

UnEnglish and Unmanly: Anglo-Catholicism and Homosexuality

By David Hilliard

DESPITE THE TRADITIONAL teaching of the Christian Church that homosexual behaviour is always sinful, there are grounds for believing that Anglo-Catholic religion within the Church of England has offered emotional and aesthetic satisfactions that have been particularly attractive to members of a stigmatised sexual minority. This apparent connection between Anglo-Catholicism and the male homosexual subculture in the English-speaking world has often been remarked upon, but it has never been fully explored. In 1960, for example, in a pioneering study of male homosexuality in Britain, Gordon Westwood stated:

Some of the contacts maintained that the highest proportion of homosexuals who are regular churchgoers favoured the Anglo-Catholic churches. ... It was not possible to confirm that suggestion in this survey, but it is not difficult to understand that the services with impressive ceremony and large choirs are more likely to appeal to homosexuals.¹

More recently, in the United States, several former priests of the Episcopal church have described some of the links between homosexual men and Catholic forms of religion, on the basis of their own knowledge of Anglo-Catholic parishes.²

This essay brings together some of the historical evidence of the ways in which a homosexual sensibility has expressed itself within Anglo-Catholicism. Because of the fragmentary and ambiguous nature of much of this evidence only a tentative outline can be suggested.

I

Until the late nineteenth century homosexuality was socially defined in terms of certain forbidden sexual acts, such as “buggery” or “sodomy.”³

¹ Gordon Westwood, *A Minority: A Report on the Life of the Male Homosexual in Great Britain* (London: Longmans, 1960), pp. 54-55. See also Andrew Hodges and David Hutter, *With Downcast Gays: Aspects of Homosexual Self-Oppression* (Toronto: Pink Triangle Press, 1917), pp. 16, 37-38; Tom Sutcliffe, “Husbands of Christ,” *Spectator* (London), 5 May 1973, p. 553.

² Laud Humphreys, *Out of the Closets: The Sociology of Homosexual Liberation* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972), pp. 79-93, 143-145, 151 and *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places*, 2d ed. (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1975), p. 23; Alan Watts, *In my own Way: An Autobiography, 1915-1965* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), pp. 230-231.

³ The following discussion of changing attitudes to homosexuality in late nineteenth century Britain is based upon the work of Jeffrey Weeks, “‘Sins and Diseases’: Some Notes on Homosexuality in the Nineteenth Century,” *History Workshop*, 1 (1976), 211-219; *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain, from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (London: Quartet Books, 1977), chaps. 1-3; “Movements of Affirmation: Sexual Meanings and Homosexual Identities,” *Radical History Review*, 20 (1979), 164-179. See also Vern L. Bullough, *Sexual*

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Homosexual behaviour was regarded as a product of male lust, potential in anyone unless it was severely condemned and punished. In England homosexuality had been covered by the criminal law since 1533 when the state took over the responsibility for dealing with the offence from the ecclesiastical courts. The last executions for buggery took place in the 1830s, but it was not until 1861 that the death penalty was abolished. In the 1880s and 1890s—at the same time that the word homosexuality entered the English language, largely through the work of Havelock Ellis—social attitudes towards homosexuality underwent a major change. From being defined in terms of sinful behaviour, homosexuality came to be regarded as a characteristic of a particular type of person. Because homosexuality was seen as a condition, homosexuals were therefore a species, which it became the object of the social sciences to explore and explain. The principal vehicles of this redefinition were legal and medical. Homosexual behaviour became subject to increased legal penalties, notably by the Labouchère Amendment of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, which extended the law to cover all male homosexual acts, whether committed in public or private.⁴ This in turn led to a series of sensational scandals, culminating in the three trials of Oscar Wilde in 1895. The harsher legal sanctions were accompanied over a longer period by an important change in the conceptualisation of homosexuality: the emergence of the idea that homosexuality was a disease or sickness which required treatment. The various reasons for this change in definition are beyond the scope of this essay. The result, however, was that the late nineteenth century saw homosexuality acquire new labelling, in the context of a social climate that was more hostile than before. The tightening of the law and the widespread acceptance by opinion-makers of the “medical model” of homosexuality produced conditions within which men with homosexual feelings began to develop a conscious collective identity. For although a small homosexual subculture had existed in London and a few other cities in the British Isles since the early eighteenth century, the final development of a homosexual underground was essentially a phenomenon of the late nineteenth century.⁵ Such a subculture did not rise in a vacuum. It was a direct consequence of growing social hostility that compelled homosexual men to begin to perceive themselves as members of a group with certain distinctive

Variance in Society and History (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976), pp. 555-557, 565-575; *Homosexuality: A History* (New York: New American Library, 1979), pp. 38-42, 106-112; Peter Coleman, *Christian Attitudes to Homosexuality* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge [S.P.C.K.], 1980), pp. 137-158; Barbara Fassler, “Theories of Homosexuality as Sources of Bloomsbury’s Androgyny,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 5 (1979), 237-251; Arthur N. Gilbert, “Buggery and the British Navy, 1700-1861,” *Journal of Social History*, 10 (1976), 72-98; A. V. Harvey, “Prosecutions for Sodomy in England at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century,” *Historical Journal*, 21 (1978), 939-948; H. Montgomery Hyde, *The Other Love: An Historical and Contemporary Survey of Homosexuality in Britain* (London: Heinemann, 1970), chaps. 4-5; A. L. Rowse, *Homosexuals in History: A Study of Ambivalence in Society, Literature and the Arts* (London: Weldenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), chaps. 9, 12.

⁴ F. B. Smith, “Labouchère’s Amendment to the Criminal Law Amendment Bill,” *Historical Studies*, 17 (1976), 165-175.

⁵ The homosexual subculture of eighteenth century London is described by Randolph Trumbach in “London’s Sodomites: Homosexual Behaviour and Western Culture in the 18th Century,” *Journal of Social History*, 11 (1977), 1-33.

characteristics:

The homosexual subculture, in which sexual meanings were defined and sharpened, was then predominantly male, revolving around meeting place, clubs, pubs, etc. Indeed perhaps it was less a single subculture than a series of overlapping subcultures, each part supplying a different need. In its most organized aspect there was often an emphasis on transvestism, a self-mocking effeminacy, an argot (slang) and a predominance of “camp.” (Weeks, “Movements of Affirmation,” 175).

Although the homosexual subculture embraced men of all ages and occupations, and there are many recorded examples of close friendships across class barriers, upper middle-class values predominated. This was probably because in late Victorian England only middle-class men had sufficient social freedom to develop a homosexual lifestyle. Most of these middle-class homosexuals were married and lived double lives. Outside or on the fringes of the subculture were many men with a homosexual orientation who avoided giving their behaviour a homosexual interpretation. Until the mid-twentieth century, because male homosexuality was so often equated in popular thinking with the display of feminine behaviour and personality traits, it was often difficult for men who combined strong homosexual feelings with a strong sense of male gender identity to regard themselves as homosexual.⁶

One facet of the homosexual subculture was Anglo-Catholic religion. For many homosexual men in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Anglo-Catholicism provided a set of institutions and religious practices through which they could express their sense of difference in an oblique and symbolical way. A large number of religious and social rebels were similarly attracted to Anglo-Catholicism at this time. Some were drawn by the Anglo-Catholic idea of the church as a divinely constituted religious society and by its emphasis on tradition, dogma, and visible beauty in worship. Others, of radical temperament, found in Anglo-Catholicism a religion “freed from the respectability and the puritanism of the churches in which they had grown up.”⁷

Starting in the 1830s Oxford Tractarians had sought to revive in the established church the traditions of the “ancient and undivided Church” in doctrine, liturgy, and devotion.⁸ Their teachings included the God-given

⁶ John Marshall, ‘Pansies, Perverts and Macho Men: Changing Conceptions of Male Homosexuality,’ in *The Making of the Modern Homosexual*, ed. Kenneth Plummer (London: Hutchinson, 1980), pp. 133-154.

⁷ Hugh McLeod, *Clan and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (London: Croom Helm, 1974), p. 249.

⁸ For short accounts of the Oxford Movement, see Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 2 vols. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1966, 1970), 1, chap. 3; R. W. Church, *The Oxford Movement: Twelve Years, 1833-1845* (1891; rpt. Ed., Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1970); David Newsome, “Newman and the Oxford Movement,” in *The Victorian Crisis of Faith*, ed. Anthony Symondson (London, S.P.C.K., 1970), pp. 71-89; S. L. Ollard, *A Short History of the Oxford Movement* (1915; rpt. ed., London: Faith Press, 1963). On the ritualist controversy, see James Bentley, *Ritualism and Politics in Victorian Britain: The Attempt to Legislate for Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); William Fong, “The Ritualist Crisis: Anglo-Catholics and Authority with Special Reference to the English Church Union, 1859-1882,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1977). Late nineteenth century Anglo-Catholicism is examined by J. E. B.

authority and spiritual independence of the church, a high doctrine of the ministry and of the sacraments, and a rejection of religious liberalism and rationalism. Also central to the Oxford Movement was a “sense of awe and mystery in religion,” a feeling for poetry and symbolism as vehicles of religious truth.⁹ A feature of the early Oxford Movement was the prevalence among its male followers of intense and demonstrative friendships. These relationships were not regarded by contemporaries as unnatural, for intimate friendships were common enough at the time in the exclusively male communities of public school and university. What was unusual in John Henry Newman’s circle was the prominence given to celibacy and the consequent foundation of religious brotherhoods. This has generally been interpreted by historians as an expression of religious idealism and self-sacrifice: “the idea of celibacy, in those whom it affected at Oxford, was in the highest degree a religious and romantic one” (Church, p. 248). Did it also, in many cases, have a homosexual motivation? It seems inherently possible that young men who were secretly troubled by homosexual feelings that they could not publicly acknowledge may have been attracted by the prospect of devoting themselves to a life of celibacy, in the company of like-minded male friends, as a religiously-sanctioned alternative to marriage. Newman himself believed and taught that celibacy was “a high state of life to which the multitude of men cannot aspire.”¹⁰

This homoerotic motivation was strongly hinted at in the 1890s by James Rigg, a Wesleyan historian of the Oxford Movement, who made much of the “characteristically feminine” mind and temperament of Newman and the lack of virility of most of his disciples.¹¹ The idea was developed and popularised by Geoffrey Faber in his classic *Oxford Apostles* (1933). His portrait of Newman as a sublimated homosexual (though the word itself was not used) has since been a source of embarrassment to those biographers and theologians who seek to present him as a “Saint for Our Time.”¹²

Faber’s argument was brilliant but open to attack. Meriol Trevor, in her two-volume biography of Newman, undermined some of his illustrations, as when she pointed out, for example, that Wilfred Ward had given no source for the often-quoted statement that Newman lay all night on Ambrose St. John’s bed

Munson, “The Oxford Movement by the End of the Nineteenth Century: The Anglo-Catholic Clergy,” *Church History*, 44 (1975). 392-395.

⁹ *The Mind of the Oxford Movement*, ed. Owen Chadwick (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1960), p. 29.

¹⁰ Letter to C. Ryder, 1833, quoted in Meriol Trevor, *Newman*. 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1962), I, 159.

¹¹ James H. Rigg, *Oxford High Anglicanism and its Chief Leaders* (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1895), pp. 13, 31-33, 109-110, 132, 154-156.

¹² Geoffrey Faber, *Oxford Apostles: A Character Study of the Oxford Movement* (London: Faber and Faber, 1933), pp. 32-35, and generally chap. 6. See also David L. Edwards, *Leaders of the Church of England, 1828-1944* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 49-50; William Robbing, *The Newman Brothers: An Essay in Comparative Intellectual Biography* (London: Heinemann, 1966), pp. 83-54. For a critical discussion of the historiography of the Oxford Movement and J. H. Newman, see John Kent, “The Study of Modern Ecclesiastical History since 1930,” In J. Daniélou, A. H. Couratin, and John Kent, *Historical Theology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), pp. 316-328; also Geoffrey Best, “New Bearings on the Oxford Movement,” *Historical Journal*, 12 (1969), 707-710.

after the death of his inseparable friend, and that in view of other known events of that night the incident could hardly have occurred. Of the intensity of their relationship, however, there can be no doubt. On his death in 1890 Newman was buried at his own wish in the same grave as St. John.¹³

The same aura of ambiguous sexuality surrounds other figures in Newman's circle—notably Richard Hurrell Froude, who died young in 1836, and the effusive Frederick William Faber, who followed Newman into the Roman Catholic church in 1845.¹⁴ Geoffrey Faber, for example, argued that Froude's "temperamental bias" can be inferred from the "fervour of his masculine friendships," the "tone and temper" of his private journal, and especially its "unmistakable language of conflict with sexual temptation" (Faber, p. 218). He claimed that Froude's private writings reveal an intense struggle between an "Old Self" and a "New Self," in which his homosexual instincts ("the beast within him") were sublimated into a positive religious ideal: the "idea of virginity" (Faber, p. 222).

As with Newman the available evidence is open to alternative interpretations. The bitter self-accusations of Froude's journal and the language of striving and self-tormenting have been explained by his most recent biographer as a struggle between lofty religious aspirations and the undisciplined self-indulgence of a romantic imagination, disjoined from Christian conduct. According to this interpretation, Froude's attraction to celibacy had its roots not in a lack of interest in women, but in an idealistic desire to fulfil a counsel of perfection, by which celibacy was to be sought for its "intrinsic excellence."¹⁵

Any interpretation must remain controversial. It is unrealistic to expect documented proof of overt homosexual behaviour, for if sexual activity of any kind occurred between male lovers in private the fact is unlikely to have been recorded. Nor is it possible, on the basis of passionate words uttered by mid-Victorians, to make a clear distinction between male affection and homosexual feeling. Theirs was a generation prepared to accept romantic friendships between men simply as friendships without sexual significance. Only with the emergence in the late nineteenth century of the doctrine of the stiff-upper-lip, and the concept of homosexuality as an identifiable condition, did open expressions of love between men become suspect and regarded in a new light as morally undesirable.¹⁶ In addition there is the general question of whether intimate friendships between members of the same sex can legitimately be labelled homosexual when the individuals concerned may not be conscious at the time of an underlying erotic attraction. On the other hand one should also remember the

¹³ Trevor, II, 526-527.

¹⁴ On F. W. Faber, see Ronald Chapman, *Father Faber* (London: Burns and Oates, 1961), especially pp. 46-51; *Sexual Heretics: Male Homosexuality in English Literature from 1850 to 1900*, ed. Brian Reade (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 4-5, 11, 67-68.

¹⁵ Piers Brendon, *Hurrell Froude and the Oxford Movement* (London: Paul Elek, 1974), pp. 60-66, 72-76.

¹⁶ For changing attitudes to male friendships, see J. R. deS. Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School* (London: Millington, 1977), pp. 167-196; David Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning: Four Studies on a Victorian Ideal* (London: John Murray, 1961), pp. 83-89; Alison G. Sulloway, *Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Victorian Temper* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 21-29.

reluctance of many historians (especially historians of religion) to consider the implications of the fact that the men and women they study did have sexual feelings, and that not all of them were attracted to the opposite sex.¹⁷

When the Oxford and Anglo-Catholic Movements are examined as a whole, the hypothesis of the existence of a continuous current of homoerotic sentiment would appear to offer a plausible explanation of a great deal of otherwise mysterious behaviour and comment. The extent to which these homosexual inclinations were unrecognised, sublimated, consciously disciplined, or expressed in overt sexual acts cannot easily be ascertained. In view of the weight of the traditional Christian condemnation of any sexual relationship outside marriage and (one may assume) the ambivalent attitudes of the individuals concerned towards their own sexuality, it is likely that the majority of homosexual friendships in Anglo-Catholic circles did not find physical expression. But this is not to deny the strength of the emotions that they generated and their subtle influence on religious attitudes and behaviour.

The Oxford Movement provoked vehement hostility in the Church of England. Evangelical and Broad Church critics claimed that it fostered novel ideas and religious practices, such as the separateness of the professional priesthood and the increased use of ceremonial in church services. They deplored this “sacerdotalism” and “ritualism” as essentially un-English and unmanly.¹⁸ Moreover, there was a marked difference between the self-assertiveness and noisy emotionalism of popular Protestantism and the ethos of Tractarian piety, with its concern for reverence and reserve in discussing sacred truths, its delight in symbolism and subtle imagery, and its strict observance of the traditional feasts and disciplines of the church. It may be surmised that Charles Kingsley’s deep hostility to Newman was based largely on an instinctive feeling (for the two men never actually met) that there was something rather unhealthy about Newman and his circle. In 1851 at the height of the agitation against “Papal aggression” in England (triggered off by Pope Pius IX’s restoration of a Roman Catholic hierarchy), Kingsley had written of Roman Catholics and Tractarians:

In all that school, there is an element of foppery—even in dress and manner; a fastidious, maundering, die-away effeminacy, which is mistaken for purity and refinement; and I confess myself unable to cope with it, so alluring is it to the minds of an effeminate and luxurious aristocracy; neither educated in all that should teach them to distinguish between bad and good taste, healthy and unhealthy philosophy or devotion.¹⁹

Kingsley himself was an enthusiastic exponent of the duty of Christian “manliness,” which he defined as courage, heartiness, physical vitality, and the procreation of children within marriage. The idea of celibacy he abhorred as both

¹⁷ Some of the problems in the historical interpretation of same-sex relationships are discussed in Jonathan Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976), introduction to section 6.

¹⁸ Geoffrey Best, “Popular Protestantism in Victorian Britain,” in *Ideas and Institutions of Victorian Britain: Essays in Honour of George Kitson Clark*, ed. Robert Robson (London, G. Bell, 1967), pp. 124-126.

¹⁹ *Charles Kingsley: His Letters and Memories of his Life*, ed. Frances Kingsley, 2 vols., 10th ed (London: C. Kegan Paul and Co., 1881), I, 201.

contrary to nature and a sin against God. Thus the violence of his attack on Newman in *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1864 cannot be explained solely in terms of the overt grounds of the conflict—the falsehood and cunning of the Roman clergy versus the Protestant virtues of truth and morality. It should also be seen as a conflict of fundamentally opposing personalities—the subtle misogamy of Newman versus the robust uxoriousness of Kingsley—of which neither man would have been fully aware.²⁰

The charge of effeminacy—the usual nineteenth-century caricature of male homosexuality—stuck to the successors of the Tractarians. It was frequently used by Protestant controversialists to smear the Anglo-Catholic party as a whole, though the allegations were more usually in the form of innuendo than direct assertion. It may be true that these suspicions were often founded on prejudice; it is equally likely that in many instances they had some basis in fact. After Bishop Samuel Wilberforce of Oxford founded Cuddesdon College in 1854 for the training of ordination candidates according to Tractarian principles, it was rumoured among the country clergy of the Oxford diocese that Cuddesdon-trained curates were unmanly, and that their semimonastic life bred effeminacy. Even Wilberforce himself was inclined to agree that the religious formation provided by his college lacked “vigour, virility and self-expressing vitality.”²¹ Bishop Edward King of Lincoln, a former chaplain and principal of Cuddesdon, was prosecuted in 1889-90 by a Protestant organisation, the Church Association, for the use of “illegal” ritual, and it is probable that a hidden factor in the decision to launch a prosecution was a dislike of King’s personal characteristics. As an unmarried High Churchman who had been devoted to his theological students, and the first English diocesan bishop since the Reformation to wear a mitre and the traditional eucharistic vestments, he “embodied all the Tractarian characteristics which Protestants held in special abhorrence.”²²

The revival of pre-Reformation ceremonial in public worship, justified on historic grounds and as an expression of the sacramental principle, was a product of the second generation of the Oxford Movement. During the 1860s ritualism came into the public eye, and the clergy and congregations of ritualist churches were increasingly subjected to hostile scrutiny. Clergymen of “extreme High Church proclivities,” sneered *Punch*, “are very fond of dressing like ladies, They are much addicted to wearing vestments diversified with smart and gay colours, and variously trimmed and embroidered.”²³ A Protestant visitor to St. Matthias’s, Stoke Newington (London), which with its coloured vestments, incense, and lighted candles was regarded as a centre of advanced ceremonial, wrote in the *Rock* that the “style of dress and the close-shaven face, favoured so greatly by

²⁰ Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning*, pp. 197-199, 207-211; Robert Bernard Martin, *The Dust of Combat: A Life of Charles Kingsley* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959), pp. 237-253. For Newman’s side of the controversy, see Trevor, II, 317-345.

²¹ Owen Chadwick, *The Founding of Cuddesdon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 92-93. The existence of homosexual interests among young Oxford-educated Anglo-Catholic clergymen in the 1850s is strongly implied in Samuel Butler’s autobiographical novel, *Ernest Pontifex, or The Way of All Flesh* (1903), chaps. 51-59.

²² E. R. Norman, *Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1968), p. 110.

²³ “Parsons in Petticoats,” *Punch*, 48 (10 June 1865), 239.

English imitators of Rome, do give to most men a rather juvenile, if not womanly appearance.” Unlike most churches, “the Ritualistic world attracts crowds of men, both young and old.”²⁴ About the same time a journalist from *The Times* attended a Sunday High Mass at the famous ritualist church of St. Alban, Holborn—“one of the ecclesiastical curiosities of London.” In describing its eclectic congregation, he noted that “foremost perhaps, among the devotees are young men of 19 or 20 years of age, who seem to have the intricacies of ritualism at their fingers’ ends.”²⁵ By the end of the century, the jubilee history of St. Alban’s proudly related, the number of young men in the congregation had become “more and more conspicuous”: “Pious women there were in abundance—was there ever a church where they did not congregate?—but St. Alban’s was from the first a Man’s church, and a Young Man’s church before all.”²⁶

Some of the young men who clustered around Anglo-Catholic churches—many of them apparently shop assistants and clerks—were regarded by observers as “unwholesome” and “sentimental.”²⁷ For many of those so described it is possible that Anglo-Catholic ritualism provided a way of escape from the problems of sexual tension and forbidden love into a make-believe world of religious pageantry, ancient titles and ranks, exotic symbolism, and endless chatter about copes and candles, the apostolic succession, and the triumphs of the “true faith.” Certainly the more austere Anglo-Catholics were disquieted by the air of levity and unreality they witnessed in some of these circles, and they sought to distance themselves from the popular charge of effeminacy. Charles Fuge Lowder, vicar of St. Peter’s, London Docks, for example, was described approvingly in his biography as “not a Ritualist at all in the modern sense of the word, after the gushing, effeminate, sentimental manner of young shop-boys, or those who simply ape the ways of Rome.”²⁸

The allegations persisted. At the end of the nineteenth century the conflict between Protestantism and Anglo-Catholicism within the Church of England was still regularly depicted by Protestant propagandists as a struggle between masculine and feminine styles of religion. They pointed out the apparent appeal of Anglo-Catholic forms of worship to members of the upper classes—“especially women, in the artificial and luxurious atmosphere of our wealthier classes”—which carried the implication that male Anglo-Catholics were effete, decadent, and lacking in manly qualities.²⁹ In 1898 John Kensit, fanatical founder of the Protestant Truth Society, which specialised in disrupting the services of Anglo-Catholic churches, described to a cheering Protestant meeting in London the “idolatry” of a ritualist church at St. Cuthbert’s, Pilbeach Gardens, that he had

²⁴ *Rock*, 9 and 12 June 1868.

²⁵ “Ritualism,” *The Times*, 27 August 1866, p. 8.

²⁶ George W. E. Russell, *Saint Alban the Martyr, Holborn: A History of Fifty Years* (London: George Allen and Co., 1913). p. 306. See also [Eleanor A. Towle], *Alexander Heriot Mackonochie: A Memoir by E.A.T.*, ed. Edward Francis Russell (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and Co., 1890), pp. 99-100; Fong, pp. 146-150.

²⁷ See, for example, *Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell*, arranged with supplement, by M. D. Petrie, 2 vols. (London: Edward Arnold, 1912), 1, 150-152.

²⁸ [Maria Trench], *Charles Lowder: A Biography, by the Author of “The Life of St. Teresa,”* 12th ed. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1887), p. 284.

²⁹ *Rock*, 29 April 1898.

invaded the previous Good Friday. The service had been conducted by a “priest in petticoats.” The congregation were “very poor specimens of men.... They seemed a peculiar sort of people, very peculiar indeed.” To his listeners, the meaning and intent of his remarks were obvious.³⁰

In the second half of the nineteenth century as a result of the Oxford Movement there was a revival of religious brotherhoods and sisterhoods in the Church of England.³¹ The first two male communities, Newman’s at Littlemore and F. W. Faber’s at Elton, followed their founders into the Roman Catholic church in 1845. This development confirmed Protestant suspicions that Tractarianism encouraged sexual aberration and impropriety. The Protestant case against Anglican monasticism in any of its forms was not only that it propagated “Romanising practices and doctrines,” but that it was also contrary to God’s “natural laws.” The “suppression or perversion of natural love” by monastic vows led inevitably to “corruption” and “defilement.”³² Popular imagination was fuelled by “revelations” and exaggerated rumours of sexual scandals (in both Roman Catholic and Anglican religious houses) of a kind which works like the *Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk* (1836) had already made familiar.³³

In the case of communities of priests such as the Society of St. John the Evangelist (1865) or the Community of the Resurrection (1892) these charges were clearly without foundation. They maintained a close connection with the intellectual life of the universities and followed a strictly disciplined way of life. At the same time, however, the “Anglo-Catholic underworld” was producing a succession of short-lived, often clandestine, brotherhoods and guilds whose members delighted in religious ceremonial and the picturesque neo-Gothic externals of monastic life. Because these brotherhoods enforced no strict criteria for entry, it is likely that they were especially attractive to homosexually inclined young men who felt themselves drawn to the male environment of a monastic community and the dramatic side of religion. These histories were punctuated with crises and scandals.³⁴

³⁰ *The Protestant Alliance, Verbatim Report of Speeches Delivered at the Great Demonstration, Held in the Queen’s Hall, Longhorn Place. . . May 3rd, 1898* (London: R. J. Haynes, 1898), p. 23. See also Chadwick, *Victorian Church*, II, 355-356; Munson, pp. 385-387.

³¹ A. M. Allchin, *The Silent Rebellion: Anglican Religious Communities, 1845-1900* (London: S. C. M. Press, 1958); Peter F. Anson, *The Call of the Cloister: Religious Communities and Kindred Bodies in the Anglican Communion*, revised by A. W. Campbell, 4th ed. (London: S. P. C. K., 1964), and *Building up the Waste Places: The Revival of Monastic Life on Medieval Lines in the Post-Reformation Church of England* (Leighton Buzzard: Faith Press, 1973).

³² For example: *Norfolk News*, 24 September 1864; Walter Walsh, *The Secret History of the Oxford Movement* (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1897), chap. 6.

³³ Chadwick, *Victorian Church*, I, 509; Norman, *Anti-Catholicism*, p. 109; Best, pp. 127-132.

³⁴ On the minor brotherhoods, see Anson, *Call of the Cloister*, pp. 90-106. In 1869 Bishop Edward Twells, a missionary bishop in southern Africa and founder of a missionary brotherhood called the Society of St. Augustine, was involved in a homosexual scandal and compelled to flee the country in disguise. A senior clergyman observed: “People’s faith in the sanctity of high Churchmen will be a good deal shaken, and celibacy and brotherhood which were the order of the day in that diocese will certainly be at a discount” (Peter Hinchliff, *The Anglican Church in South Africa* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1963), pp. So, 140-141). Homosexual tension in two small Anglo-Catholic men’s communities in the 1920s are recalled in Martin Boyd, *Day of my Delight: An Anglo-Australian Memoir* (Melbourne: Lansdowne, 1965), pp. 124-125; Bruno S. James, *Asking for Trouble* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1962), p. 46.

One well publicised incident occurred in 1864 at a monastery in Elm Hill, Norwich, where the eccentric and quixotic Father Ignatius (Joseph Leycester Lyne) was trying to restore the Benedictine life within the English church.³⁵ A love letter written by a Brother Augustine to a young apprentice printer who sang in the priory's choir was sent to the *Norfolk News*, and on 17 September 1864 it was printed in full in an article headed "Ignatius and his Singing Boys." The Protestant citizenry of Norwich was horrified. The newspaper proceeded to publish a stern editorial on the moral evils inherent in monasticism:

We tell "Ignatius" plainly, and we tell everybody else connected with this establishment who has the slightest power of reflection, that the herding together of men in one building, with the occasional letting in of young girls—some of them morbid, some of them silly and sentimental—and of boys likewise, with soft, sensitive temperaments, cannot fall to produce abominations. (*Norfolk News*, 24 September 1884).

A year later the Elm Hill community was almost destroyed when Brother Stanislaus led malcontents in an unsuccessful rebellion against Ignatius's authority, then fled the priory with a boy from its associated Guild of St. William. In 1868 the ex-Brother Stanislaus (James Barrett Hughes) reappeared as a popular guest speaker on Protestant platforms in London and the provinces, where he scandalised the respectable with revelations of the "semi-Popish and improper practices" established by Ignatius and other ritualists. At a meeting in London two youths brought up from Norwich specially for the occasion "made frightful charges, utterly unfit for publication, against a monk"—a reference to Brother Augustine.³⁶ Then in the following year another youth alleged that he had lived at the monastery in a sexual relationship with Stanislaus, with the encouragement of Ignatius: "it needed no more to set the Protestant world ablaze with joy and expectation" (de Bertouch, p. 430).

Another monastic brotherhood was the Order of St. Augustine, founded in 1867 by a wealthy and eccentric clergyman, George Nugée. In 1872 it established a priory at Walworth in South London, where it maintained a round of extremely elaborate services. Most of those connected with "St. Austin's Priory" were rich men who enjoyed a comfortable life, and there was "very little of a normal religious community about its spirit or observances" (Anson, *Call of the Cloister*, p. 100). Among those who regularly visited St. Austin's and enjoyed its colourful ritual (without believing yet in Christianity) was Walter Pater, aesthete and historian of the Renaissance.³⁷ His intimate friend was Richard Charles Jackson

³⁵ For biographies of Father Ignatius, see Baroness (Beatrice) de Bertouch, *The Life of Father Ignatius, O.S.B.: The Monk of Llanthony* (London: Methuen and Co., 1904); Donald Attwater, *Father Ignatius of Llanthony: A Victorian* (London: Cassell and Co., 1931); Arthur Calder Marshall, *The Enthusiast: An Enquiry into the Life, Beliefs and Character of the Rev. Joseph Lycester Lyne alias Fr. Ignatius, O. S. B.* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962). See also Anson, *Building up the Waste Places*.

³⁶ *Rock*, 27 March 1868.

³⁷ Thomas Wright, *The Life of Walter Pater*, 2 vols. (London: Everett and Co., 1907), II. 31-42. In his last years in Oxford, Pater frequently attended St. Barnabas's, an Anglo-Catholic church known for its elaborate ritual. He was the model for "Mr. Rose" in W. H. Mallock's *The New Republic* (1877).

(Brother à Becket), a lay brother and so-called professor of Church History at the priory. At Pater's request Jackson wrote a poem for his birthday:

...Your darling soul I say is enflamed with love for me;
Your very eyes do move I cry with sympathy:
Your darling feet and hands are blessings ruled by love,
As forth was sent from out the Ark a turtle dove!
(Wright, II, 22).

A slightly less bizarre foundation was the "Anglican Congregation of the Primitive Observance of the Holy Rule of St. Benedict." This was founded in 1896 by a former medical student, Benjamin (Aelred) Carlyle, who had been fascinated by the monastic life since the age of fifteen, when he had founded a secret religious brotherhood at his public school.³⁸ His choice of the religious name of Aelred, after a twelfth-century Cistercian abbot of Rievaulx who had written treatises on "spiritual friendships," was a deliberate one, for a biography of St. Aelred by Newman's companion, J. O. Dalgairns, had revealed to him "a monastic world in which natural and spiritual relations could be fused" (Anson, *Building up the Waste Places*, p. 134). Aelred Carlyle was a man of dynamic personality, hypnotic eyes, and extraordinary imagination. In 1906 his community made its permanent home on Caldey Island, off the coast of south Wales (outside Anglican diocesan jurisdiction), where, largely on borrowed money, he built a splendidly furnished monastery in a fanciful style of architecture. The life of this enclosed Benedictine community centred upon an ornate chapel where the thirty or so tonsured and cowled monks sang the monastic offices and celebrated Mass in Latin according to the Roman rite. As there was nothing like it anywhere else in the Church of England the island abbey inevitably became a resort for ecclesiastical sightseers, and many young men were drawn to join the community out of personal affection for Carlyle. The self-styled Lord Abbot of Caldey introduced practices into the life of his monastery which many outsiders, accustomed to the austere atmosphere of the existing Anglican men's communities, found disconcerting. "Stories Toto Told Me" by "Baron Corvo" (Frederick Rolfe), which had originally appeared in *The Yellow Book*, were often read aloud to the assembled monks at recreation time, and during the summer months they regularly went sea-bathing in the nude. Nor did Carlyle make any secret of his liking for charming young men. Spiritual friendships were "not discouraged," recalled his biographer, himself a former member of the Caldey community:

... and their expression sometimes took a form which would not be found in any normal monastery to-day. . . . Embraces, ceremonial and non-ceremonial, were regarded as symbolical of fraternal charity, so our variant of the Roman rite permitted a real hug and

³⁸ The Anglican Benedictine community on Caldey Island is described by Peter F. Anson in *The Benedictines of Caldey: The Story of the Anglican Benedictines of Caldey and their Submission to the Catholic Church* (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1940); *Abbot Extraordinary: A Memoir of Aelred Carlyle, Monk and Missionary, 1874-1955* (London: Faith Press, 1958); *Building up the Waste Places*, chaps. 12-15.

kisses on the cheek between the giver and the recipient of the *Pax Domini* at the conventual Mass. (Anson, *Abbot Extraordinary*, pp. 125-126)

Not surprisingly for this and other reasons the more conservative Anglo-Catholics regarded the Caldey Benedictines with deep distrust. The bubble burst in March 1913 when Carlyle and twenty-two of his monks—heavily in debt and convinced by the Anglo-Catholic Bishop Charles Gore that their liturgical and devotional usages could be defended only on a papal basis of authority—were received into the Roman Catholic church. The community continued in existence with Carlyle as abbot. Then in 1921 he suddenly resigned his abbacy and went to Canada, accompanied by another monk from Caldey, to work as a Roman Catholic missionary priest in British Columbia. He renewed his monastic vows shortly before his death in England in 1955.

II

The world of many Anglo-Catholic clergy was overwhelmingly masculine. Some urban parishes were staffed exclusively by unmarried priests, who lived together in clergy houses. A significant minority was committed to celibacy. Among the more extreme Anglo-Catholics, for a priest to “commit matrimony” was considered to be not only a profound betrayal of the Catholic priestly role, but also an act of personal disloyalty to those who remained celibate.³⁹ The biographies of Anglo-Catholic notables reveal a number of discreetly drawn examples of deep friendships between men, and of priests who were known for their remarkable ability to work with lads and young men. The possibility of moral danger was widely recognised. Vincent Stuckey Coles, librarian and later principal of Pusey House, Oxford, from 1884 to 1909, had realised while still a schoolboy, declared his biographer, that his “beautiful and ennobling love for his friends might co-exist with much that is faulty and ill-regulated, and even with much that is corrupt, and that, like all passionate enthusiasms, it has untold capacities for good but also carries within it possibilities for evil.”⁴⁰ It is significant that among Coles’s circle of Anglo-Catholic friends at Eton and Oxford in the 1860s had been Digby Mackworth Dolben, whose religious poetry, written before his early death in 1867, has been described as “perfect Uranian verse;” and Gerard Manley Hopkins, who apparently became strongly attracted to Dolben and channeled his own anguished feelings into a series of sonnets.⁴¹ An Anglo-Catholic tract published in 1922, advocating clerical celibacy, warned priests

³⁹ For example: Colin Stephenson, *Walsingham Way* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1970), pp. 127-128, 225-229; *Merrily on High* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1972), pp. 77-78.

⁴⁰ V. S. S. Coles: *Letters, Papers, Addresses, Hymns & Verses with a Memoir*, ed. J. F. Briscoe (London: A. R. Mowbray and Co., 1930), pp. 7-8.

⁴¹ Briscoe, pp. 6-9; Paddy Kitchen, *Gerard Manley Hopkins* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978), chap. 4; Reade, pp. 10-12, 72-76; Timothy d’Arch Smith, *Love in Earnest: Some Notes on the Lives and Writings of English ‘Uranian’ Poets from 1889 to 1930* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 188-191; Sulloway, pp. 50-55. Hopkins’s homosexuality is discussed by Michael Lynch, “Recovering Hopkins, Recovering Ourselves,” *The Hopkins Quarterly*, 6 (Fall 1979), pp. 107-117.

against friendships with members of both sexes. Friendship with a woman might lead to marriage: “A similar caution is necessary with regard to undue intimacy with boys. If the Cross weighs heavily upon some of us in these respects let us pray for grace to be generous in bearing it.”⁴²

Male friendships within the church took many forms. At a later date, in a different context, some of them would undoubtedly have been regarded as homosexual. The case of Henry Scott Holland, High Church theologian and social theorist, is instructive. Having deliberately renounced marriage as a “willing sacrifice,” at the age of thirty-five he wrote of his reactions on hearing of a friend’s engagement: “The sudden sense that I alone of all my friends am really going to be wifeless, is born in upon me with unwonted energy, and makes me feel strange, and wondering; and I clench my teeth a little, and feel sterner (but not less resolute).”⁴³ Later in 1903 when Scott Holland was a canon of St. Paul’s Cathedral, London, he appointed as his secretary a young Oxford graduate, Laurence Stratford, who became a “real and close friend,” entering fully into Scott Holland’s many interests. It was “difficult to speak adequately” of his devotion, and when at last he took up a government post Scott Holland found the parting a “bitter grief” (Paget, p. 224).

Priests who worked among undergraduates at Oxford and Cambridge had many opportunities for intimate relationships with the young men in their pastoral care. For example the friendship of Ronald Knox, when chaplain of Trinity College, Oxford, before the first world war, with a handsome and brilliant undergraduate, Guy Lawrence, was the “strongest human affection” of his early manhood.⁴⁴ Forbes Robinson, a theological lecturer and college fellow at Cambridge in the 1890s, was remembered for his “extraordinary interest” in his undergraduate acquaintances: “He loved some men with an intensity of feeling impossible to describe. It was almost pain to him. If he loved a man he loved him with a passionate love (no weaker expression win do).”⁴⁵ He prayed for those he loved for hours at a time.

Another type of friendship was between priests of similar ages who were engaged in a common enterprise or who worked in the same parish. At St. Clement’s, Bournemouth, for example, in the 1870s, there was a deep if outwardly undemonstrative relationship between the vicar, George Douglas Tinling (“artistic, graceful in manner”) and his curate, Robert Gray Scurfield (“an enthusiastic sportsman”)⁴⁶ These lifelong friends are said to have held everything in common—“their faith, ideals, aims, occupations and possessions.” At the

⁴² C. Newell Long, *Personal Efficiency: The Priest’s Rule of Life*, York Books, no. 34 (London: Society of SS. Peter and Paul, 1922), p. 10.

⁴³ *Henry Scott Holland. . . Canon of St. Paul’s, Memoir and Letters*, ed. Stephen Paget (London: John Murray, 1921), p. 166. See also pp. 94-96—an exposition, in a letter to his brother, of his views on friendship.

⁴⁴ Evelyn Waugh, *The Life of the Right Reverend Ronald Knox ...* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1959), p. 125.

⁴⁵ Forbes Robinson, *Letters to his Friends*, ed. Charles [Robinson], 3d ed. (London: Spottiswoode and Co., for private circulation, 1905), p. 50.

⁴⁶ [Malcolm Thorning], *St. Clement’s Bournemouth, 1873-1973* (Bournemouth, 1973), p. 9. “George Tinling’s ministry was notable for its fearless teaching of Catholic doctrine at a time of great hostility towards the Oxford movement” (p. 10).

Anglo-Catholic outpost of St. Matthew's, Sheffield, the formidable George Campbell Ommanney (vicar from 1882 to 1936) was buried at his request in the same grave as a favourite curate, who had died in the parish many years previously.⁴⁷ These and other relationships which have been recorded can only be a small fraction of the whole.

From the mid-1880s, when a new generation of literary men began accepting homosexual sentiment as "part of the whole range of feeling which waited to be explored," some claimed that homosexuality was often linked to the "artistic temperament" (Reade, p. 31). During the 1890s, a crucial decade in the development of a distinctive homosexual identity, there were many links between this homosexual literary culture and Catholic religion, in both its Roman Catholic and Anglo-Catholic forms. There is, for example, the evidence of the literary magazines, *The Artist*, *The Spirit Lamp*, and *The Chameleon*, which, during this period, published many poems, essays, and stories with homosexual themes (Reade, pp. 40-47). Frederick Rolfe, who in 1890 had been expelled from the Scots College in Rome after five months' training for the Roman Catholic priesthood, wrote poems for *The Artist* on St. Sebastian and other subjects. *The Spirit Lamp*, an Oxford undergraduate magazine, was edited from December 1892 to June 1893 by Lord Alfred Douglas, who turned it into "an expensively produced and serious organ of the aestheticism created by Oscar Wilde"—his lover.⁴⁸ Several of its contributors subsequently became Anglo-Catholic priests. *The Chameleon*, which was edited by John Francis Bloxam of Exeter College, Oxford, and lasted for only one issue (December 1894), acquired notoriety for an unsigned short story, "The Priest and the Acolyte,"⁴⁹ Although written by Bloxam this was widely attributed to Wilde and was used by the prosecution at his first trial in 1895. It was an emotional tale—"the first piece of English fiction to echo the firmly-founded French syndrome of the 'naughty' priest" (d'Arch Smith, p. 56)—about the passionate love of a young priest for a fourteen-year-old golden-haired boy. Following discovery by the priest's rector, and the certainty of disgrace, the two lovers take poison in the chalice at a private Mass and die together, embracing on the steps of the altar.

This was Bloxam's last published work. Following his ordination in 1897 he was an assistant priest at various Anglo-Catholic churches in London, including St. Mary's, Graham Street, in the fashionable West End. (It was attended by the Anglo-Catholic lay leader Viscount Halifax and by his son Lord Irwin, subsequently Viceroy of India.) After service as a chaplain in the first world war, during which he was twice decorated for gallantry, he became vicar of the East End parish of St. Saviour, Hoxton. This Anglo-Catholic church was so "Romanised" that its priests used the Latin Missal and followed all Roman

⁴⁷ *Ommanney of Sheffield: Memoirs of George Campbell Ommanney, Vicar of St. Matthew's, Sheffield 1882-1936*, ed. Francis C. Belton (London: Centenary Press, 1936), pp. 35, 142.

⁴⁸ Compton Mackenzie. *My Life and Times: Octave Two, 1891-1900* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1963), p. 202. One of the founders of *The Spirit Lamp* in 1892 was Leighton Sandys Wason (1867-1950), an undergraduate of Christ Church. Later as a priest he was to achieve temporary fame in ecclesiastical circles as an Anglo-Catholic victim of Protestant fanaticism. In 1919 he was deprived of his village parish in Cornwall for doctrinal and liturgical disobedience.

⁴⁹ "The Priest and the Acolyte" is reprinted in *Sexual Heretics*, pp. 349-360. See also *The Trials of Oscar Wilde*, ed. H. Montgomery Hyde (London: William Hodge and Co., 1948), pp. 120-122.

devotions.⁵⁰ After Bloxam's death in 1928 a former clerical colleague wrote in the *Church Times* of his "pastoral genius," his work for the young, and his "passionate love of beauty": "In regard to his personal character it would be hard to say whether he was more remarkable for his power of winning affection or for his lavishness in bestowing it."⁵¹

Another minor literary figure of the 1890s who sought to integrate the two worlds of homosexuality and Catholic religion was André Raffalovich. A member of a rich emigré Russo-Jewish family, he was converted to Roman Catholicism in 1896, shortly after the Wilde trials. In the same year he published a study of homosexuality, *Uranisme et Unisexualité*, in which he argued that homosexuality ("inversion") and heterosexuality are two equally legitimate manifestations of human sexuality, rejected the current view that homosexuality was a disease, and advocated a life of chastity, supported by friendship, as the Christian ideal.⁵²

Many others associated with the homosexual literary world of the 1890s and early 1900s found a religious home in either the Anglo-Catholicism of the Church of England or the Roman Catholic church. Among those who joined the latter were Frederick Rolfe, Lord Alfred Douglas, Lionel Johnson, and John Gray, the intimate friend of Raffalovich, who eventually became a Roman Catholic parish priest in Edinburgh.⁵³ The most famous was Oscar Wilde himself, who had become attracted to Roman Catholicism—"a Church which simply enthralms me by its fascination"⁵⁴—while an undergraduate at Oxford in the 1870s, though he was not received into the Roman church until his deathbed in 1900. During Wilde's final trial in 1895 he received aid from a prominent Anglo-Catholic socialist priest, Stewart Headlam—himself something of an aesthete—who put up part of his bail, accompanied him to the courtroom each day, and scandalised most of his own Christian Socialist supporters in the process.⁵⁵ Another convert with a prolific literary output was Robert Hugh Benson, youngest son of Archbishop E. W. Benson of Canterbury and a former priest member of the (Anglo-Catholic) Community of the Resurrection. As a young man, he recalled, he had rejected the idea of marriage as "quite inconceivable."⁵⁶ Then in 1904, soon after his ordination as a Roman Catholic priest, he formed a passionate friendship with

⁵⁰ S. C. Carpenter, *Winnington-Ingram: The Biography of Arthur Foley Winnington-Ingram, Bishop of London, 1901-1939* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), pp. 170-175; Crockford's Clerical Directory, 1898-1928.

⁵¹ *Church Times*, 27 April 1928.

⁵² P. W. J. Healy, "Uranisme et Unisexualité: A Late Victorian view of Homosexuality," *New Blackfriars*, 59 (1978), 56-65; Reade, pp. 32-35.

⁵³ See *Two Friends, John Gray & André Raffalovich: Essays Biographical and Critical*, ed. Brocard Sewell (Aylesford: St. Albert's Press, 1963); Brocard Sewell, *Footnote to the Nineties: A Memoir of John Gray and André Raffalovich* (London: Cecil and Amelia Woolf, 1968).

⁵⁴ *The Letters of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Rupert Hart-Davis (London: Hart-Davis, 1962), p. 31.

⁵⁵ Coleman, pp. 149-150; Peter d'A. Jones, *The Christian Socialist Revival, 1877-1914: Religion, Class, and Social Conscience in Late-Victorian England* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 145-149. Shortly before his release from Reading Gaol in 1897, Wilde was visited by another Anglo Catholic socialist priest, the Honourable and Reverend James Adderley (James Adderley, *In Slums and Society: Reminiscences of Old Friends* [London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1916], pp. 178-179).

⁵⁶ Robert Hugh Benson, *Confessions of a Convert* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1913), p. 29.

Rolfe. For two years this relationship involved letters “not only weekly, but at times daily, and of an intimate character, exhaustingly charged with emotion.”⁵⁷ All letters were subsequently destroyed, probably by Benson’s brother. Several of that group of “Uranian” poets of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who wrote on the theme of boy-love were clergymen in the Church of England. Among them were Edwin Emmanuel Bradford, Samuel Elsworth Cottam, George Gabriel Scott Gillett, Edward Cracroft Lefroy, and Edmund St. Gascoigne Mackie.⁵⁸ During their ecclesiastical careers Cottam and Gillett were associated with a number of well-known Anglo-Catholic churches in London and elsewhere, though the latter turned his literary talents from writing poetry on Uranian themes at Oxford in the nineties to editing an Anglican missionary periodical and writing devotional and comic verse in the distinctive Anglo-Catholic genre.⁵⁹ Cottam was an enthusiastic collector of Uranian poetry and other publications, and (with Bradford) was a member of a secret homosexual society called the Order of Chaeronea, founded in the late 1890s, and whose members were drawn together by ties of friendship, the hope of reforming hostile attitudes, and secret rituals and symbols (Weeks, *Coming Out*, pp. 122-127). A fellow member of the Order of Chaeronea and a writer of Uranian verse was Alphonsus Joseph-Mary Augustus Montague Summers. As an Anglo-Catholic he was ordained a deacon in the Church of England before being received into the Roman Catholic church in 1909. Rejected from training for the Catholic priesthood (though it is probable that he subsequently received priest’s orders through a schismatical source), he became a school teacher and antiquarian scholar, an author of voluminous works on Restoration drama, the Gothic novel, witchcraft, and demonology, and an active member of the British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology.⁶⁰

III.

⁵⁷ C. C. Martindale, *The Life of Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1916), II, 96. For other accounts of the relationship, see Betty Askwith, *Two Victorian Families* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971), pp. 212-217; A. J. A. Symons, *The Quest for Corvo: An Experiment in Biography* (London: Cassell and Co., 1934), chap. 14; Donald Weeks, *Corvo* (London: Michael Joseph, 1971), pp. 249-252, 258-259, 262-276, 387-390; David Williams, *Genesis and Exodus: A Portrait of the Benson Family* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979), pp. 163, 170, 188-189, 219. The romantic friendships of R. H. Benson’s brother, Arthur Christopher Benson, are sympathetically described in David Newsome, *On the Edge of Paradise. A. C. Benson: The Diarist* (London: John Murray, 1980).

⁵⁸ See d’Arch Smith and Reade. The Uranians’ attempt, to provide religious justification for their sexual feelings are analysed in Brian Taylor, “Motives for Guilt-Free Pederasty: Some Literary Considerations,” *Sociological Review*, n. s. 24 (1976), 104-106. For details of the clergymen’s church careers, see *Crockford’s Clerical Directory*.

⁵⁹ Two of Gillett’s early poems are in *Sexual Heretics*, pp. 227-128, 247-248. For his devotional verse, see Gabriel Gillett, *A Garden of Song: With Pictures by Martin Travers and an Introductory Note by Kenneth Ingram* (Westminster: Society of SS. Peter and Paul, 1923). See also John Betjeman’s foreword to S. J. Forrest, *What’s the Use?* (London: A. R. Mowbray and Co., 1955), pp. 3-5; Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, p. 115.

⁶⁰ “Joseph Jerome” [Brocard Sewell], *Montague Summers: A Memoir* (London: Cecil and Amelia Woolf, 1965); d’Arch Smith, pp. 117-123; Weeks, *Coming Out*, pp. 124, 135-136.

From the early 1900s until the second world war, the public face of the Anglo-Catholic movement was militant and uncompromising.⁶¹ Many younger clergy took delight in shocking the respectable “Church of Englandism” of the ecclesiastical establishment, personified by the canny and cautious archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson.⁶² A vociferous ginger-group was the Society of SS. Peter and Paul, founded in 1910 on the initiative of Maurice Child, Ronald Knox (son of the staunchly Evangelical bishop of Manchester), who seceded to Rome in 1917, and Samuel Gurney, a director of the Medici Society.⁶³ The society made fun of the bishops by describing itself as “Publishers to the Church of England” and by advertising and selling such articles as *Ridley* and *Latimer* votive-candle stands and *The Lambeth Frankincense*. It annoyed the authorities even more by advocating in a series of tracts the adoption by Anglican churches of the liturgical practices and popular devotions of the contemporary Roman Catholic church. The ultimate aim was the “resumption of arrested development,” as if the Reformation had not happened, for only then, it was claimed, would the Church of England once again become a genuine “church of the people.” The Society of SS. Peter and Paul was behind the great series of Anglo-Catholic congresses held between 1920 and 1933 (the latter being the centenary celebration of the Oxford Movement), at which the Anglo-Catholics went onto the attack and expounded the “Catholic position” to huge and enthusiastic audiences, with the object of demonstrating that it represented nothing less than the “true mind” of the Church of England.⁶⁴

Exerting considerable influence at the centre of the Society of SS. Peter and Paul, and later as general secretary of the Anglo-Catholic congress organisation, was Maurice Child—the “mystery man” of the Anglo-Catholic movement—who was regarded by critics as a flippant and pleasure-loving “sybarite” and by admirers as a dedicated priest of remarkable ability.⁶⁵ Child was of a type that popped up regularly in Anglo-Catholic circles between the wars. A strong believer in clerical celibacy, he was also rich, witty, versatile, a *bon*

⁶¹ On the Anglo-Catholic movement in the twentieth century, see Francis Absalom, “The Anglo-Catholic Priest: Aspects of Role Conflict,” in *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain: 4*, ed Michael Hill (London: S. C. M. Press, 1971), pp. 46-61; Anselm Hughes, *The Rivers of the Flood: A Personal Account of the Catholic Revival in England in the Twentieth Century* (London: Faith Press, 1961); Roger Lloyd, *The Church of England, 1900-1965* (London: S. C. M. Press, 1966), chap. 6. There are numerous biographies of Anglo-Catholic leaders. By 1901 at least three out of every ten parochial clergy in the Church of England could be regarded as sympathetic to High Church teaching and practices. Only about two per cent of the parochial clergy, however, can definitely be identified as Anglo-Catholic ritualists. For numbers and geographical distribution, see Munson, pp. 387-391.

⁶² For example: “Anglicanus,” *My People Love to Have it so*, York Books, no. 20 (London: Society of SS. Peter and Paul, 1916).

⁶³ The Society of SS. Peter and Paul is described in Peter F. Anson, *Fashions in Church Furnishings, 1840-1940*, 2d ed. (London: Studio Vista, 1965), chap. 30; Eric Waldram Kemp, *N. P. Williams* (London: S. P. C. K., 1954), pp. 31-41; Waugh, *Ronald Knox*, pp. 114-118.

⁶⁴ *Church Times*, 23 January 1920.

⁶⁵ On Maurice Child, see Sydney Dark, *Not Such a Bad Life* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 191), pp. 205-206; Frederick Hood, “Maurice Child,” *St. Mary’s Pimlico, Quarterly Review*, (Spring 1950), 18-28; James, p. Desmond Morse-Boycott, *They Shine Like Stars* (London: Skeffington and Son, 1947), pp. 260-462; *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh*, ed. Mark Amory (London; Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980) p. 544; Obituary in *Church Times*, February 1950.

viveur—nicknamed “the Playboy of the Western Church.” In London he lived with a male companion at a succession of fashionable addresses, where he entertained friends from many different walks of life. His glittering parties bore little resemblance to the usual clerical social gatherings. At one of them a young visitor was startled to see the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity from Oxford in conversation over a cocktail with the film actress Tallulah Bankhead. As a skilled counsellor, an old friend recalled after his death in 1950, his “greatest forte was with young men” (Hood, p. 25).

In examining the homosexual component of early twentieth-century Anglo-Catholicism, it would be quite wrong to imply that more than a minority of Anglo-Catholic clergy or laity were homosexually inclined. Indeed one of the most common criticisms of Anglo-Catholic priests of this period was not that they were “effeminate” (the favourite allegation of nineteenth-century Protestants), but that so many of them behaved like Roman Catholic priests while having wives and children. Nevertheless, in cities such as London, Brighton, and Oxford, and other places in the south of England which had a high concentration of Anglo-Catholic churches, there are indications that a male homosexual subculture was associated with the more flamboyant wing of Anglo-Catholicism. In some London churches visitors noticed an unusually high proportion of young men in the congregation.⁶⁶ In the industrial Midlands and the North, on the other hand, where Low Churchmanship was dominant and Anglo-Catholics were on the defensive, the correlation was much less likely.

The published evidence for the connection is sparse. There are a few references in the posthumously published autobiography of Tom Driberg (Lord Bradwell), who was both a prominent Labour member of parliament, a devout Anglo-Catholic, and well-known in upper-class circles as a homosexual.⁶⁷ There are some revealing passages in fictional works by writers who themselves had a first-hand knowledge of both worlds. In Evelyn Waugh’s *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) an Oxford undergraduate, newly arrived in college, is warned by his cousin: “Beware of the Anglo-Catholics—they’re all sodomites with unpleasant accents.”⁶⁸ Compton Mackenzie’s *Sinister Street* (1913) and his Anglo-Catholic trilogy, *The Altar Steps* (1922), *The Parson’s Progress* (1923), and *The Heavenly Ladder* (1924), include (despite the author’s disclaimers) many vivid and accurate descriptions of typical, often identifiable, Anglo-Catholic clergy and parishes of the 1890s and early 1900s.⁶⁹ They are subtly permeated with hints of

⁶⁶ For example, All Saints, Margaret Street, and St. Mary’s, Graham Street (*Church Times*, 13 March 1925, 3 April 1925).

⁶⁷ Tom Driberg, *Ruling Passions* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977), pp. 15-16, 4748, 73. The idiosyncratic Anglo-Catholicism of his friend, the poet Wystan Auden, is discussed in Charles Osborne, *W.H. Auden: The Life of a Poet* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979), p. 202-204.

⁶⁸ Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1946), chap. 1, p. 26.

⁶⁹ Compton Mackenzie, *Sinister Street*, 2 vols. (London, Martin Seeker, 1913), 1, book 2, chaps. 5-9; *The Altar Steps* (London: Cassell and Co., 1922), chaps. 2, 16, 23-29; *The Parson’s Progress* (London, Cassell and Co., 1923), chap. 19. Among more recent novels which portray homosexuality in an Anglo-Catholic setting are Iris Murdoch, *The Bell* (London; Chatto and Windus, 1958); Barbara Pym, *A Glass of Blessings* (London; Jonathan Cape, 1958) A. N. Wilson, *Unguarded Hours* (London: Seeker and Warburg, 1978).

homosexuality. A minor character in *The Parson's Progress* is Father Hugh Dayrell, assistant priest at "St. Cyprian's, South Kensington," an authority on moral theology, who shows unusual interest in the works of Havelock Ellis, Krafft-Ebing, and Freud, privately admits an antipathy to women, and is finally forced to flee the country in order to avoid an unspecified sexual scandal. In *The Altar Steps* the vicar of an Anglo-Catholic slum church in London expresses his dislike of "these churchy young fools who come simpering down in top-hats, with rosaries hanging out of their pockets." The same novel contains an account of life at "Malford Abbey" in the "Order of St. George" (which is recognisable as the Order of St. Paul at Alton). Many years later an historian of Anglican monasticism recalled: "Octogenarians can vouch for the truth of the period atmosphere. Even the gossip between the monks both during and outside times of recreation revive memories of the chit-chat in at least one Anglican monastic community about the turn of the century" (Anson, *Building up the Waste Places*, pp. 154-155). More recently, the autobiography of a former administrator of the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham has described with disarming frankness the semiconspiratorial and light-hearted atmosphere of a section of the Anglo-Catholic world of Brighton and Oxford between the wars (Stephenson, *Merrily on High*).

Archibald Kenneth Ingram, an Anglo-Catholic lay theologian, socialist, and prolific writer, attempted in several works to integrate his sexuality with his religious beliefs. In 1920 he contributed two pieces to a short-lived Uranian literary journal, *The Quorum: A Magazine of Friendship*, in which he advocated male comradeship as the highest relationship and the only way to bridge the gap between social classes (d'Arch Smith, pp. 140-141). In his view of the positive social value of male friendships, Ingram was influenced by the writings of Edward Carpenter, who saw Uranian men and women ("the intermediate sex") as filling an important function as reconcilers and interpreters and as a potential "advance guard" in the evolution of a new society. To the ideas of Carpenter and the other sexual radicals, Ingram added a religious justification derived from his Anglo-Catholic faith: "Pure love, especially so intense a love as the homogenic attachment, is not profane but divine."⁷⁰

The *Symbolic Island* (1924), Ingram's first novel, included among its characters an Anglo-Catholic priest, Father Evrill, who becomes the spokesman for Ingram's personal views on the need for a revitalised Anglo-Catholicism as the remedy for the ills of modern society. At one point Evrill explains his close friendship with young altar boy Gerald Frayne, and talks with enthusiasm of "a new type of youth" which is coming into existence in English society—lighthearted, artistic, nature-loving, "not so exclusively, so aggressively, male," though by no means effeminate.⁷¹ These youths and young men have a "much keener sense of comradeship" than their forefathers and show little romantic interest in women. Wherever they express themselves religiously, the priest observes with satisfaction "... it is always by the Catholic religion. I think the type

⁷⁰ Edward Carpenter, *The Intermediate Sex: A Study of Some Transitional Types of Men and Women* (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co., 1908); (Archibald) Kenneth Ingram, *An Outline of Sexual Morality* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1922), chap. 8.

⁷¹ (Archibald) Kenneth Ingram, *The Symbolic Island* (London: Damian Press, 1924), pp. 158-163.

is naturally religious, because it is mystical. That Catholicism should be the form of its religious expression is, I think, quite inevitable. There could be nothing else” (Ingram, *Symbolic Island*, p. 163).

Ingram also wrote four books which went beyond the frontiers of Christian orthodoxy by advocating a new sexual morality for the “new age.” In his first book on the subject, published in 1922, he described homosexuality as “a romantic cult rather than a physical vice” and reluctantly agreed that there could be “no religious countenance for any physical sex-act outside the sacrament of matrimony” (Ingram, *An Outline*, pp. 71-73). He became increasingly radical. By the 1940s he was arguing that the morality or immorality of any sexual behaviour was determined by the presence or absence of love; where love was mutual there was no sin. Conventional religious opinion was outraged.⁷²

To the extent that “camp” (in its meaning of “elegantly ostentatious” or “affected display”) was a prominent attribute of the homosexual style as it developed in England from the 1890s onwards, it found ample room for expression in the worship and decoration of many Anglo-Catholic churches. Perhaps its most visible manifestation was the attempt, fostered by the Society of SS. Peter and Paul during the 1920s, to refurnish the interiors of English churches in baroque and rococo styles, justified on the ground that this was the living architecture of Catholic Europe. The medieval restorations, so beloved of an earlier generation of High Churchmen, were denigrated as sterile antiquarianism—“British Museum religion.” Under the guidance of ecclesiastical decorators such as Martin Travers, the interiors of a number of Gothic Revival churches were transformed into replicas of churches of Counter-Reformation Austria, Italy, and Spain, with gilded altars and reredoses, baroque candlesticks, tabernacles, and shrines, and ornamental cherubs (Anson, *Fashions in Church Furnishings*, pp. 319-327).

The ornamentation and fittings of these churches were luxuriant, often gaudy, and as such they were profoundly shocking to Low Church bishops and Protestant-minded laity. That was part of the attraction. “Anglo-Catholic baroque” was a theatrical, slightly unreal style which reflected the restless gaiety of the 1920s and the postwar urge to reject established social conventions. High Mass in an Anglican church with baroque interior decor, sung to music by Mozart or Schubert, belonged to the age of the Charleston, Theosophy, the Russian Ballet, and the first dramatic successes of Noel Coward. The same people often sampled them all. One can also sense a covert link between exotic church decoration, liturgical extravagance, and the over-ripe elegance of homosexual “camp.”

IV

What were the reasons for this apparent correlation between male homosexuality and Anglo-Catholic religion? Some homosexuals recognised the

⁷² (Archibald) Kenneth Ingram, *The Modern Attitude to the Sex Problem* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1930), chap. 5; *Sex-Morality Tomorrow* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1940), chap. 5; *Christianity and Sexual Morality—A Modernist View* (London: Union of Modern Free Churchmen, 1944).

existence of an aesthetic attraction, for their sense of the numinous was aroused by the elaborate ceremonial and sensuous symbolism of Catholic worship. “The Church! How wonderful!” exclaims Arthur Wilmot, a homosexual poet in Compton Mackenzie’s *Sinister Street* (set in the 1890s): “The dim Gothic glooms, the sombre hues of stained glass, the incense-wreathed acolytes, the muttering priests, the bedizened banners and altars and images. Ah, elusive and particoloured vision that once was mine!” (Mackenzie, *Sinister Street*, I, 284). And in Bloxam’s story, “The Priest and the Acolyte,” one can recognise the author’s own voice in the priests attempt to explain his “nature”: “The whole aesthetic tendency of my soul was intensely attracted by the wonderful mysteries of Christianity, the artistic beauty of our services. . . . My delight is in the aesthetic beauty of the services, the ecstasy of devotion, the passionate fervour that comes with long fasting and meditation” (Reade, pp. 6-357).

Aesthetic attraction, however, is not a sufficient explanation, simply because many homosexual men were not aesthetes, and many aesthetes were not Anglo-Catholics. The ideology and structure of Anglo-Catholicism in the context of English Christianity must also be considered. In the eyes of their Protestant opponents, Anglo-Catholics were no more than “Anglo-Romanists”—an impression which was reinforced by the small but steady stream of Anglo-Catholic clergy and laypeople who seceded to Rome, “the home of truth.”⁷³ But this verdict is misleading, for the intellectual and social ethos of the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England was very different from that of English Roman Catholicism. Almost all its leaders, clerical and lay, shared a common upper-class background of public school and ancient university. Among its intellectuals the dominant theology from the 1880s until the 1930s was a liberal Catholicism which accepted the legitimacy of biblical criticism, used contemporary philosophical and scientific concepts in the study of theology, and asserted the central importance of the Incarnation—the historical Christ as both fully God and fully man—in its dogmatic system.⁷⁴

“The doctrine of the Incarnation revealed the glory of the Church, but it also revealed the glory that is in man, whose nature has been united with the divine.”⁷⁵ In the theology of the Incarnation, human nature was fallen but not depraved; natural man could be raised to holiness through the sacraments of the church; Christianity should penetrate and transform the entire social order. A belief that the “Incarnation is fulfilled in the growing together of every human activity” led some Anglo-Catholic priests in the direction of Christian Socialism—

⁷³ For example: Dean Henry Wace of Canterbury, quoted in J. C. Wilcox, *Contending for the Faith: John Kensit, Reformer & Martyr* (London: Protestant Truth Society, n.d.), p. 119. A number of former Anglo-Catholics published accounts of their conversion to Roman Catholicism. Some are included in *The Road to Damascus*, ed. John A. O’Brien, 4 vols. (London: W.H. Allen, 1949-55).

⁷⁴ On liberal Catholicism in the Church of England, see Arthur Michael Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple: The Development of Anglican Theology between “Lux Mundi” and the Second World War, 1889-1939* (London: Longmans, 1960); Roy Philip Flindall, “The Development of Anglo-Catholicism from *Lux Mundi* to *Essays Catholic and Critical*” (M. Phil. thesis, University of London, 1972).

⁷⁵ John Gunstone, “Catholics in the Church of England,” in *Catholic Anglicans Today*, ed. John Wilkinson (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1968), p. 188.

the idea of a society based upon the principles of cooperation and brotherhood, as symbolised by the Christian sacraments.⁷⁶ It also encouraged a slightly more accommodating attitude towards homosexuality than was commonly found elsewhere in the Christian church. At a time when hostility to homosexuality was intense, and when the few public statements on the subject by church leaders were full of references to “shameful vice,” “grievous sin,” and “perversion”⁷⁷ it would appear that many Anglo-Catholic priests were inclined to the view that homosexual feelings were not in themselves sinful; they should be disciplined and controlled, and channelled into the service of others. The advice given in a tract entitled *Letter to a Homosexual* (1955) by the vicar of a leading Anglo-Catholic church in London (All Saints, Margaret Street) may be taken as representing a well-established Anglo-Catholic viewpoint, though this was the first time that it had been presented for a popular readership:

You cannot help being homosexual: nor can you help it if your sexual feelings are very strong. That is a matter of natural endowment. . . . So it is much better to reconcile yourself to the fact that you are homosexual in outlook and make the best of it. I would go further: I say that your homosexual bias is to be used for the glory of God.⁷⁸

The reactions of homosexual men to the moral condemnation of the church varied widely. If many who had been brought up in the Church of England, or in a nonconformist denomination, were alienated from institutional religion, others were drawn to Anglo-Catholicism because of the attitude of its priests and the method they employed to deal with sexual problems and moral dilemmas—auricular confession. Unlike the conventional Anglican parson, Anglo-Catholic clergymen fulfilled a sharply defined priestly role and had been trained in their theological colleges to be discreet and unshockable confessors. “In the right sense of the word, they were professionals: they knew their job through and through,” observed a historian of the twentieth-century Church of England (Lloyd, p. 134).⁷⁹ On the subject of sex the teaching of their moral theology textbooks was less detailed and less legalistic than the corresponding Roman Catholic authorities, but no less rigorous. Although homosexuality was not specifically mentioned in Francis Belton’s widely used *Manual for Confessors* (1916), his advice in other areas of sexual behaviour was uncompromising. Priests were advised to forbid close friendships between young men and women before

⁷⁶ Ramsey, p. 1; Jones, pp. 85-94; E. R. Norman, *Church and Society in England, 1770-1970: A Historical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 246-250, 318-323.

⁷⁷ For example: Bishop C. M. Chavasse of Rochester and Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher of Canterbury, quoted in D. J. West, *Homosexuality*, 2d rev. ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 94. See also Selwyn Gummer, *The Chavasse Twins* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1963), pp. 213-215.

⁷⁸ Kenneth N. Ross, *Letter to a Homosexual* (London: S. P. C. K., 1955), p. 5. See also Lindsay Dewar and Cyril E. Hudson, *A Manual of Pastoral Psychology* (London: Philip Allan, 1932), pp. 184-188. For a survey of the views of Anglican theologians on homosexuality, see Coleman, chaps. p.10.

⁷⁹ Anglo-Catholic theological colleges consciously aimed at the formation of disciplined priests—“the presentation of the ministerial ideal and the development of the devotional life.” See, for example, “Ely Theological College,” *The Treasury* (London), I (1903), 353-360.

marriage as dangerous. Even after the modification by the 1930 Lambeth Conference of the Anglican church's traditional opposition to artificial birth control, Belton's view was unchanged: the prevention of conception was never justified.⁸⁰ His viewpoint on contraception was not universally accepted by Anglo-Catholic clergy, for a significant minority defended the legitimacy of birth control at a time when it was by no means fashionable to do so.⁸¹ In other areas of morality Anglo-Catholic teaching was substantially identical to the Roman Catholic position. Homosexual acts were judged to be intrinsically sinful, though the degree of moral guilt varied according to the circumstances of each case. For "true homosexuals," declared an influential guide for Anglican confessors, the "only treatment lies in the strengthening of the will to resist temptation."⁸² Nevertheless orthodox doctrine was often tempered with pastoral sympathy. Especially before the 1950s, when homosexuality was a taboo subject, many Anglo-Catholic priests were able, under the seal of the confessional, to discuss the personal problems associated with it without show of embarrassment or open hostility, and without informing the police.

There was also the inherent attraction of identifiable and continuous groupings of homosexuals. Many homosexual men, unmarried and therefore outside the regular family structure, had a strong need for companionship with others like themselves. Before the liberalisation of the late 1960s, when public meeting places for homosexual men outside London were virtually nonexistent, and when pubs and clubs in London were difficult to find and regularly harassed by the police, Anglo-Catholicism provided a visible network of supportive and protective institutions—not only in England, but also scattered through the Anglican church in the cities of the United States, Canada, South Africa, and Australia. Within these Anglo-Catholic congregations, homosexual men, compelled by social hostility to remain invisible and avoid social disgrace, could make contact with each other and establish discreet friendships across class barriers. Looking back at London's homosexual subculture of the 1930s, a recent writer in the weekly *Gay News* recalled that many of his own youthful contemporaries had "attended fashionable churches where contacts were made with rather rich gays. Some were left substantial legacies."⁸³

⁸⁰ Francis George Belton, *A Manual for Confessors: Being a Guide to the Administration of the Sacrament of Penance for the Use of Priests of the English Church*, rev. ed. (London: A. R. Mowbray and Co., 1931), pp. 179-186, 204-205.

⁸¹ One of the most prominent of these priests was Father Stephen Langton of St. Mary's, *Graham Street* (now Bourne Street), Pimlico, in *Graham Street Quarterly*, (Autumn 1972). In the 1930s, however, most Anglo-Catholic leaders regarded the practice of artificial birth control as inherently unnatural and immoral. For the evolution of official Anglican thinking on contraception, see Norman, *Church and Society*, pp. 270, 347-348, 412-414.

⁸² [Reginald Somerset Ward], *A Guide for Spiritual Directors, by the Author of "The Way"* (London: A. R. Mowbray and Co., 1957), p. 33. See also Kenneth Ross, *Hearing Confessions* (London: S.P.C.K., 1974), pp. 85-86.

⁸³ Gifford Skinner, "Cocktails in the Bath," *Gay News*, 135 (26 January 1978), 22. Another account of London's homosexual subculture of the 1920s and 1930s is by J. R. Ackerley, *My Father and Myself* (London: Bodley Head, 1968), chap. 12.

At the heart of the correlation between Anglo-Catholicism and homosexuality was an affinity in outlook between a sexual minority and a minority religious movement within the established church. Both were at variance with entrenched beliefs and both outraged the older generation. In middle- and upper-class circles in the interwar years, an involvement in the homosexual subculture could be a means of demonstrating rebellion, for since the scandals of the 1890s heterosexuality had been “the key test of respectability”: “What better way therefore to declare one’s contempt for the official mores of society than to take a whirl among homosexuals?”⁸⁴

Similarly, until the second world war, Anglo-Catholics were a consciously defined party within the Church of England—a “Church-within-the-Church”—in perpetual conflict with the dominant norms of the establishment. In many dioceses Anglo-Catholic congregations were ostracised by their bishops and isolated from neighbouring parishes because of doctrinal and liturgical disobedience. In return they viewed the “official diocese ... with indifference, suspicion, or even hostility” (Gunstone, p. 189). With the adoption of Roman Catholic baroque furnishings and ceremonial, they “tended to become a ‘people apart’ and their churches almost unrecognisable as Anglican” (Stephenson, *Walsingham Way*, p. 88). At the same time, however, many fashionable Anglo-Catholic churches offered all the trappings of outward respectability, as well as the security and stability of ancient rituals and traditions. Despite their marginal position, Anglo-Catholics chose to remain within the established church and liked to regard their religion as “much smarter” than its rival, Roman Catholicism.⁸⁵ Anglo-Catholicism was thus both elitist and nonconformist, combining a sense of superiority with a rebellion against existing authority. As such it provided an environment in which homosexual men could express in a socially acceptable way their dissent from heterosexual orthodoxy and from the Protestant values of those who wielded repressive power in church and state.

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⁸⁴ Noel Annan, “‘Our Age’: Reflections on Three Generations in England,” *Daedalus*, 107 (Fall 1976), 91.

⁸⁵ See, for example, Rose Macaulay, *Letters to a Friend, 1950-1952*, ed. Constance Babington Smith (London: Collins, 1961), p. 144.