formally laid down. Against this, religion provided a back-cloth. In the Eighteenth Century this backcloth was almost exclusively in the form of Anglican religion but when the Evangelical Revival sent the Nonconformist Churches scurrying out into the countryside the authority of the Church of England came increasingly to be questioned. When the Church of England could no longer claim to be the sole agency of spiritual life its status declined somewhat to become that of just another denomination and at the same time, as religion became split into different camps its authority in society in general was weakened. The effects of this can be seen especially in Wedmore where the four Nonconformist congregations accounted for 39.6 of all worshippers and where the worshipping proportion of the adult population was only 53%, which compared with other rural parishes was relatively low. Exning, on the other hand was relatively more isolated and much less affected by Dissenters. Only the Wesleyans had built a chapel there and they could only command the support of 11% of all churchgoers, who were in effect the entire population. From the evidence available it would seem that, of the two, this parish was the much more closely knit community where the influence of the landed gentry had a much greater affect upon the established norms and where the function of religion as a form of social control was still an important factor. Both these parishes however, represent a hierarchical model of society rather than a power or dichotomous one, where workers recognise a higher and unapproachable status group of leaders with whom they do not identify and whose status they do not strive to reach. Status is inherited rather than achieved while the boundaries of the various status groups are maintained by means of social acceptance and rejection based on widespread concensus as to the rank order of society. In this type of community the individual work units are small and relationships are characterised by direct associations with employers and other middle-class influences, which tends to prevent any strong attachment between workers themselves in the form of either religious or class conflict groups. In this way the religious affiliations of the leaders are generally accepted by all and there is little desire to break away from the established norms. This explains the difficulty experienced by the Nonconformist churches in general, in trying to win over support from the Church of England in the countryside. In small communities where the Anglican religion was well established their gains were minimal, but in



strikes which peppered the middle years of the Century. To some extent trade union activity in Cornwall was forestalled by the method of employment whereby work contracts were put out to tender, a method which set workers up in competition with one another, but religious influence was undoubtedly another factor and it is possible that the outcome may have been very different had the Primitive Methodists travelled that far south.

Reasons for the appeal of one particular religion over another or else, of no religion at all become increasingly more confused when one examines the third type of community, represented by Arnold in Nottinghamshire where the population gave relatively little attention to Methodism, considerably more to the Baptist churches and, in view of its only recent appearance in the village, a surprising amount to the Mormon Chapel.

The social structure here in 1851, represents a sort of half-way house between an agrarian society on the one hand and an urban industrialised society on the other. Arnold was still a relatively small community, relationships would have been on a personal, face-to-face level as they were in the agricultural and mining parishes but the occupational structure and the actual work situation provided no bonds of attachment either on a horizontal level between workers themselves or on a vertical level between employer and employees. The framework knitters who worked in their own homes worked usually for the large hosiery employers of Nottingham who maintained contact through a middleman, or else for the self-employed bagman. Either way there was little direct contact between employers and employed so that middle-class influences which might have had some bearing upon religious observance were irrelevant. Furthermore, the extreme state of depression in the industry meant low wages and the necessity of working very long hours to earn even a subsistence wage and as workers were not united in any central work place their opportunities for association among themselves must have been few. The fact that there were eleven public houses and seven beer houses in the village would suggest that what leisure time they did have must have been spent mostly in these places although average wages at this time were hardly sufficient to verify this. In such an impoverished and dislocated community one might have expected the churches to provide a focal point of interest but in fact, only 43% of the adult population were counted on Census Sunday and what community feeling there was, was expressed through other channels, in the form of alternating trade union and Chartist activity.

Of those members of the population who did choose the Church, the fact that 10% were present at the Mormon services represents a considerable success for a sect whose mission had only recently been set up among this community. The converts it made here were typical, in their social and economic background of the general Mormon following in England. That sectarian religions tend to identify with one or other particular social class or status group has been well illustrated in the work of Bryan Wilson (1) and this holds equally true for Mormonism, which drew almost all its support from among the working-classes. Viewed with suspicion by the other denominations, the Mormon Chapel nevertheless set an example of religious enthusiasm and missionary zeal, which as we have seen, provided

(1) B. Wilson - Sects & Society Heinemann (1961)



its dividends and contrasted sharply with the complacency into which both Anglican and Dissenting congregations had fallen.

In the last type of community structure discussed we reach the highest point of industrialisation and urbanisation in mid-Nineteenth Century England. The towns of Bradford and Bolton are both typical of the social chaos thrown up by the Industrial Revolution and can hardly be called communities at all, since any sense of social cohesion or feeling of belonging were totally lacking among their populations and this is reflected in the miserably low figures of attendance at Church or Chapel. In these industrial complexes, freedom from paternal control effectively meant the emancipation of the individual, but the sharpness of the transition from community traditionalism produced only a state of anomie. Large numbers of people were thrown out of adjustment with important features of their social environment as life became increasingly fragmented, while there seemed to be no common links binding the separate parts into one whole. In later years, as these populations became more settled, they developed their own forms of community life, traditions and customs, but in the mid-Nineteenth Century when they were still subject to a continuing influx in terms of natural population increase and migration from the surrounding countryside, these accepted norms had not yet been established. The result for the individual was a loss of orientation in the wider society and at the same time the destruction of those features of the older forms of community life to which religion had given symbolic expression. In the face of what was so obviously a man made environment the concept of a God-given and largely unalterable natural order was clearly no longer tenable; neither was it possible to view the social gradations of society as part and parcel of this order when all stability and continuity had been eroded. Of even greater importance was the lack of any shared and established norms and values, common to all, to which religion had previously given authority and justification. Whereas in the old society of rural England religion had functioned to integrate the community and to give force to a set of social norms, thereby providing an expression of that society's moral unity, the diversification of urban life and the consequent polarisation of relationships into class interests prevented any such effective function. Insofar as religion did give expression to any norms or values it was invoked by certain groups to justify their own sectional interests and not those of society in general. This can be illustrated by the statement of a Sheffield steel works owner to his workmen after a dispute in 1836.

"While the foreman gets his 30/- or 40/-, the striker, whose labour is more severe only receives his 20/- or 30/-, while he that has served apprenticeship obtains his 20/- to 30/-, the learner and the mere labourer gets his 10/- to 18/-. In all these cases the God of nature has established a just and equitable law which man has no right to disturb; when he ventures to do so, it is always certain that he sooner or later meets with a corresponding punishment." (1)

(1) E.R. Wickham - Church and People in an Industrial City  
Lutterworth Press (1957)

It has been said that - "One of the abiding general propositions of sociology is that religion serves the central and crucial function in society of supporting .....social integration, social solidarity and social cohesion....Underlying this proposition is the still more general one that every society must achieve some consensus around a set of basic values."(1) The fact was, that in industrial England each class developed its own set of values and aspirations while the basic norms which prevailed became increasingly divorced from any direct religious significance, although of course, they still owed much to the religious conceptions of society of the past.

That the moral condition of the working-classes underwent an improvement during the first half of the Nineteenth Century was undoubtedly due to the influence of the Churches and in particular, of the Evangelicals, but the Evangelical belief that morals and religion were inter-changeable and that the rejection of religion would necessarily entail the total collapse of the moral order was unsubstantiated. Methodism in the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Century had a largely working class following upon whom it impressed the virtues of work, discipline and sobriety, but by 1851 Wesleyan Methodism especially was experiencing, for, the first time, a decline in membership and there is also evidence that a great deal of its support was now coming, not from the poorer section of the population, but from the middle and lower-middle classes among whom many no doubt had raised themselves to that position through the cultivation of exactly those virtues which Methodism held supreme. The percentage of the working classes absent from church had therefore increased, but there is no evidence to suggest that this rejection on their part was accompanied by any deterioration in moral standards. In this respect the influence of the Churches had been extremely effective, but they raised the general level of morals in society more by coercion than by conversion and in an indirect rather than in a direct religious way. The efforts of the Methodists to ban all 'frivolous' pursuits together with the activities of co-ercing bodies such as the Society for the Suppression of vice provide examples of how this moral improvement was forced upon the population. As a form of social control, in the face of what were thought to be revolutionary threats this moral directorate functioned remarkably well. The manners had improved among all strata of society by 1840 is undeniable. The illicit affairs of the great were no longer the subject of public knowledge and ribald amusement; the fox-hunting, absentee parsons were mostly gone and there was no more vulgar or obscene clerical poetry in magazines. The last lottery had been held, bear-baiting and bull-fighting were both gone and there were no more matter of fact references to the biological or physiological parts and functions. Upon English culture their influence had a profound effect. Evangelicals were opposed to the theatre, to music and to plain and blunt language in literature; hence England had to wait a long time for the successors to Goldsmith and Sheridan, between 1830-1880 music was represented by the modest names of John Field and William Sterndale Bennett and in literature the effects can be seen in the pruderies of Dickens and his sexless characters. But in spite of these manifestations

(1) O. Whitely - Religious Behaviour

(2) ... - ... (1784) - ... - ...  
 (3) ... - ... (1875) Vol. 11, p. 102-1

the working classes were still absent from the church although there was now precious little else for them to do on a Sunday.

The slightly more subtle, though no less calculated, channel through which the middle and upper classes sought to impose their social ideals upon those beneath them was that of education. Mass education in the early part of the Nineteenth Century however simply meant the inculcation of the essential virtues of submission and obedience on the part of the labouring population; it had not the remotest connection with the humane liberal approach which the middle classes adopted for their own sons. The relationship of the Church in this process is amply stated by Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London - "We may lay this down," he said, "as an incontestible truth that a well-informed, intelligent people, more particularly, a people well acquainted with the sacred writings, will always be more orderly, more decent, more humane, more virtuous, more religious and more obedient to their superiors than a people totally devoid of all instruction and all education." (1) Not only were the Churches concerned to provide education by means of early indoctrination to halt the tide of secularisation but furthermore, they were to buttress the established order and assist the claims of industry by producing generations of children schooled in the virtues of unquestioning discipline and subordination. This is a glaring example of how religion, in this case through the agencies of Sunday and Day Schools, could be manipulated to serve the needs of one or more particular groups. Dr. Andrew Ure advocated Christianity as a means to factory discipline and idea was obviously also in the mind of William Brooke, organiser of the Sunday Schools in Bath when he praised - "the advantage the children derive from thus being regularly assembled together on a stated day in each week - they become reconciled to confinement and are habituated to behave with silence and respect in the presence of their superiors." (2)

The belief that only a certain level of education should be acquired by the working-classes 'lest they forget their station in life' was common to all the major churches although the Methodists were by far the most rigid in what they allowed or disallowed in their schools and Wesley's own educational theory was wholly negative. His approach to the bringing up of children was entirely concentrated on the destruction of the child's will. "In the whole art of Christian education," he claimed, "there is nothing more important than this." "The wise parent should begin to break their will the first moment it appears. Whatever pain it cost, conquer their stubbornness; break the will if you would not damn the child....Therefore let a child from a year old be taught to fear the rod and to cry softly. In order to do this; let him have nothing he cries for; absolutely nothing, great or small; else you undo your own work. At all events, at that age, make him do as he is bid, if you whip him ten times running to effect it. Let none persuade you it is cruelty to do this, it is cruelty not to do it. Break his will now, and his soul will live and he will probably bless you to all eternity....Make them submit, that they may not perish. Break their wills that you may save their soul." (3)

Although in practice these views were no doubt modified, the general conclusion is that Methodist education in particular both in the home and

- (1) B. Porteus - Charges to the Clergy (1786) - in - D. Stewart - Works Vol. VIII. P. 51  
 (2) W. Brooke - Short Addresses to the Children of Sunday Schools. 1811 P. 78.  
 (3) J. Wesley - Sermons on several occasions (1825) Vol. 11. P. 493-7



at school, but also mass education provided by the Churches in general did not produce any great achievement motivation among its pupils because this was never one of its aims. By its own limitations which were implicitly defined together with the reliance upon the Bible and other religious and moralising works as the sole source of literature, plus the mechanical method of instruction, church education for the masses in the first half of the Nineteenth Century produced a dull and unquestioning stereotyped population which fitted exactly the requirements of middle-class industrialists. Such an educational process also goes a long way to explain the characteristic indifference and inertia of the majority of the working classes. It provides some explanation, for example, for the fact that having rejected formal religious worship there was no significant transference of beliefs on the part of the lower classes, from Christian religion either, to other forms of supernatural explanations or to conscious atheism, or to socialist doctrines such as Owenism or Marxism. To all these ideologies they remained equally impervious, while to trade unionism and Chartism they gave fluctuating support, according to their individual prevailing economic condition at the time.

What was established in the new urban concentrations approximates to a pecuniary model of society in which the dominant relationship became that of the 'cash nexus'. For those involved in the factory situation, involvement in the job, attachments to the enterprise and to fellow workers were all slight. Often inhibited by the constraints of the machine workers did not form cohesive groups within the factory, neither did they form occupational communities outside, but found themselves in a work situation that was both socially isolating and meaningless and in an environmental situation where the same feelings prevailed. Both involvement in the job and involvement in the wider society were usually too low to generate strong feelings of any kind so that commitment to a highly developed class consciousness did not occur. In situations of anomie, such as were found in the new industrial centres, one might expect to find religious observance functioning as a response to frustration either of psychological needs or in the form of economic or social status deprivation. According to the Marxist theory of alienation, areas which are socially disorganised should tend to be more religious but in fact, the evidence to support this is by no means conclusive. For the majority of the working classes in mid Nineteenth Century England it has no relevance at all; their response is more adequately described by Weber - "Insofar as the modern proletariat has a distinctive religious position it is characterised by indifference to or rejection of religious common to large groups of the modern bourgeoisie. The sense of dependence on one's own achievements is supplanted by a consciousness of dependence on purely societal factors, economic conjunctures and power relationships guaranteed by law. Any thought of dependence on the course of natural or meteorological processes or upon anything that might be regarded as subject to the influence of magic or providence, has been completely eliminated." (1) Thus, the increasing rationalisation of urban populations, the emergence of

(1) M. Weber - The Sociology of Religion Translated by Ephraim Fischhoff  
Methuen 1965 P. 100.

attributional rather than inter-actional status systems and the rejection of religion as irrelevant to their social and economic experiences.

Accommodation provided by the Churches in the new towns was in any case totally inadequate but the fact that so many seats were left unoccupied even where they were available suggests that lack of accommodation does not in itself provide an adequate explanation. Neither does the existence of the pew rent system, since this has been shown to have only a marginal influence upon religious observance; many churches were half-empty even where all the seats were free. However, although not an exclusive cause of working-class absence from formal religious observance the system did operate as a contributory factor towards the view that the churches were class institutions and, more specifically, middle-class institutions. Insofar as the organisational structure of the major denominations were responsible for working-class alienation, this responsibility can be explained in terms of the class character which they evolved and in the cultural gap which existed between their middle-class ideology put forward by administrators and preachers and the predominantly hedonistic ideals of the urban masses. It would be wrong to speak of any unified working-class culture; this did not exist in 1851 and the subsequent fragmentation of society into an increasing number of status groups has prevented its establishment ever since, but the line of demarcation was certainly much clearer a century ago and no one could deny the large chasm that separated the middle-class agents of religion and the working-class population they sought to entice. In the countryside these divisions were blurred by the personal day to day contacts between men of all ranks, but urban development and the division of labour destroyed this natural cohesion and emphasised the destruction by concentrating the different levels of society into distinct and separate geographical areas. In working class parishes therefore middle class influences became completely alien except insofar as they were represented by the various ministers of religion who themselves were completely out of touch with the every day experiences of their flock. The level of education, language, dress and general style of life all served to erect barriers between them which all the theology and sermonising in the world could not break down any more than could religion continue to claim justification for the social order as God-given and immutable. During six days of the week the urban populations were dependent for all their relationships upon their own class; that they should exchange this pattern for submission to totally alien influences on the Sabbath was hardly to be expected.

In dealing with the general withdrawal from the Churches however, one must not overlook the fact that at the same time, there were undoubtedly many working class people for whom religion was still very much a fundamental part of their existence and as such, highly relevant to their social and psychological needs. How many of these were involved with the major denominations it is impossible to tell, but subsequent research has shown that economic frustration does not appear to produce

greater religious activity among these congregations but that usually, the reverse is true - people of low social status have been found to go to church least. On the other hand there are certain minority religious groups which tend to recruit all their members from one particular social class. A good many of these are found especially among working class populations and the mid-Nineteenth Century pattern of religious behaviour in England, to some extent follows Weber's thesis that 'the lowest and most economically unstable strata of the proletariat, for whom rational conceptions are the least congenial, and also the proletaroid or permanently impoverished lower middle-class groups who are in constant danger of sinking into the proletarian class are nevertheless readily susceptible to being influenced by religious missionary enterprise.' (1) But in England, such enterprise as was displayed by the Church of England and the established forms of dissent was singularly unsuccessful, while among the poorest section of the population it was performed most effectively by the sect type of religions and in particular by the Primitive Methodists and the Mormons.

It is significant that between 1841-51 the only two Methodist connexions to actually increase their membership were the Primitive Methodists who grew by as much as 29% and the tiny Bible Christian sect, operating mostly in Devon and Cornwall, who increased their numbers by 15%, while over the same period membership of the original Wesleyan Connexion declined by 9% (2)

Primitive Methodism was not a sect in the modern sense of the word as it is generally understood; it was a schismatic group whose doctrines were basically the same as those of Orthodox Methodism but whose quarrel was with the organisational structure of the parent body, and in particular with the increasing authority and domination of the ministry over the laity. Nevertheless, it may be termed a sect on the grounds that it was a relatively small, conversionist group which rebelled against the tendency towards institutionalisation and which provided for its members a total reference group within the wider society in much the same way as the original connexion had done in the Eighteenth Century. Mormonism, on the other hand was an entirely new religious community with doctrines somewhat different from Protestant orthodoxy and based on the teachings of a charismatic leader. The support which both these movements obtained however, is not to be explained by the validity of either faith but by the social and psychological functions which they performed. At a time when the Anglican Church, the older denominations and the main body of Methodism were all fully institutionalised, hierarchical associations, the sects offered community religion, in and to which, members were made to feel a direct involvement and commitment. For those who found the freedom and normlessness of the new industrial society unbearable, they offered a point of orientation and a sense of belonging, together with the opportunity to achieve power and status within a defined community that members would be unlikely to obtain in the wider society. In this respect we may accept the Marxist axiom that

(1) Ibid. P. 101.

(2) R. Currie - Methodism Divided P. 64.



religion functions as a means of allievating the fears and frustrations of the socially and economically depressed, but its appeal as such was only to a minority and the theory does not apply to religion in general, which suggests that faith in itself was not the important variable and that sociological and not theological factors were the more relevant.

The nature of historical evidence is such that absolute certainty as to the causes of any one phenomenon is almost always denied; with research in the field of religion this is especially true since the complex processes of belief which operate within the individual can never be quantatively or qualitatively defined. When dealing with the working classes these difficulties are multiplied by the fact that these people did not tend to leave personal records behind them. Such contemporary evidence as exists is invariably the work of middle and upper class observers whose values could not be expected to coincide with those of whom they were reporting. Such records are often coloured by underlying moral attitudes and assumptions so that their validity as accurate historical material is extremely questionable. The value of religious statistics on the other hand is necessarily limited. Thus the 1851 religious census, while it gives an adequate record of formal religious observance at one particular point in time, can go no further towards providing us with any evidence as to the varying degrees of belief and commitment held by individual members of the population. To assume that a man was necessarily a firm believer simply because he was a regular attender at church is clearly absurd, while equally absurd is the view that those who stayed at home necessarily had no religious faith at all. Many might have been attending church because it was in their best worldly interests to be seen doing so; this was especially true in rural areas where the pressure to conform was exerted not only by those with some authority, but also among the workers themselves.

" The sermon over, the people sprang to their feet like Jacks-in-a-box. With what gusto they sang the evening hymn, and how their lungs expanded and their tongues wagged as they poured out of the churchyard! Not that they resented anything that was said in the Rector's sermons. They did not listen to them..... Some of them went to Church to show off their best clothes and to see and criticise those of their neighbours; some because they loved to hear their own voices raised in the hymns, or because churchgoing qualified them for the Christmas blankets and coals; and a few to worship." (1)

From the census returns it is clear that in the densely populated urban areas the majority lost the habit of regular church attendance and that religious worship in other parts of the country would appear to vary with the size of the community, the work situation and the degree of interaction among its members. This however is the best that can be said; how far those who did not go to church rejected all religious faith is uncertain; they did not for example reject the rites of baptism, marriage or burial and these are still widely used to-day even though the process of

(1) F. Thompson - Larkrise to Candleford (1945) pp. 230 - 1

secularisation has now become much more developed. Reasons for the withdrawal from formal worship however, can never be wholly supplied. Overwhelming evidence points to the mere fact of industrialisation, as being a major factor, producing a diversification, rationalisation and increasing impersonality of life in which theological explanations appeared to be totally inadequate. This situation was emphasised by the inability of the churches to make their presence felt in terms of both physical accommodation and ministerial enterprise. The existence of the class cleavage, aggravated by a system of pew rents and the hierachical structure of the major denominations must not be overlooked although the subsequent diffusion of secularisation among all ranks of society suggests that this in itself is not enough to explain the process.

The extent of religious devotion on the one hand, or alienation from the church on the other can never be adequately explained in terms of broad generalisations. A study of different occupational situations and community structures does give some help towards understanding this complex phenomenon but even then, individual variations among the population prohibit the foundation of any definite conclusions. The complicated inter-play of all the variables involved make it impossible to single out any one exclusive cause of working-class alienation and in the final analysis one must look to the social and psychological make up of each individual.

	<i>The Conditions of the Working Class in England, in 1851</i>	1852
FABER REV. A.	<i>A Critical History of Free Thought: in reference to the Christian Religion</i> <i>Hampton Lectures</i>	1852
FERRY W.	<i>An Account of the Mission-Society</i> <i>Society Trade</i>	1853
BURN A.	<i>Remarks on the Causes of Religious</i> <i>Worship 1851</i>	1853
JURISON R. Ed.	<i>The Letters of Hannah More</i>	1825
LEVETT W.	<i>The Life and Struggles of William Levett</i> <i>in his pursuit of bread, knowledge and</i> <i>Freedom</i>	1876
HAYDEN R.	<i>London Labour and the London Poor</i>	1852
FISHER G.B.	<i>Progress of the Nation</i>	1857
BROCKENW J.	<i>Religion in England from 1800-1850. 2 Vol.</i>	1864
THOMPSON F.	<i>From Lark Rise to Candleford : A Trilogy</i>	1943
URS A.	<i>The Philosophy of Manufactures</i>	1835

BIBLIOGRAPHYPARLIAMENTARY PAPERS.CONTEMPORARY SOURCES.GENERAL

- ARCH J. The Story of His Life - Told by Himself 1898
- BAINES E. A History of the Cotton Manufacturers in Great Britain 1835
- BLOMFIELD A. Memoir of Charles Blomfield, Bishop of London 1863
- BOOTH C. Life and Labour of the People in London 7 Vols. Macmillan 1902-3
- CAIRD J. English Agriculture in 1850-51 1852
- ENGELS F. The Condition of the Working Class in England, in 1844 1892
- FARRAR REV. A. A Critical History of Free Thought in reference to the Christian Religion Bampton Lectures 1862
- FELKIN W. An Account of the Machine-Wrought Hosiery Trade 1845
- HUME A. Remarks on the Census of Religious Worship 1851 1860
- JOHNSON B. Ed. The Letters of Hannah More 1925
- LOVETT W. The Life and Struggles of William Lovett in his pursuit of bread, knowledge and Freedom 1876
- MAYHEW H. London Labour and the London Poor 1852
- PORTER G.R. Progress of the Nation 1847
- STOUGHTON J. Religion in England from 1800-1850. 2 Vol. 1884
- THOMPSON F. From Lark Rise to Candleford : A Trilogy 1945
- URE A. The Philosophy of Manufactures 1835



PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS.

Report from His Majesty's Commissioners for inquiring into the  
Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws.  
1834 (44) XXVII 1.

First Report of the Commissioners for inquiring into the  
Employment and Condition of Children in Mines and Manufactories  
1842 (380) XV 1.

Reports of the Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the  
Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture.  
1843 (510) XII 1.

First Report of the Commissioners for inquiring into the  
State of Large Towns and Populous Districts.  
1844 (572) XV 1.

Second Report..... 1845 (602) (610) XVII 1.299

Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the  
Condition of the Framework Knitters  
1845 (609) XV 1.

Appendix Part II. Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire  
1845 (641) XV 665.

Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the State  
of the Population in the Mining Districts.....

1844	(592)	XVI	1.	1847-8	(993)	XXVI	233
1845	(6700)	XXVII	197	1849	(1109)	XXI	395
1846	(737)	XXIV	383	1850	(1248)	XXIII	571
1847	(844)	XVI	401	1851	(1406)	XXIII	447

Report from the Select Committee on Public Libraries  
1850 (655) XVII 1.

The Census of Great Britain 1851 : Religious Worship  
England and Wales  
1852-3 LXXXIX

PARISH STUDIES

BARTON B.T.	Historical Gleanings of Bolton & District	1881
BARTON D.D.	A History of Copper Mining in Devon and Cornwall Truro	1968
BURT R. Ed.	Cornish Mining - Essays on the Organisation of Cornish Mines & the Cornish Mining Economy David & Charles, Newton Abbot	1969
CHAMBERS J.D.	Nottingham in the Eighteenth Century	1932
CHURCH R.A.	Economic & Social Change in a Midland Town-Victorian Nottingham. Cass	1966
FYNES R.	The Miners of Northumberland & Durham	
HEATH F.G.	The Romance of Peasant Life in the West of England	1872
HAMER H.	Bolton 1838-1938 Bolton	1938
HAMILTON JENKIN A.K.	The Cornish Miner	1927
JAMES J.	History of Bradford	1857
KING R.W. & RUSSELL J.	A History of Arnold, Nottinghamshire	1913
MARSTON ACRES W.	A Brief History of Wedmore	1953
MUSGRAVE J.	Origins of Methodism in Bolton Bolton	1865
PARKINSON G.	True Stories of Durham Pit Life	1912
PRESCOTT P.	The Case of Cornish Methodism Considered	1871
ROWE W.J.	Cornwall in the Age of the Industrial Revolution Liverpool	1953
SCRUTTON W.	Pictures of Old Bradford	1889
THIRSK J. & IMRAY J.	Suffolk Farming in the Nineteenth Century Suffolk Records Society	1958
PAULSEN R.H.	Quakerism and the Churches	
CRISWELL H.	Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians	

SECONDARY SOURCES.GENERAL HISTORY

- ADAMSON J.W. English Education 1789-1902  
Cambridge University Press 1930
- ARMITAGE W.H.G. Heavens Below Routledge 1961
- BIRGENOUGH C. History of Elementary Education in England  
and Wales, 1800 to the Present Day 1930
- BRIGGS A. Victorian People Odhams Press 1954  
Chartist Studies Macmillan 1959
- BRIGGS A. &  
SAVILLE J. Essays in Labour History Macmillan 1967
- BURGESS H.G. Enterprise in Education The Story of the  
Work of the Established Church in the Education  
of the People prior to 1870 1958
- BURNETT J. A History of the Cost of Living. Penguin Books 1969  
Plenty and Want : A Social History of Diet in  
England from 1815 - to the present day  
Nelson 1966
- CHALLINOR R. &  
RIPLEY B. The Miners' Association : A Trade Union in  
the age of the Chartists. Lawrence & Wishart 1968
- CHECKLAND S.G. The Rise of Industrial Society in England  
Longmans, Green 1964
- COCKSHUT A.O.J. The Unbelievers - English Agnostic Thought  
1840 - 1890 Collins 1964
- COLE G.D.H. A Short History of the Working Class  
Movement 1789 - 1848 1925  
Chartist Portraits Macmillan 1941
- CURTIS S.J. History of Education in Great Britain  
University Tutorial Press 1948
- FAY C.R. Life and Labour in the Nineteenth Century 1920
- FUSSELL G.E. The English Rural Labourer 1949
- FAULKNER H.U. Chartism and the Churches 1916
- GRISEWOOD H. Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians 1949



HALEVY E.	History of the English People in 1815		1937
HAMMOND J.L.& B.	The Village Labourer		1911
	The Town Labourer		1917
	The Skilled Labourer		1919
	The Age of the Chartists 1832-54		1930
	The Bleak Age		1947
HARRISON J.F.C.	Learning and Living	Routledge	1961
HASBACH W.	A History of the English Agricultural Labourer translated by R. Kenyon	Cass	1966
HEARNSHAW F.	Social and Political Ideas of some Representative Thinkers of the Victorian Age		1933
HOBBSAWM G.	Labouring Men	Weidenfeld & Nicholson	1964
HOUGHTON W.E.	The Victorian Frame of Mind	New Haven	1957
HOVELL M.	The Chartist Movement	Manchester	1918
JOHNSON L.	Social Evolution of Industrial Britain	Liverpool	1959
JONES M.G.	The Charity School Movement	Cambridge	1938
KELLY T.	A History of Adult Education in Great Britain 1770 - 1870	Liverpool University Press	1962
KITSON CLARK G.	The Making of Victorian England	Methuen	1962
LONGMATE N.	The Waterdrinkers	Hamilton	1968
PARREAUX A.	Daily Life in England in the Reign of George III.	Allen & Unwin	1969
PERKINS H.	The Origins of Modern English Society	Routledge	1969
PETRIE C.	The Victorians	Eyre	1960
PIKE R.	Human Documents of the Industrial Revolution	Allen & Unwin	1966
	Human Documents of the Victorian Golden Age	Allen & Unwin	1967
	The English Gentleman	Allen & Unwin	1967
PIMLOTT J.A.R.	The Englishman's Holiday - A Social History		1947
REDFORD A.	Labour Migration in England 1800-1850	Manchester	1926

- RICHTER M. The Politics of Conscience Weidenfeld 1964
- SHADWELL A. Drink, Temperance and Legislation Black 1902
- SMELSER N.J. Social Change in the Industrial Revolution  
Routledge 1959
- SOMERVELL D.C. English Thought in the Nineteenth Century 1947
- SPRINGALL L.M. Labouring Life in Norfolk Villages 1834-1914 1936
- STACEY M. Tradition and Change : A Study of Banbury  
Oxford University Press 1960
- THOMPSON E.P. The Making of the English Working Class  
Penguin Books 1968
- THOMPSON F.M. English Landed Society in the Nineteenth  
Century Routledge 1969
- TOYNBEE A. The Industrial Revolution 1884
- TRIBE D. 100 Years of Free Thought Elek 1967
- WEARMOUTH R.F. Some Working Class Movements of the  
Nineteenth Century 1948
- WEBB R.K. The British Working Class Reader  
1790 - 1848 Allen & Unwin 1955
- WILLIAMS W.M. Gosforth : The Sociology of an English Village  
Routledge 1956
- WOOD H.G. Belief and Unbelief since 1850  
Cambridge University Press 1955
- YOUNG G.M. Portrait of an Age University Press 1936
- RELIGIOUS HISTORY
- ABRECHT P. The Churches and Rapid Social Change S.C.M. 1961
- BALLEINE G.R. A History of the Evangelical Party in the  
Church of England 1933
- BECK G.A. The English Catholics 1850-1950 1950
- BEST G.F.A. Temporal Pillars Cambridge University Press 1964
- BOLAM C. The English Presbyterians Allen & Unwin 1968

BREADY J.W.	England : Before and After Wesley		1938
CHADWICK O.	The Victorian Church	A. & C. Black	1966
CHURCH L.	The Early Methodist People		1948
COAD F.R.	A History of the Brethren Movement	Paternoster Press Exeter	1968
CORNISH F.W.	The English Church in the Nineteenth Century		1910
CURRIE R.	Methodism Divided	Faber	1968
DAVIES R.	Methodism	Epworth Press	1963
ELLIOTT-BINNS L.E.	Religion in the Victoria Era		1946
FRANCIS BROWN C.K.	A History of the English Clergy 1800-1900		1953
HEASMAN K.	Evangelicals in Action	Bles	1962
HIMBURY D.M.	British Baptists : A Short History	Carey Kingsgate	1962
INGLIS K.S.	The Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England	Routledge	1963
MATHEWS H.F.	Methodism and the Education of the People 1791-1851		1949
MATHIESON W.L.	English Church Reform	1815-40	1923
MULLEN R.	The Mormons	W.H. Allen	1967
O'DEA T.	The Mormons	Chicago University Press	1957
PAYNE E.A.	The Baptist Union : A Short History	Carey Kingsgate	1959
SOLOWAY R.A.	Prelates and People	Routledge	1969
TAYLOR E.R.	Methodism and Politics 1791-1851	Cambridge	1935
UNDERWOOD A.C.	A History of the English Baptists		1947
VIDLER A.	The Church in an age of Revolution.	Penguin	1961
WARNE A.	Church and Society in the Eighteenth Century	Newton Abbot	1969



WARNER W.J.	The Wesleyan Movement in the Industrial Revolution		1930
WEARMOUTH R.F.	Methodism and the Common People of the Eighteenth Century Methodism and the Working Class Movements of England 1800-1850	Epworth Press	1937
WHITAKER W.	The Eighteenth Century Sunday		1940
WICKHAM E.R.	Church and People in an Industrial City	Lutterworth	1962

#### SOCIOLOGICAL SOURCES.

ARON R.	Main Currents in Sociological Thought	Weidenfeld	1965
ARGYLE M.	Religious Behaviour	Routledge	1958
BENDIX R. & ARGYLE M.	Social Theory and Economic Change	Tavistock Publications	1967
BOULARD F.	An Introduction to Religious Sociology translated by Ms Jackson	Darton, Longmans, Todd	1960
COX H.	The Secular City	S.C.M.	1965
DURKHEIM E.	The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life	Collier Books	1961
FROMM E.	The Fear of Freedom	Kegan, Paul	1942
MACINTYRE A.	Secularisation & Moral Change	Oxford University Press	1967
MANN P.	An Approach to Urban Sociology	Routledge	1965
MARTIN D.	A Sociology of English Religion The Religious and the Secular	S.C.M. Routledge	1967 1969
NIEBUHR H.R.	The Social Sources of Denominationalism	Meridian Books New York	1957
ROBERTSON R. Ed.	Sociology of Religion	Penguin Books	1969
TILlich P.	The Religious Situation	Meridian Books New York	1956

TONNIES F.	Community and Association translated by C.P. Loomis	Routledge	1955
WEBER M.	The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism	Allen & Unwin	1930
	The Sociology of Religion translated by E. Fischoff	Methuen	1965
WILSON B.	Sects and Society	Heinemann	1961
	Religion in Secular Society	Watts	1966
Ed.	Patterns of Sectarianism : Ideology and Organisation	Heinemann	1967