

NATHANIEL JAMES MERRIMAN, ARCHDEACON AND BISHOP 1849 - 1882:

A STUDY IN CHURCH LIFE AND GOVERNMENT

A Thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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The writer expresses her gratitude to the Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust for a Scholarship for 1820 Settler and Eastern Cape History. The financial assistance of the Human Sciences Research Council is also acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions reached are those of the author and are entirely independent of both these organisations.

RHODES UNIVERSITY

GRAHAMSTOWN

1982

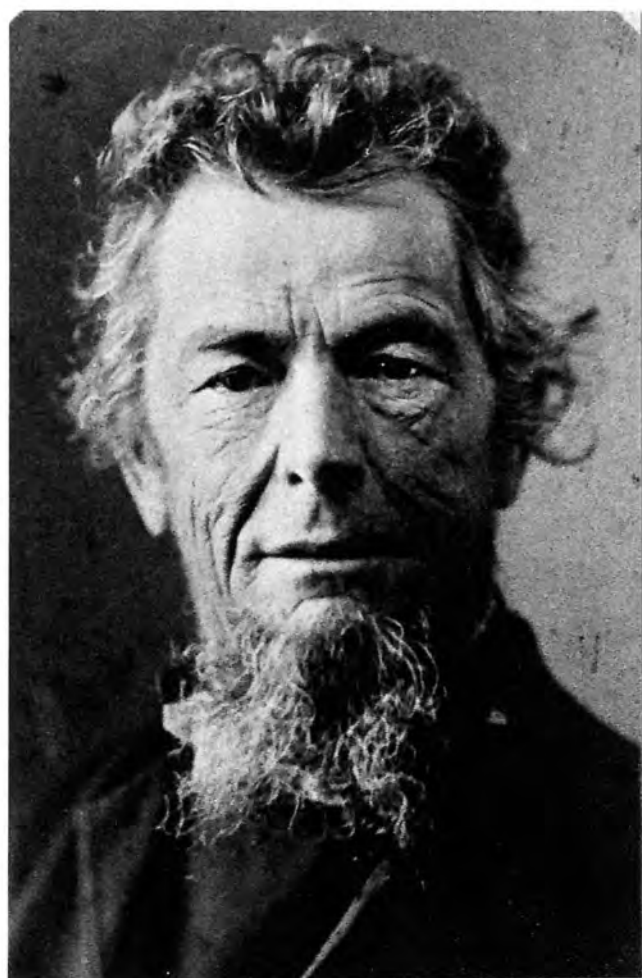


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PREFACE

I am grateful to the many people who, by the help they have given me, have made the completion of this research and the writing of this thesis such a worthwhile experience.

I owe much to the advice and generous assistance of all the staff at the manuscript repositories I have visited, but would like especially to thank Miss Margaret Cartwright of the South African Library; Mrs Anna Cunningham and Mrs Joan Knoesen of The Library, University of the Witwatersrand; and Mrs Barbara McGahey, who allowed me access to the Grahamstown Diocesan Archives before these were deposited in the Cory Library for Historical Research. The staff of the Cory Library, Mr Michael Berning, Mrs Sandra Fold and Mr Zweliyanyikima Vena not only provided me with exhaustive assistance, but have been friends in need.

Dr Kenneth Matier, of the Classics Department at Rhodes, identified, translated and explained classical references, Mr Oakley West of the Geography Department drew the map, and Mr Gerry Walters of the Rhodes Library took the photographs opposite page 198. I am grateful to Mr David Gess, great-great-grandson of Bishop Merriman, for providing me with family photographs of his great-great-grandfather, and for reproducing the photograph which forms the frontispiece to this volume.

I am greatly indebted to the Right Reverend Michael Nuttall, Bishop of Natal, who graciously found time to talk about the early history of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, showed me the sources he had used for his own research and allowed me to read the early chapters of his biography of Robert Gray.

My supervisors, Professor Calvin Cook and Professor Rodney Davenport, seem to have had nil desperandum, (to quote Bishop Merriman's favourite, Horace), as their motto, and for their wisdom, criticism, advice and encouragement, I am very grateful.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE FOOTNOTES:

AA: The Anglo-African

AM: Agnes Merriman

Cape Journals: D.H. Varley and H.M. Matthew, The Cape Journals of Archdeacon N.J. Merriman 1848 - 1855

CC: The Church Chronicle

CNG: C.N. Gray, Life of Robert Gray

CO: Archives of the Colonial Secretary's Office of the Cape of Good Hope

CPP: Cape Parliamentary Papers

C.P.S.A.: Church of the Province of South[ern] Africa

CVMB: St George's Cathedral Vestry Minute Book

D.S.A.B.: Dictionary of South African Biography

EH: Ernest Hawkins

ES: The Eastern Star

FHW: Frederick Henry Williams

GDA: Grahamstown Diocesan Archives, A-series

GPM: Grocott's Penny Mail

GTJ: The Grahamstown Journal , which after March 1864 became simply the Journal

HC: Henry Cotterill

Historical Records: C. Lewis and G.E. Edwards, Historical Records of the Church of the Province of South Africa

JM: Julia Merriman

JXM: John X. Merriman

LV: Library Volume in the Grahamstown Diocesan Archives

M. Nuttall, unpubl. ts.: Draft chapters for a biography of Robert Gray

- MCMB: Mission Conference Minute Book
- MF: The Mission Field
- MP: J.X. Merriman Papers in the South African Library.
- Net: The Net
- NJM: Nathaniel James Merriman
- ODCC: Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church
- OHSA: Oxford History of South Africa
- PBH: P.B. Hinchliff, The Anglican Church in South Africa
- PBH/BD: P.B. Hinchliff, The history of the Anglican church in South Africa with special reference to the development of constitution and organisation. Oxford, B.D.
- RG: Robert Gray
- SAL: South African Library
- S.P.G.: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. (Amalgamated with the Universities' Mission to Central Africa in 1965 to form the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel).
- SPG mic.: U.S.P.G. African Archives, on microfilm
- UWL: The Library, the University of the Witwatersrand
- WTB: William Thomas Bullock
- WWJ: William West Jones

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

1. Because the history of South Africa is incomprehensible without an understanding of the classification into race which has determined its course, and because both light and dark complexioned natives of South Africa have begun to talk of themselves as Africans, I have used the term, "whites", in referring to descendants of settlers from Europe, and the term, "blacks", in referring to dark-skinned, part-negro people, except in those cases where a more specific description such as Mfengu, Ngqika etc. is relevant or available. The word "kaffir", now as then a term of abuse, has been retained only in quotations from contemporary documents.
2. The first Provincial Synod of the Church of the Province of South Africa was held in 1870, forty years before the formation of the Union of South Africa. The two entities have never been coterminous, and at the 1982 Provincial Synod it was resolved to change the name of the province to the Church of the Province of Southern Africa as a more accurate description of the extent of the church. Throughout this thesis, which was typed before the resolution was passed, I have, with a few exceptions, referred to the Church of the Province of South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

The lot is fallen to me in a fair ground :
yea, I have a goodly heritage.

Psalm 16.7

Nathaniel James Merriman was born on 4 April 1809, in Marlborough, sixth child and third son of Thomas Merriman and his wife, Mary.¹

It has been suggested that their patronymic is a corruption of Marmion, and that the Merrimans were descended from Robert de Marmion, lord of Fontenoy in Normandy, who went to England with the Conqueror. Less patrician, but more attractive, is the suggestion that the name is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word 'myrige' meaning cheerful, and familiar in the phrase 'merry men', a band of followers delighting in the service of their chief.² Nathaniel James Merriman entered fully into the inheritance of his name, displaying the robust, vigorous and cheerful nature it suggested, and adding to it his own special quality of dedication.

The association of the Merriman family with the Wiltshire town where the future bishop was born can be traced to John Merriman of Newbury (1618-1677), a captain of horse in the army of Parliament, who earned Stuart thanks for his courtesy to Charles I, when the king was in custody at Carisbrooke, and whose son Nathaniel, choosing a more mundane career, was apprenticed in January 1678 to Nathaniel Bayley, a grocer of Marlborough.

By 1809 the Merrimans had risen in the world. They were no

¹For a history of the Merriman family, see G.F.M. Merriman, Pedigree of the Family of Merriman. Thomas (1771-1841) and Mary had fourteen children, nine sons and five daughters. Thomas Baverstock 1802-1867; Mary 1803-1855; William Clark 1805-1877; Elizabeth 1806-1887; Hannah 1807-1887; Nathaniel James 1809-1882; John 1810-1834; Samuel Benjamin 1812-1888; Charles Antony 1814-1870; Katherine Anne 1816-1831; Frederick Ward 1817-1865; Martha Jane 1819-1906; Henry Gordon 1822; Henry Gordon 1823-1887.

²Ibid., p.1.

longer grocers, drapers or even prosperous brewers as their fathers had been. Thomas Merriman was an attorney-at-law and banker. He had received his education at the local grammar school, but was substantial enough to send his sons to public schools, the two eldest to Harrow, and the others to Winchester, while Nathaniel and his youngest brother went on to Oxford as a prelude to, and training for ordination.³ He was moreover willing to assist his sons financially where necessary in their chosen vocation. If it is characteristic of his generosity and concern for the security of his family, together with the stirrings of family pride, that Thomas Merriman offered to buy Nathaniel James a living, the refusal of that offer is equally characteristic of his high-principled and independent son.⁴ While bestowing on his family some degree of public eminence, education and security, Thomas Merriman set an example of professional integrity, and as town clerk of Marlborough for twenty years, and subsequently as alderman and mayor of the town,⁵ an example of public service which was not lost on at least one of his fourteen children.

When he could afford the time, Thomas Merriman was an agreeable companion, but he and his wife allowed their sons freedom to spend their time as they wished. The boys on their own undertook walks, or fishing expeditions in the Kennet, or rode after the hunt on their ponies : thus was born in Nathaniel James the love of open spaces and outdoor exercise which stood him in good stead in his south African years. It was not an undisciplined existence : Mrs Merriman required prompt appearance at mealtimes, with clean hands and combed hair. She taught her sons to read before surrendering them to the local grammar school and insisted on regular church attendance. At her knee they learnt and recited the catechism : to her, young Nat confessed his early wish for ordination and remained always grateful for her instruction.⁶ In south Africa, when accused of ecclesiastical bigotry, he, least bigoted of men, answered readily:

³ Ibid., pp.18-23, 40-42, 55-67.

⁴ CC., September 1882, p.260.

⁵ G.F.M. Merriman, op.cit., pp.40-42.

⁶ CC., September 1882, p.258.

I thank God I am a bigot...I owe it to one of the best of mothers, who taught me from a little child to love my Church, its doctrines and its worship, and to believe that nothing else on earth could be to me instead of them. ⁷

Her teaching had fallen on fertile ground.

In 1823 Nathaniel went to Winchester.⁸ The nineteenth century public school aimed to instil in its sons habits of godliness as taught by the established church, of good learning by means of a classical education, and of manliness. This cardinal Victorian virtue is not easily defined. More than mere hearty enjoyment of physical pursuits, it encompassed qualities of openness, honesty, self-control, modesty and self-forgetfulness. It was no stoic, but a specifically Christian virtue.⁹ Its practice meant, in the words of E.W. Benson, "that the brotherhood of man may be to you no shadow."¹⁰ If the training of Winchester was intended to achieve this end, the life of Nathaniel James Merriman suggests that it was conspicuously successful. Like Thomas Arnold before him, Merriman thrived on the classical education he received at Winchester, and it left its mark on him, both by the inner discipline it inculcated, and more apparently, in generous classical quotation in his writings. Equally significant was his attendance at the regular round of services in the school chapel, the boys wearing surplices as they had done for three hundred and fifty years.¹¹

The regime of public schools was harsh before the reforms of Arnold at Rugby spread to other schools. The great headmaster himself wrote:

Many a man who went from Winchester to service in the Peninsula in the course of the last war must have

⁷H. Badnall, A Sermon Preached at St. George's Cathedral, Cape Town, on Sunday Evening, the 20th August 1882, p.3, quoting Merriman.

⁸The College was founded in 1382 by William of Wykeham.

⁹D. Newsome, Godliness and Good Learning, pp.195-197. The book examines the ideal and practice of godliness, manliness and good learning in Victorian public schools.

¹⁰Ibid., p.198.

¹¹Ibid., p.183.

found his school experience and habits no bad preparation for the activity and hardships of a campaign. ¹²

The discipline was not disagreeable to young Nathaniel, and his work in south Africa gave him reason to be grateful for his early rigorous training. The bishop's son recorded after his death in 1882:

Merriman was a true Wykehamist and loved to recall the Spartan simplicity of school life sixty years ago, as compared with the namby-pamby doings of modern days. ¹³

Victorian writers found the opportunity to point a moral irresistible, and for this reason, memoirs of Merriman without exception record the following anecdote from his life at Winchester:

He...obtained the gold medal for an essay on the subject, "Simplicity is the Essential of True Greatness", a maxim he ever bore in mind and acted upon. It may be mentioned here as an illustration of how little he ever estimated the value of his own work, or expected any reward for it, that when the motto of the successful essayist was pronounced, no recognition followed - it was only after a second announcement and a reminder from a neighbour, that Merriman woke up to the fact that he was the victor. ¹⁴

It is similarly recorded of George Augustus Selwyn, the future Bishop of New Zealand and of Lichfield, that he showed early promise at Eton by eradicating the use of profane language among boys in his section of the school. ¹⁵ The self-effacing bishops would have blushed at such examples, which suggest more about the age, than about their subjects.

Merriman was happy at school, as he had been at home. ¹⁶ His

¹² Ibid., p.207.

¹³ CC., September 1882, p.258.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ H.W. Tucker, Memoir of the Life and Episcopate of George Augustus Selwyn D.D. Bishop of New Zealand 1841-1869, Bishop of Lichfield 1867-1878. vol. I, p.8.

¹⁶ Sidney Smith, who went up to New College from Winchester in 1789 remembered his school life as one of "kicking, fagging, hardship, vice, neglect." C.E. Mallet, A History of the University of Oxford, vol. III, p.203. W.E. Gladstone, Merriman's contemporary at Oxford, who was at Eton when it was ruled by Dr Keate and by the fear and use of the birch, wrote in 1841: "My own strong conviction

memories of Winchester at the end of his life were not merely of discipline and austerity, but of youthful energy and laughter.¹⁷

Particularly he remembered the slang, the private language of a boys' world : "as we used to say Wykehamically",¹⁸ he would recall. A momentous half-century separated the entrance into Winchester of Nathaniel James Merriman and Martin White Benson, but a letter from the latter to his mother evokes some of the verve of the schoolboy life they shared:

I have been learning no end of slang. Guess what this means - 'You brockster, to splice hollises at a man's duck by Salve diva potens'. Alias 'You bully, to throw stones at a man's face by Salve diva potens corner'.... oh horror a man has sat down on my cathedral, alias topper...'Notion' by the bye is a remarkable word. To 'sport notions' is to say anything. To 'have a notion' is to pride oneself on anything especially.¹⁹

Merriman fulfilled the hopes of his parents and the expectations of his masters : in his final year at Winchester he was Senior Prefect, and in 1828 the young man, who already had a profound awareness of his solemn vocation, went as Hulme Exhibitioner to Brasenose College, Oxford.²⁰

Like many British institutions in the early nineteenth century, the established church was in need of reform.²¹ As a religious

...is that to send a bad or weak boy to a Public School is madness : but that every boy with the true Principle of love to his Redeemer and who has any firmness or tone of character is better there than anywhere else." S.G. Checkland, The Gladstones, p.216.

¹⁷CC., September 1882, p.258.

¹⁸MP 26-77, NJM to JXM, 4 Jul. 1877.

¹⁹D. Newsome, Godliness and Good Learning, p.176. Martin Benson, son of E.W. Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury 1883-1896, was born in 1860, entered Winchester in 1874 and died in 1878. D. Newsome describes his life at the school in ibid., ch.3.

²⁰CC., September 1882, p.258.

²¹Owen Chadwick's two volume study, The Victorian Church, covers the history of the Church of England and Dissent in England in the nineteenth century, in the light of their relationship with the state, their ability to cope with rapid social and economic change, and their

corporation where the Church of England enjoyed a monopoly and as a training ground for leaders of both church and state, Oxford shared this need for reform. The university, however, was also to be one of the most important sources of ecclesiastical reorganization and spiritual revitalization for the Church of England.

The phrase, 'as by law established', describes the relationship of the Church of England with the state,²² but behind the phrase lies no single definition or enactment, but coincidence and chance, custom and usage, human emotions, state action, accidents and temporary expedients. Moreover, the relationship has not remained static : a continually redefined relationship is characteristic of the establishment. The relationship between church and state functions on two levels. Whatever the theoretical claims of the church to absolute authority, independence, and the right to be involved in all aspects of life, the fact remains that the church has to exercise authority in a world where secular powers are jealous of their own jurisdiction and anxious to increase it. Of the various theories of the relationship between church and state, that of the two arms exercising authority over two separate spheres can never be acceptable unless the church turns her back on her Lord's commission to be involved in every aspect of life in the world. Where Christians claim membership of both church and state, and where they form a large part of the population, the state has an obvious interest in trying to control the church and to prevent conflicting loyalties. Seldom has the church possessed the power to exercise the authority she claims, and the pattern of history has therefore been an assertion of rival claims by secular and ecclesiastical authorities, together with the achievement of a working relationship, usually at the expense of the church.

response to the intellectual changes of the age. Among other works on the period are D.Bowen, The Idea of the Victorian Church; S.C. Carpenter, Church and People 1789-1889; J.R.H. Moorman, A History of the Church in England; E.R. Norman, Church and Society in England 1770-1970; A. Symondson, The Victorian Crisis of Faith.

²²This discussion of the changing position of the established church owes much to P.B. Hinchliff, The One-Sided Reciprocity. Also illuminating are O.J. Brose, Church and Parliament : The Reshaping of the Church of England 1828-1860, and Lewis Dibdin, Establishment in England.

Behind the establishment of the Church of England lay the assumption that all loyal subjects of the crown were members of the national church, and the Erastian doctrine that while the authority of the church is subordinate to that of the state, the state exercises this authority under God for the good of the church, to protect its teaching and to guard against clerical tyranny. On both these levels, by the nineteenth century, theory and practice had parted company to an extent which could not be ignored.

Although Magna Carta guaranteed the freedom of the English church to elect bishops without interference from the crown and to run its own courts, bishops were too important, first as feudatories and then as potential ministers, for the monarch to allow them to be tools of the papacy or the English clergy, so that in practice, while Rome appointed and cathedral chapters elected, nomination lay with the crown. In 1532 the royal supremacy became explicit when the English clergy agreed that Convocation, the clerical legislative assembly of the Church of England, would only meet by royal command, and undertook to make no new canons without royal assent. In 1534 this submission was embodied in an Act of Parliament. After the reformation, secular courts gradually took over cases which had formerly fallen under the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical tribunals.²³ Although deprived of autonomy, the Church of England enjoyed certain exclusive privileges. Only members of the established church were admitted to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. There was no secular registration of births : the role was fulfilled by the baptismal registers of the Church of England. Similarly, marriages were only legal if conducted by an Anglican clergyman, and as churchyards were controlled by the established church, burials were conducted according to the Prayer Book rite, or in silence. All inhabitants of a parish, whether Anglican or not, owed a tithe to the incumbent, and were subject to the church rate, the hated 'steeple tax', voted by the annual Easter vestry for the maintenance and repair of the parish church.²⁴ These were largely temporal gains : the extent of the church's loss of spiritual authority is made clear by the fact that the Book of Common

²³P.B. Hinchliff, The One-Sided Reciprocity, ch.1.

²⁴O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church, vol.I, pp.80-81.

Prayer, issued as a schedule to an Act of Parliament, was imposed by a secular law which made the use of any other form of service an offence.²⁵ Bishops were appointed by the crown and could only be consecrated under royal mandate. The fact that on the death of Henry VIII the bishops were required to resign and be reappointed indicates that state nomination was more highly regarded than apostolic succession.²⁶ Although establishment meant that the state could enforce the decisions of ecclesiastical courts, this was a mixed blessing, as the right of appeal lay from the ecclesiastical to civil courts, and a decision of the former could be overruled by a purely secular body. Moreover, the Thirty-Nine Articles, the basis of the reformation settlement, to which all clergy were required to subscribe, spelt out the subordination of the Church of England to King and Parliament.²⁷ The Elizabethan ideal of toleration through comprehension never materialised, and as the idea that dissent in religion was incompatible with loyalty to the state prevailed, civil disabilities were imposed on non-Anglicans. At first, only Roman Catholics and Jews were so restricted, but the Clarendon Code, which excluded Dissenters from Parliament, from offices under the crown and from municipal corporations and which imposed restrictions on dissenting schools and places of worship, extended this practice to Protestant Nonconformists.²⁸ While all Members of Parliament were at least nominally also members of the established church, it could

²⁵ P.B. Hinchliff, The One-Sided Reciprocity, p.71.

²⁶ Ibid., p.68.

²⁷ For example, Article XXI (Of the Authority of General Councils) states that 'General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes...', while Article XXXVI (Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers) lays down that 'The Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, and Ordering of Priests and Deacons, lately set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth, and confirmed at the same time by the authority of Parliament, doth contain all things necessary...' Article XXXVII makes it clear that 'The King's Majesty hath the chief power in this realm of England, and other his Dominions, unto whom the chief Government of all Estates of this Realm, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Civil, in all causes doth appertain, and is not, nor ought to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.'

²⁸ G.R. Cragg, The Church and the Age of Reason 1648-1789, ch.4; P.B. Hinchliff, The One-Sided Reciprocity, pp.128f.

be claimed that King, Lords and Commons constituted the lay voice of the Church of England, and this in turn provided justification for parliamentary legislation for the church, especially as the bishops sat in the House of Lords, although Anglican clergy were debarred from the Commons.²⁹

Convocation, though practically powerless, continued to meet and debate until 1717. In that year, to prevent condemnation of the Whig Bishop Hoadly's latitudinarian view that there was no basis in the gospels for a visible church authority, Convocation was prorogued by royal writ.³⁰ For more than a century after this its meetings were purely formal, and initiatives for church reform from this direction were stifled. In 1733 episcopal votes in the House of Lords saved Walpole from defeat, thus revealing and encouraging the policy of appointing bishops for their political usefulness rather than their pastoral zeal.³¹ Nor were the bishops inclined to quarrel with the role in which the government cast them, or with the view of the church it implied. The keynote of the age was moderation rather than self-denial, and worldly success was regarded as a mark of divine favour. A man like Benjamin Hoadly (1676-1761) made good use of the opportunities his position offered, and his career, though an extreme example, illustrates characteristics of the Church of England in the age of reason.³² During the years 1716 to 1721 when Hoadly was Bishop of Bangor, he never visited his see. For his political services he was translated to Hereford in 1721, Salisbury in 1723 and Winchester in 1734, in each case an elevation in prestige and prosperity. The value of bishoprics varied enormously : Winchester was worth £5000 a year, ten times the income of the see of Oxford. Poorer bishops held additional ecclesiastical benefices to supplement their income, but the practice was not confined to bishops or other needy clergy. Nor was the crown the only source of abuse of patronage.

²⁹An Act of Parliament to this effect was passed in 1801, with the specific aim of preventing the radical Rev. Horne Tooke from taking his seat for Old Sarum. Dictionary of National Biography, vol.LVII, p.45.

³⁰ODCC, pp. 126, 342, 653.

³¹G.R. Cragg, op.cit., p.120.

³²Ibid., ch.9.

Bishops, large corporations and lay patrons had livings in their gift, and worldly ambition could silence opposition to injustice or corruption. Jane Austen's Mr Collins, whose chief endeavour was "to demean [himself] with grateful respect"³³ to Lady Catherine de Bourgh, is an example of the sycophancy and low level of spiritual life encouraged by lay patronage, especially where bishops ordained without examining candidates, and instituted to benefices as a matter of course without investigating the clergyman's fitness for a cure of souls. The Church of England teetered on the brink of simony : advowsons, or the right to nominate to a living, could be purchased, although not while the living was vacant. Pluralism and nepotism were endemic. John Hoadly, son of the bishop, held six benefices simultaneously.³⁴ Pluralism implied non-residence, and by 1827, out of a total of 10 533 livings only 4 413 had a resident incumbent.³⁵ Church of England parsons regarded themselves as gentlemen first and priests second, and their association with the squire and work as justices of the peace identified them with the governing class. As collectors and beneficiaries of the tithe, they were resented. Far from uniting the nation, the established church reflected the division between government and governed, and where its hierarchy identified with the former on non-ecclesiastical issues, not surprisingly it attracted the opposition of the latter. Much of the parochial work was done by curates who were paid a pittance and who were often ill-qualified and disinclined to raise standards of spiritual life and parochial care.

But the Church of England was more than a product of the reformation and the age of reason. The spirit of the Caroline divines and the Nonjurors³⁶ did not entirely die, and the church produced men

³³ Jane Austen, Pride and Prejudice, ch.13.

³⁴ G.R. Cragg, op.cit., p.125.

³⁵ O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church, vol.I, p.34.

³⁶ ODCC, p. 979. The Nonjurors were a group of nine bishops and about four hundred clergy who refused to repeat the oaths of allegiance and supremacy which they had taken to James II, to William and Mary. As the bishops were deprived of office by Act of Parliament and not by canonical sentence, the nonjuring clergy continued to acknowledge their authority. The Nonjurors were absorbed into the

of deep devotion and with a strong sense of duty and responsibility. Parson Woodforde was a faithful priest and a punctilious dispenser of charity. The Wesleys were nurtured in a Church of England parsonage, and at the end of the eighteenth century there was a group of sincere and pious Evangelicals including William Wilberforce within the established church. A man like Henry Martyn wore out his brilliance in mission work rather than in a search for preferment, and Richard Watson, of versatile and independent mind, who was appointed Bishop of Llandaff on the strength of his support for the government in the war with the American colonies, later proposed redistribution of church revenue, which kept him at Llandaff with £550 a year for life.³⁷ In many families such as the Merrimans, Christian duty, morality and worship were carried out respectfully and devoutly.

The parochial structure of the Church of England had evolved to meet the needs of a rural society, and the church, encumbered by the establishment, had not adapted to the demands of growing towns and an industrial society. Parochial division required legislation from a Parliament reluctant to interfere with property rights. Church buildings for urban areas, and stipends of clergy to serve them, required redistribution of the income from redundant medieval ecclesiastical offices, but vested interests stood in the way of spiritual and social needs.

The Church of England had not only surrendered its government to Parliament : it was in danger of losing its awareness of itself as a divine institution, with a source of life and authority independent of secular government. The church was in need of reform, but where was reform to come from? Convocation was no longer effective, and the bishops were content to be officers of state. The answer came from two unexpected and opposing directions. In 1828, the year in which Merriman entered Oxford, Parliament provoked the established church into seeking a new definition of itself and its relationship

established church in the late eighteenth century. Although their watchwords were the divine right of kings and passive obedience, their high conception of the church as a spiritual society links them with the Caroline Divines and with the Tractarians.

³⁷G.R. Cragg, op.cit., p.122.

with the state when it repealed the Test and Corporation Acts, and followed this in 1829 with repeal of the laws which imposed civil disabilities on Roman Catholics.³⁸ Members of the Church of England no longer had a monopoly in Parliament, which could therefore no longer be considered a lay assembly of the established church, yet which retained the right to legislate for that church. Still the Church of England might have slumbered on, but for a small group of clergymen at Oxford. In 1828, one of them, John Henry Newman,³⁹ was appointed vicar of the university church of St Mary, Oxford.

Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, most bishops of the Church of England regarded the degrees of Oxford and Cambridge as adequate preparation for ordination.⁴⁰ Gladstone, whose years at Oxford coincided with Merriman's, seems to have thought otherwise. "The state of religion at Oxford," he wrote in 1829, "is the most painful spectacle which ever fell to my lot to behold."⁴¹ Nineteenth century Oxford was still a predominantly clerical society⁴² : until 1871 administration and teaching at the university was controlled by the established church, and a high percentage of fellows were in orders. The foundation of diocesan theological colleges was stepped up after the 1871 Act of Parliament which ended this Anglican monopoly.⁴³ Until 1854, undergraduates were required to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles,⁴⁴ a statute which had excluded Nonconformists, Jews and Roman Catholics from Oxford. Significantly, in 1854, Samuel Wilberforce,⁴⁵

³⁸O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church, vol.I, pp.7-24; P.B. Hinchliff, The One-Sided Reciprocity, ch.5.

³⁹M. Trevor, Newman, the pillar of the cloud, and Newman, light in winter, is a modern two volume biography.

⁴⁰O. Chadwick, The Founding of Cuddesdon, p.1.

⁴¹S.G. Checkland, op.cit., p.241.

⁴²On Oxford at this period, see C.E. Mallet, A History of the University of Oxford, vol.III, and V.H.H. Green, A History of Oxford University.

⁴³O. Chadwick, The Founding of Cuddesdon, p.126.

⁴⁴Ibid., p.1.

⁴⁵S. Meacham, Lord Bishop, and D. Newsome, The Parting of Friends, both contain discussions of Wilberforce's churchmanship and his contribution to the Church of England.

Bishop of Oxford, founded Cuddesdon,⁴⁶ a theological college for Anglican graduates. In 1841, half the students at Oxford intended to seek ordination,⁴⁷ and eighty-six per cent of Anglican ordinands were graduates of Oxford and Cambridge,⁴⁸ figures which fell as the century advanced. Brasenose, which until 1886 could boast its own brewery, and which won pre-eminence in games and rowing, could also record that a third of its students in the Victorian age became clergy of the established church.⁴⁹

A mathematical and classical education was the accepted training for Anglican clergy, an expression of confidence in the inherently Christian and Anglican character of the university, but it was also the education of a gentleman. In 1800 a new honours school, literae humaniores, was started, comprising Latin, Greek, philosophy, mathematics and divinity,⁵⁰ but it was only in 1854 at Cambridge and 1868 at Oxford, that a theology degree was introduced,⁵¹ as a result of growing secularisation of the universities and the intellectual challenges facing the church. Undergraduates were expected to attend services in their college chapel, so that whatever its imperfections, the life of the university was almost ostentatiously dominated by the Church of England and the training provided by a theological college was theoretically superfluous.

Nevertheless, Gladstone's criticism was not without foundation; Oxford shared the malaise of the Church of England as a whole. Many fellows were non-resident, examinations were carelessly conducted, academic standards were often low, and the mechanism for reform was cumbersome,⁵² while many sources, not least the cartoons of Thomas

⁴⁶O. Chadwick, The Founding of Cuddesdon, p.1.

⁴⁷Ibid., p.2.

⁴⁸M.A. Crowther, Church Embattled, p.221.

⁴⁹C.E. Mallet, op.cit., vol.III, pp.407-408.

⁵⁰D. Balsdon, Oxford Now and Then, p.19.

⁵¹O. Chadwick, The Founding of Cuddesdon, p.7.

⁵²V.H.H. Green, op.cit., pp.132-135.

Rowlandson, testify to the licence of university life. There were colleges, notably Christ Church and Oriel, which, under reforming heads, became homes of real scholarship and good teaching, and if the university provided no discipline for the idle, it provided opportunity for the conscientious. Some tutors required hard work and high standards and a great deal more theological knowledge than was expected for examinations.⁵³ The head of "B.N.C.", Dr Gilbert, was sympathetic to young men of Merriman's ideals,⁵⁴ and while Nathaniel was at the university, qualities he already possessed of discipline, self-denial and humility were strengthened. With other earnest young men, he studied the Greek New Testament, the subjects of the books of the Old and New Testaments, the Thirty-Nine Articles and their scriptural proofs, as well as the works of Hooker, Butler, and Paley. It is impossible to imagine the tall and energetic Merriman eschewing all sport, but as his awareness that Oxford was the preparation for his priestly vocation increased, competitive games claimed his attention less and the habit of walking, the usual exercise of a scholar and his hallmark in south Africa, grew.

Newman's crusade against the religious attitudes of his day must have struck a chord in Merriman's heart:

Everything is bright and cheerful. Religion is pleasant and easy; benevolence is the chief virtue; intolerance, bigotry, excess of zeal, are the first of sins. Austerity is an absurdity; - even firmness is looked on with an unfriendly suspicious eye.⁵⁵

He urged the young men who came to hear him preach at St Mary's to practise self-denial, and to attend services frequently:

Be you content with nothing short of perfection, exert yourselves day by day to grow in knowledge and grace.⁵⁶

To Merriman it was a confirmation of his own chosen path. He never fell under Newman's spell : his character was already formed, and

⁵³ M.A. Crowther, op.cit., ch.9, especially p.226.

⁵⁴ C.E. Mallet, op.cit., vol.III, p.253.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.242.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.241.

too independent to make him one of the undergraduates who imitated the mannerisms of the future cardinal. Newman's high seriousness he shared, but he possessed a sense of humour, want of which was a Tractarian weakness. Perhaps, like Gladstone, who was seen to fall asleep during one of Newman's Sunday sermons, Merriman too found them not entirely free from "objectionable matter".⁵⁷ He would have understood Newman's exhortation to his fellow presbyters in the first of the Tracts for the Times, published after Merriman left Oxford:

Exalt our Holy Fathers the Bishops, as the representatives of the Apostles, and the Angels of the Churches; and magnify your offices, as being ordained by them to take part in their Ministry. ⁵⁸

Although Merriman would have chosen to express it less stridently, his mother's teaching and his own reading and learning had led him to the same conclusion. His south African experience was to confirm it. But whereas this for Newman was a milestone on his journey to Rome, to Merriman it was an ever-fixed mark. His vocation was to the ordained ministry of the Anglican church, "a Priest of the Church of Christ."⁵⁹ The future bishop clearly saw no fault in Oxford as a preparation for ordination, for if his eldest son had had a vocation to the priesthood, Merriman intended to provide for him a repetition of his own public school and university training.⁶⁰

In 1832, the year in which Gladstone secured his spectacular double first at Oxford, Merriman graduated with second class honours in literae humaniores, and after travel on the continent and in Scotland, he was ordained priest on 31 January 1833⁶¹ by the evangelical John Bird Sumner, Bishop of Chester.

As Merriman began his work as a country curate, the Church of England was on the brink of much-needed reform, which had two sources. One was Parliament, and the other was the Oxford he had just left.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.226.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.249.

⁵⁹ H. Badnall, op.cit., p.26.

⁶⁰ MP 2-55, NJM to JXM, 13 Jul. 1855.

⁶¹ CC., September 1882, p.259.

In 1831 the first Reform Bill had been lost in the House of Lords, twenty-one of the majority of forty-one against the bill being episcopal votes. This was the signal for a violent popular attack on the established church, during which the bishop's palace at Bristol was razed, effigies of bishops were substituted for those of Guy Fawkes on bonfires, and on a more sophisticated level, circulation of the statistical attack on the establishment, the Extraordinary Black Book, shot up. At the second reading of the 1832 Reform Bill, twelve bishops supported the bill, while sixteen opposed it, and it eventually passed into law with no episcopal votes cast against it.⁶² The Reform Act affected property rights, and the holdings of the established church could no longer be regarded as sacrosanct. In 1833, a Whig government, dependent on Irish Roman Catholic, Scottish Presbyterian and English Nonconformist votes, came to power. One of its first measures was the reform of the established church in Ireland, united in 1801 with the Church of England. It was a rational move. The Church of Ireland was a minority church, and the reform measures had the support of Richard Whately, Archbishop of Dublin. The number of Irish archbishoprics was cut from four to two, and the number of bishoprics reduced by eight, and the church rate was abolished.⁶³ Throughout the Victorian age, a Parliament no longer solely Anglican passed measures which included many necessary reforms, but which nevertheless reduced the privilege of the established church, or were directly contrary to its teaching. The Ecclesiastical Commission, which Lord Melbourne established on a permanent basis in 1836, did much to adjust the ancient endowments of the Church of England to meet changed circumstances. In 1836 steps were taken to raise the stipends of poorer bishops and in 1838 the number of benefices which could be held in plurality was limited to two and these had to be within ten miles of each other. In 1840, non-resident prebends were suppressed, together with resident canonries above the number of four. These valuable changes were hardly revolutionary, and were carried out very gradually, nothing being done in the lifetime of existing incumbents.⁶⁴ In 1836 civil registration of births,

⁶²O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church, vol.I, pp.24-47.

⁶³Ibid., pp.47-60.

⁶⁴Ibid., pp.126-142.

marriages and deaths was introduced,⁶⁵ thus removing a nonconformist grievance, but significantly only after they had acquired a voice in Parliament. All these were logical reforms, designed to remove corruption and improve the efficiency of the church, but they were imposed by Parliament. The relationship between church and state was too close, and the tradition of Erastianism too strong to be shrugged off, but the need for redefinition of the relationship became clear when the state passed legislation which removed the privileges of the Church of England or was directly contrary to her teaching. In 1857, Parliament legalised divorce and passed an act providing for the re-marriage of divorced persons by the Church of England, although this was contrary to canon law. The established church, learning independence, refused to obey this law. In 1868, the church rate was abolished. The Clerical Disabilities Act of 1870 again forced the church to choose whom to obey. The law allowed Anglican clergy to relinquish their orders without ecclesiastical censure, notwithstanding the character indelibilis and canonical prohibition against such exemption. In 1880, by Act of Parliament, other orders of service than that of the Book of Common Prayer were allowed at funerals.⁶⁶

The Oxford reformers were a group of high church clergy, led by J.H. Newman, E.B. Pusey and John Keble, who were uneasy about parliamentary reform of the Church of England. The abolition of the Irish bishoprics provoked Keble on 14 July 1833 to preach a sermon on 'National Apostasy',⁶⁷ before His Majesty's Judges of Assize. Newman regarded this event as the beginning of the Oxford Movement. In September 1833, he published the first of the Tracts for the Times.⁶⁸ The authors attempted to encourage in English clergy their own view of the church. They were mostly Tory in politics and not opposed to the establishment, but they placed great emphasis on the spiritual independence of the church. Although no lovers of the reformation,

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp.143-146.

⁶⁶ L. Dibdin, op.cit., pp.44-45; O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church, vol.I, p.158.

⁶⁷ H. Bettenson, Documents of the Christian Church, pp.432-435.

⁶⁸ On the Oxford Movement, see R.W. Church, The Oxford Movement, and F.W. Faber, Oxford Apostles.

they believed Rome to be in error. The Church of England was the true representative of the church, holy, catholic and apostolic, and her bishops true successors of the apostles. It was a doctrine of the church as a divine institution which ultimately brooked no interference from the state.

The impact of the small group of Oxford academics on the Church of England was by no means decisive, but they made a significant and lasting impression. Erastianism continued, as the controversies surrounding Renn Dickson Hampden, the Jerusalem bishopric, Charles Gorham and Essays and Reviews⁶⁹ indicate, but the change they desired in the Church of England's understanding of the source of its own authority came gradually and from a variety of sources. The attempt at restatement was assisted by the fact that Parliament's time was increasingly taken up with secular issues. Under Queen Victoria's influence, crown patronage was exercised more for the good of the church and less to bolster the government in power.⁷⁰ The real influence of the Oxford Movement was on parochial life : it brought in its wake a generation of devoted priests, faithful in conducting church services and full of concern for their flock. Tractarian ideas also influenced those who left England as missionaries, and one of the important sources of a new definition of church-state relations in the nineteenth century was the example of the colonial church,⁷¹ Anglican in all essentials but not established.

It was at first assumed that the reformation settlement applied to all crown colonies, and that the Church of England, bound as it was to King and Parliament, would expand with British territory but not beyond.⁷² This assumption was far too facile, as the litigious reality was to prove. The Thirty-Nine Articles were not drawn up with an Indian or an African empire in mind, nor was it envisaged that any part of the empire would throw off British rule or be granted independence. Ecclesiastical institutions, like their political

⁶⁹O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church, vol.I, pp.112-121, 188-193, 237-249.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp.470-473.

⁷¹P.B. Hinchliff, The One-Sided Reciprocity, ch.6.

⁷²Ibid.

counterparts, are the product of historical development and are not easily transplanted.

In 1634, the Bishop of London was entrusted with episcopal supervision of British colonial possessions.⁷³ His oversight was purely hypothetical and it is suggestive of the slight emphasis placed on episcopacy within the Church of England that no bishop was consecrated specifically for the colonies. It also indicates the church's bondage to the establishment : a bishop with no seat in the House of Lords seemed a contradiction in terms. The American Declaration of Independence cut the Gordian knot, and the ecclesiastical independence of the American colonies coincided with their political freedom. It required an Act of Parliament in 1784 to free the bishop of London to ordain men who were not British subjects to work in America. In 1784 the clergy of Connecticut took the initiative, elected a bishop and sent him to England for consecration. A bishop not appointed by the crown was unheard of, and as Samuel Seabury refused to take the oath of allegiance required by law at an episcopal consecration, the English bishops felt unable to act. The first American bishop was consecrated by bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Only after an act had been passed, allowing the consecration of bishops who were not British subjects without administration of the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, did the Archbishops of Canterbury and York participate in the consecration of Dr Prevoost for New York and Dr White for Pennsylvania in 1787.⁷⁴ The first very hesitant step in recognizing the possibility of the existence of the Anglican church outside the establishment had been taken. Also in 1787, Charles Inglis was consecrated Bishop of Nova Scotia, first of the colonial bishops. In the next fifty years, the British empire grew, but only nine more colonial sees were created.⁷⁵ At each point, the established character of the Church of England was a barrier to the spread of the church.

⁷³W.F. France, The Oversea Episcopate, p.5.

⁷⁴H. Lowther Clarke, Constitutional Church Government, pp.196-202.

⁷⁵Ibid., pp.45-71. The new dioceses were Quebec (1793), Calcutta (1814), Jamaica, Barbados (1824), Madras (1835), Sydney (1836), Bombay (1837), Newfoundland, Toronto (1839).

Although restricted by the establishment, the Church of England was not moribund. Much valuable work outside England was done by voluntary organizations such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel,⁷⁶ and its evangelical counterpart, the Church Missionary Society.⁷⁷

The year 1841 saw the formation of yet another society which was to do much pioneering work in the creation of the Anglican Communion. Even among those who rejected its tenets, the Oxford Movement had awakened an awareness of the church as an institution transcending national boundaries, and of the importance of episcopal leadership. In April 1840, Charles James Blomfield, who as Bishop of London was responsible for all areas of the empire without a bishop, wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Howley:

The time appears to me to have arrived at which a great effort is required on the part of the Church of England, to impart the full benefits of her apostolical government and discipline, as well as of her doctrines and ordinances, to those distant parts of the British Empire where, if the Christian religion is professed at all, it is left to depend for its continuance...upon the energies of individual piety and zeal, without being enshrined in the sanctuary of a rightly-constituted Church...⁷⁸

Blomfield argued that if the state refused to act, the church must do so. Howley summoned a public meeting for 27 April 1841, attended by Anglican bishops, clergy and peers, to discuss the formation of a fund for the endowment of bishoprics in the colonies. Gladstone moved the formal resolution that the fund be set up and agreed to be one of the first treasurers. The first resolution passed by the meeting was that

...the Church of England, in endeavouring to discharge her unquestionable duty of providing for the religious wants of her members in foreign lands, is bound to proceed upon her own principles of apostolical order and discipline.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ H.P. Thompson, Into All Lands, is a history of the S.P.G.

⁷⁷ For the history of the C.M.S., see Eugene Stock, The History of the Church Missionary Society, in three volumes.

⁷⁸ W.F. France, op.cit., p.9.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.11.

On 1 June 1841, a standing committee of four archbishops, five bishops, four treasurers and a secretary was appointed, and although they resolved never to proceed "without the concurrence of Her Majesty's Government," the Colonial Bishops Fund was a voluntary organization, without parliamentary recognition or royal charter, with the bishops themselves responsible for directing the extension of the episcopate. The first diocese founded under its auspices was New Zealand in 1841. In 1846, Lady Angela Burdett-Coutts gave £35 000 to the fund, for the endowment of the dioceses of Adelaide and Cape Town.⁸⁰

By 1837, leaders of the Oxford Movement and those suspected of sympathising with them were being labelled Puseyites. The name was quite misleading : Newman led the movement, but Pusey was the first of the writers of the Tracts for the Times to acknowledge his authorship. Of the term, Chadwick writes:

The sound was smooth and comic and disrespectful. Heads of Colleges disdained to use so vulgar a word. A bishop solemnly forbade it to his clergy...But those without perfect manners continued to use Puseyite.⁸¹

Moreover, the use of the collective term tended to blur very real differences, not only between the Oxford reformers themselves, but between them and high churchmen, who adopted their views with qualification.⁸² One of these was Samuel Wilberforce, who as Bishop of Oxford from 1845, had to deal with the aftermath of Newman's defection to Rome. His reaction was not to suppress all Tractarian teaching, but where he found it valuable, to implement it. Wilberforce revitalized the pattern of episcopal activity and diocesan care, and to a very large extent the Church of England accepted the Oxford Movement "in the same modified sense as that in which he accepted it."⁸³

Leaders of the Anglican church in the colonies were often suspected of escaping from the established church to found a church abroad

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.23.

⁸¹ O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church, vol.I, p.168.

⁸² D. Bowen, op.cit., p.54.

⁸³ Ibid., p.29.

consistent with Tractarian teaching.⁸⁴ It was not coincidental that there were close parallels between reforms introduced into the Church of England in the nineteenth century and the growth of synodical government in the Anglican church in the colonies, but this owed more to the example of Samuel Wilberforce than to John Henry Newman. Colonial bishops and clergy were grieved by accusations that they were disloyal to the Church of England and sympathetic to the Church of Rome. Charges of this nature compelled Selwyn of New Zealand to deny that he had read any of the Tracts for the Times and to denounce Rome as "that monstrous coalition of triple crowns and cardinal hats and French bayonets..."⁸⁵ Merriman too denounced the Roman Catholic church, for example describing the negative effects of the Synod of Whitby in strong terms:

Rome stalked through the land unchecked and unquestioned, and for near 1000 years Papal sway was rivetted on our Island, which only since the great Reformation in the 16th century has been shaken off.⁸⁶

Merriman, like Selwyn, never wavered in his loyalty to the Church of England, although aware that the source of her life lay elsewhere than the establishment. Merriman would have echoed Selwyn's wish to see the system of the Church of England "fully worked"⁸⁷ and her "immense dormant powers",⁸⁸ available in Convocation, episcopal synod and diocesan structure, brought to life. In England it seemed an impossible task, but the colonies could pave the way. Merriman would have agreed with Selwyn's words:

My desire is, in this country, so far as God may give me light and strength, to try what the actual system of the Church of England can do, when disencumbered of its earthly load of seats in Parliament, Erastian

⁸⁴ P.B. Hinchliff, "Laymen in Synod : an aspect of the beginnings of synodical government in South Africa", in L. Baker and G.J. Cuming, eds., Studies in Church History, vol.VII : Councils and Assemblies, pp.321-327.

⁸⁵ H.W. Tucker, op.cit., vol.I, p.354.

⁸⁶ N.J. Merriman, Are the Missionaries Mischief-Workers?, p.10.

⁸⁷ H.W. Tucker, op.cit., vol.I, p.250.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.199.

compromises, corruption of patronage, confusion of orders, synodless bishops, and an unorganized clergy. None of these are inherent in our system...⁸⁹

Gladstone, who had known and admired Merriman at Oxford, recognised in him a fellow high churchman, who as a priest would restore church discipline, conduct regular church services, and introduce the offertory and weekly communion.⁹⁰ Of Merriman's churchmanship his son wrote in 1882:

In truth it would have been difficult for any good man, when brought into close contact with him, to have detected the peculiarities of any school. His own opinions were decided and, when occasion called for expression, outspoken. He fully believed in the doctrines of his Church, and endeavoured to keep her rules. He did not hesitate to avow his sympathy with the Catholic revival contemporaneous with the beginning of his ministerial career. It was to him as far removed from Romish accretions as it was from Puritan shortcomings and narrow-mindedness,...⁹¹

It is no accident that this description echoes Samuel Wilberforce's definition of his own views:

I belong to no school. In many things I do not agree with the few Oxford Tracts I have read. But I do agree as far as I can with all these great lights whom God has from time to time given to his Church; with Hooker and Bramhall and Taylor, with Beveridge and Stillingfleet, and with the primitive Church of the first three centuries.⁹²

Through all the changing scenes and many conflicts of his life, Merriman steadily sought a via media between the Scylla of Erastianism and Charybdis of Rome. In 1847, in Robert Gray, newly named Bishop of Cape Town, he found a leader whose views coincided with his own.

Merriman's own thoughts after his ordination in 1833 turned first to mission work in India : faced with parental opposition, he sought

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.200.

⁹⁰ MP 1-41, W.E. Gladstone to NJM, 13 Jul. 1841.

⁹¹ CC., September 1882, p.259.

⁹² O. Chadwick, The Founding of Cuddesdon, p.10.

episcopal counsel, was advised to remain in England and obeyed.⁹³ The ardent young clergyman gained his first parochial experience in a succession of curacies in Lancashire, where his honesty, hard work and sense of humour earned the respect and affection of the keen-eyed and plain-spoken men and women of the north country.⁹⁴

On 19 February 1840, at Preston, Merriman married the vivacious and witty Julia Potter.⁹⁵ Her father, a Manchester merchant, opposed the match. Whatever his hopes for his daughter, they had certainly not included a future as the wife of a poor curate, or worse still, a penniless missionary.⁹⁶ The fact that Merriman, disgusted by the system of patronage in the Church of England, had turned down his father's offer to purchase him a living, burnt his testimonials and refused to seek preferment, saying he could "scarcely imagine the Apostles touting for fat livings,"⁹⁷ must have seemed incomprehensible and grossly irresponsible to the businesslike Mr Potter. The act was characteristic of Merriman, and no empty gesture : few men can have recited nolo episcopari as often as he was later to do in southern Africa. Mr Potter was no tyrannical and domineering Victorian parent, and Julia, at twenty-three, was a woman of forthright speech and independent mind. She had her way. Her wide reading, lively wit, varied interests and command of language matched Merriman's own. Both generous spirited and free of pretence, Julia's vehement and impulsive nature complemented her husband's reserve and quiet resolve. They lived first at Sutton Waldron in Dorset, but in the autumn of 1840

⁹³CC., September 1882, p.259.

⁹⁴LV 329, "Memoir of Bishop Merriman" in Republic of Cluny Annual Register and Miscellany for 1926, part I, vol.III, no.15. Merriman was successively curate of Brindle (1835-1836), minister of Southills Chapel, Bolton (1836-1838), perpetual curate of Holy Trinity, Over-Darwen (1838-1839), curate-in-charge of St Dunstan's-in-the-West, London (1839), curate-in-charge at Sutton Waldron, Blandford, Dorset (1839-1840).

⁹⁵G.F.M. Merriman, op.cit., p.59. Born on 10 August 1817, in Manchester, youngest daughter of John Potter, Julia Merriman died in Grahamstown on 25 May 1910, and is buried there.

⁹⁶P. Lewsen, John X. Merriman, p.3.

⁹⁷CC., September 1882, p.260.

moved to Street in Somersetshire,⁹⁸ where the rector was Lord John Thynne,⁹⁹ and where Merriman served as curate until 1848.

Five Merriman children were born in the parsonage at Street. First came John Xavier on 15 March 1841, and then two girls, Julia Letitia on 28 July 1842, and Charlotte on 3 April 1844, the day before her father's thirty-fifth birthday. Thomas Reginald was born on 14 January 1846 and Mary exactly two years later.¹⁰⁰ Side by side with the formal religious instruction the children received from their mother¹⁰¹ went a practical demonstration from both parents in the shabby Street home, of the Christian life.

Street, near Glastonbury, had been the centre of a textile industry since the sixteenth century, but when Merriman went there it was being replaced as the source of local prosperity by the shoemaking factory started in 1825 by the Quaker brothers, Cyrus and James Clark. Workers in this concern, agricultural labourers earning between eight and ten shillings a week, and local farmers, with their families, made up the congregation of the parish church.

Obedient to a rubric in the Book of Common Prayer ignored by many of his contemporaries, Merriman said daily services in the village church, often on his own, an offering of the priest for his people. He insisted that almsgiving was not an optional extra but a positive duty, however large the family or small the income, and

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ The Reverend and Right Honourable Lord John Thynne, third son of the second Marquis of Bath and of Isabella, second daughter of the fourth Viscount Torrington, was educated at Eton and Cambridge, ordained deacon and priest in 1822. In 1823 he was presented to the sinecure living of Backwell, Somerset, by his father, which he held until 1872. He was also rector of Kingston Deverill in Wiltshire until 1836, and of Street until 1850. From 1828 to 1831 he was sub-dean of Lincoln, and in 1831 at the age of thirty-three he became canon and sub-dean of Westminster, a position he held for fifty years. The living of Street with Walton, where Lord John Thynne lived was worth £625 p.a. He had a reputation for efficiency and judicious action. See E. Carpenter, A House of Kings, pp.278f.

¹⁰⁰ G.F.M. Merriman, op.cit., pp.57, 114-120.

¹⁰¹ MP 2-56. NJM to JXM, 27 Oct. 1856.

himself set an example by giving a third of a £1500 legacy to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.¹⁰² In the year of the Irish potato famine, ten pounds of his annual stipend of £120 was given to a Quaker relief fund; not entirely without worldly wisdom, Merriman thought that the money would go further in their practical hands than if given to the fund run by the established church.¹⁰³ He took an active interest in the local benefit society, and among working men discouraged excessive consumption of alcohol, or what he referred to as "intermediate wets". Poor men and women, whose usual diet was bread and potatoes, were invited to meals of roast beef and plum pudding in the Merriman home, while the curate, in times of hardship in the parish ate boiled horse-beans for his dinner twice a week, so that the money saved could be spent on the poor, and so that he became acquainted with their hardships. Merriman could hardly be described, however, as disturbing the existing social order. There is no evidence that he was critical of his rector's pluralism, and while his family and that of Lord John Thynne met on equal terms, the working class poor of the parish came to eat in the rectory kitchen. They would probably have felt uncomfortable anywhere else. Mrs Merriman threw herself into her husband's work. Farmers' wives came to tea and stayed to a "Bee", making clothes for the poor.

In Street, Merriman's eyesight began to deteriorate, and he was advised to read as little as possible. Disliking inactivity, he apprenticed himself to one of his parishioners,¹⁰⁴ and worked from six to eight in the mornings, learning the cobbler's craft. He found immense satisfaction in the work, and in presenting the sturdy if inelegant boots he produced to his parishioners. Genial and unconventional, with no false dignity, he had a ready way with the children of the parish, contributing to, rather than detracting from the pleasure of their games. One small boy remembered him helping to put out a fire in the middle of the night and being drenched with a

¹⁰² CC., October 1856, p.306.

¹⁰³ GDA 1574, "Notes on the life of the late Bishop Merriman, Curate of Street, Somerset 1840-1848, by Joseph Clark, a Member of the Society of Friends, written in the year 1926."

¹⁰⁴ CC., October 1882, pp.305-307.

bucket of water,¹⁰⁵ but the sight of the dripping Merriman resulted in no loss of respect for his person.

A sympathetic and faithful priest, he might have remained and served at Street in great contentment all his life, but in 1847 he received three offers: the first, of a cure vacated by a recently appointed Australian bishop; the second, from the Earl of Dalkeith to act as tutor to his son and minister in the episcopal church at Edinburgh; and the third from Robert Gray, Bishop of Cape Town, to be Archdeacon of Grahamstown in the eastern districts of the new diocese.¹⁰⁶ It was this last which reawakened Merriman's early missionary hopes, and drew him.

Merriman attended the consecration of Robert Gray in Westminster Abbey on 29 June 1847, and after discussion with Gray, he returned to Street with his face set towards southern Africa.¹⁰⁷ The words of Geoffrey Chaucer, which breathed life into his Canterbury pilgrims, were no false gift of the imagination. The poor parson who took the road to Becket's tomb found human form in Nathaniel James Merriman, curate of Street, and he carried these characteristics to his new work in Africa:

A good man was ther of religioun,
 And was a povre PERSON OF A TOUN,
 But riche he was of hooly thoght and werk.
 He was also a lerned man, a clerk, 480
 That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
 His parisshe devoutly wolde he teche.
 Benygne he was, and wonder diligent,
 And in adversitee ful pacient,
 And swich he was yprevved ofte sithes. 485
 Ful looth were hym to cursen for his tithes,
 But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
 Unto his povre parisshe aboute
 Of his offryng and eek of his substaunce.
 He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce. 490
 Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer asonder,
 But he ne lefte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
 In siknesse nor in meschief to visite
 The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lite,

¹⁰⁵ GDA 1574, "Notes on the life of the late Bishop Merriman..."

¹⁰⁶ CC., October 1882, p.307.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf. 495
 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
 That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte.

...

He sette nat his benefice to hyre
 And leet his sheep encombred in the myre
 And ran to Londoun unto Seinte Poules
 To seken hym a chaunterie for soules, 510
 Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;
 But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,
 So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie;
 He was a shepherde and noght a mercenarie.
 And though he hooly were and vertuou, 515
 He was to synful men nat despitous,
 Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
 But in his techyng discret and benygne.
 To drawen folk to hevne by fairnesse,
 By good ensample, this was his bisynesse. 520
 But it were any persone obstinat,
 What so he were, of heigh or lough estat,
 Hym wolde he snybben sharply for the nonys.
 A bettre preest I trowe that nowher noon ys.
 He waited after no pompe and reverence, 525
 Ne maked him a spiced conscience,
 But Cristes loore and his apostles twelve
 He taughte, but first he folwed it hymselfe. 108

His qualities were not unrecognised. When the family left Street after Easter in 1848, Merriman was presented with a fund of £2228 to dispose of as he wished. With the gift of a rug, the Clark brothers sent a letter which in quaint but impressive, sincere and simple Quaker phrases, expressed the thoughts of the villagers:

...it will give us much pleasure to think that thou wilt have something to remind thee that there are some in this place who will often think of thee, with the sincere desire that the richest blessings of Him who alone can bless, may be with thee and thine. 109

Remember him they did. In the year of his death, there was a collection in the Street church for missions in the diocese of Grahamstown. In 1877, on his last visit to England, Merriman went to Street. He dwelt lightly on his own reception - "They were wonderfully hearty and affectionate on my going there," - but told John X:

I think they would have worshipped your mother if she had been with me.

¹⁰⁸G. Chaucer, The Works..., ed. by F.N. Robinson, pp.21-22.

¹⁰⁹CC., October 1882, p.308.

John X. too was remembered:

...one old woman pursued me...saying she had preserved a remembrance of you. "A cat upon a Board" in other words a long letter with 'C.A.T.' and a picture of a cat upon it. ¹¹⁰

Farewell visits to family and friends, and months of preparation followed Merriman's resolve to leave England. On 26 August 1848 his party left Gravesend on the 'Gwalior', and reached Table Bay on 15 November 1848. ¹¹¹

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In a century prolific in ecclesiastical biography, Nathaniel James Merriman, whom a modern historian of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa has described as "tough as a typical piece of South African biltong, and nearly as lean - perhaps the best loved, certainly one of the most vigorous bishops the Province has known," ¹¹² found no biographer.

To some extent, the period of his life is dealt with in the lives of his contemporaries, ¹¹³ but other factors account for this omission. One is the character of the man himself. Mrs Merriman recalled him

...saying after laudatory speeches made at a conversazione in his honour - "I'm afraid those kind people must have thought me cold and unresponsive. I scarcely heard what was said - all the time I was thinking how very little does man's praise or blame alter the relations of a soul in God's sight". ¹¹⁴

He certainly did not facilitate the task of any author. Mrs Merriman records that

¹¹⁰ Merriman describes this return visit to Street in MP 31-37, NJM to JXM, 8 Aug. 1877.

¹¹¹ CC., November 1882, p.337.

¹¹² PBH, p.115.

¹¹³ G.W. Cox, The Life of John William Colenso, D.D.; C.N. Gray, Life of Robert Gray; A.T. Wirgman, Life of James Green.

¹¹⁴ MP 73-85, JM to JXM, 16 Feb. 1885.

...the Bp. destroyed nearly all correspondence which might have been interesting now. He desired to efface himself in every possible way. 115

The biographies of E.W. Benson, B. Foss Westcott and Robert Gray were compiled by their sons, and that of A.C. Tait by his son-in-law, Randall Davidson. While not lacking their sense of filial duty, the didactic instinct underlying much Victorian biography was absent in John X. Merriman, and his time and talents were otherwise occupied. Besides, he met with further discouragement. Mrs Merriman had been devoted to her husband in life, and in death his memory took on an aura of sanctity. She did not approve of the brief memoir of the bishop written for the Church Chronicle by their eldest son. His wife Agnes remarked to John X. that even if the article had been written by Trevelyan

...I don't suppose she would have been pleased. She thought you dragged in too much of a private nature... yr. article would not do. 116

The bishop's death had not killed his wife's energy nor her fighting spirit. She sat up until nearly midnight on 28 August, rewriting the article, and began again at half-past six the next morning, pausing only for prayers and a brief breakfast, working out her grief and attempting to fill the great gap in her life by writing. Agnes told her husband that it would be useless to write a life of Merriman while his wife still lived: "I think she will never be pleased by anything that is said."¹¹⁷

Furthermore, Merriman's episcopate was marred by a clash of personality and principle with the Dean of Grahamstown, culminating in the exclusion of the bishop from the cathedral and the excommunication of the dean. The quarrel, which was a scandal to the city and to the church, remained unresolved at the bishop's death. It took the death of Dean Williams, and all the peace-making skills of Merriman's successor, Allan Becher Webb, to still troubled waters. A biography

¹¹⁵GDA 287, JM to Dr Hewitt, nd.

¹¹⁶MP 90-82, AM to JXM, 29 Aug. 1882. The reference is presumably to George Otto Trevelyan.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

written in this climate would have been a goad to one party or the other.

A hundred years on, when insult and anger have dissolved into local legend, the issue at the heart of the quarrel, that freedom of the church from state control for which Merriman contended, remains a crucial issue.

PART ONE : 1849 - 1871

ARCHDEACON

CHAPTER ONE

ARCHDEACON

Let them, on the one side and the other, consider that men's judgments of perfection are very various, and what is imperfect, with peace, is often better than what is otherwise more excellent, without it.

Irish Prayerbook 1877, Preface.

Nathaniel James Merriman, first archdeacon to serve the church in Africa,¹ landed in Cape Town on 15 November 1848. Impatient to begin his new work, he was disappointed to find that Robert Gray was away on a visitation of his enormous diocese, and was not expected back until mid-December.² At Mrs Gray's hospitable insistence, he consented to remain at Protea with his family until the bishop's return,³ and used the time to learn what he could about church life in the colony. His journals show his immense concern for mission among people of colour, his shock at racial prejudice within the church and his creative ideas about mission policy.⁴ The needs of this work were his lifelong concern, but Robert Gray saw as their first task the reorganization and revitalization of the church among white colonists, itself a missionary endeavour. To a large extent, despite his own inclinations, ministry to white congregations was to claim Merriman's attention and energies to the end of his life.

Britain annexed the Cape of Good Hope in 1795, and as a crown possession except for the short Batavian interlude between 1803 and 1806, it fell under the episcopal jurisdiction of the Bishop of

¹There were no archdeacons in the Roman church in north Africa.

²Cape Journals, p.1.

³Ibid. Robert Gray rented Protea from C.H. Maynier in 1848. The Colonial Bishopsrics Fund purchased the house in 1851 as a residence for the bishops of Cape Town, and it was renamed Bishops court.

⁴Ibid., pp.1-17.

London, which was never more than nominal. Bishop James of Calcutta in 1827 was the first bishop to visit Cape Town, followed in 1829 and 1832 by Tucker and by Wilson, his successors in the see. The first ordination at the Cape was in 1832, but the Indian bishops did not visit the vast hinterland, and could do little more during their brief calls at Cape Town than see the need, and urge the appointment of a bishop. The years until 1847 saw a deterioration in church life, and an increasing confusion about the constitutional position of the Church of England at the Cape, where the Dutch Reformed Church had been the established church, and where only in 1814, when British possession of the Cape was confirmed, were Anglican clergy allowed any freedom of action. In the absence of a bishop, and as head of the civil establishment, British governors acted as ordinary, with the administrative and jurisdictional powers but not the spiritual authority of a bishop. Services were held "by permission of His Excellency the Governor." The ministry of the Anglican church was carried out by colonial chaplains, appointed by the Colonial Office, responsible to the governor, ministering largely to civil servants, and themselves a species of civil servant. Their record of faithfulness and hard work was not, on the whole, impressive. In 1847 there were at the Cape seventeen clergy including the astronomer royal, the secretary to the governor, two clergy supported by the Colonial Church Society, one military chaplain, and twelve colonial chaplains paid by the government and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.⁵ These clergy were

⁵The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts was founded in 1701 by Thomas Bray. Authorized by Convocation and incorporated by Royal Charter, its two chief aims were to provide clergy to serve members of the Church of England abroad and to provide missionaries for non-Christian peoples living under British rule. In the eighteenth century, most of its work was carried out in the American colonies, but in the nineteenth century, the sphere of operation widened to include India, Australia, the Far East and west and southern Africa. Until 1832, the S.P.G. received a parliamentary grant, and it raised funds by Royal Letter until 1853. Parochial associations and district committees were first formed in England in 1819, and the network was extended after the withdrawal of state aid. Both Gray and Colenso were local secretaries for the S.P.G. before their appointment to the episcopate. The S.P.G. sent two chaplains with the 1820 settlers, and in the same year William Wright came out as "missionary to the heathen" and settled at Wynberg. Between 1836 and 1846, the society sent seven clergy to the Cape and gave large sums towards the endowment of the sees of Cape Town, Grahamstown and Natal. Ernest Hawkins was Secretary to the S.P.G. from

aware of their isolation and of the need for a bishop to consecrate churches, to confirm candidates and to back up their own authority, but the advent of a bishop would also end some of the independence to which they had grown accustomed.⁶

Clearly, the bare assumption that the Church of England would be the established church in Britain's colonies did not provide the means to accomplish what in England had been the growth of centuries. Who was to determine parochial divisions, who was to build churches, and how were churches to be run? Even the colonists who regarded the services of the Church of England as their birthright showed no eagerness to contribute towards church buildings or ministers' stipends. To meet all these exigencies, between 1829 and 1846 nine church ordinances were passed. Although the provisions varied, each church governed by an ordinance was separately established and declared to be in communion with the United Church of England and Ireland.⁷ There was no awareness of the church as a corporate organization. Four of the ordinances, those relating to Cape Town, Wynberg, Bathurst and Fort Beaufort, authorized the sale of shares to raise money to build and maintain a church. The shareholders would elect the vestry to run the church. The other five ordinances, for Rondebosch, Grahamstown, Port Elizabeth, Sidbury and Graaff-Reinet, laid down the procedure to be followed in appointing a vestry and churchwardens and the way in which they would run church affairs. Income for the upkeep of church buildings was chiefly derived from pew rents. These ordinances⁸ solved an administrative problem, but they deviated from the custom and usage of the Church of England. In England, the annual vestry meeting was

1843 to 1864, when he was succeeded by William Thomas Bullock, his assistant since 1850. W.H. Tucker became assistant secretary in 1864, and was himself Secretary from 1879 to 1901. The S.P.G. tended to represent the high church party, while the Church Missionary Society was evangelical. H.P. Thompson, Into All Lands, passim; PBH, pp.3, 14, 22, 24, 30, 47.

⁶For the early history of the Church of England at the Cape, see C.F. Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G. 1701-1900, vol.I, pp.268-275; Historical Records, pp.3-27; PBH, pp.1-26.

⁷PBH, pp.22-24.

⁸See Appendix A.

held at Easter, while under the ordinances, the Graaff-Reinet vestry met in March, and the Cape Town and Bathurst meetings were held in October. Only the Port Elizabeth and Sidbury ordinances provided for Easter vestries.⁹ Furthermore, there were real objections to the ordinances in canon law, which was not consulted at the time. Firstly, it was a contravention of the parochial law of the Church of England that a consecrated building should be the property of shareholders; secondly, select vestries were allowed only in very exceptional cases and as a result of ancient usage; and thirdly, according to English parochial law, churchwardens should be elected by parishioners and rector and not by the select vestry, as occurred in terms of the ordinances.¹⁰ In practical terms, the select vestries regarded themselves as business corporations rather than as guardians of Christian standards of worship and morality. They defended their privileges jealously and resented any interference. The result of church government by ordinance has been aptly called "Erastian Congregationalism".¹¹ Not only was it to lead to legal difficulties, but the view of the church it encouraged was distorted, and in the absence of any counterweight, the aberrant picture became not only acceptable, but to many, the correct and desirable norm.

To men of Gray's and Merriman's views, it was a denial of everything they held dear. As bishop, Robert Gray was a symbol and focus of the church's unity, and he saw as his primary task, not only visitation, confirmation, consecration of churches, raising money and finding men to serve the ten thousand Anglicans, many of whom were far from the twelve churches and seventeen clergy serving the colony, but also restoration of the church as a united body, and creation of a form of government expressive of that union. He was under no illusions about the difficulty of the task:

This Colony so far as the Church's work is concerned, is unlike any other. We have to engraft a new system - a new phase of religion - upon a previously existing one.

⁹ CPP, Select Committees, A2 of 1891, Minutes of Evidence, 19 June 1891, pp.14-15.

¹⁰ Ibid., 15 June 1891, pp.4-8.

¹¹ PBH, p.24.

Our own people, when a Clergyman comes amongst them, find that all their previous habits and actual associations have to undergo a change,...When a Clergyman, then, goes to his parish he finds very few actual Church people. Great judgment, discretion, forbearance, patience, and zeal, are required in dealing with the strange state of things around him. He has, in fact, to found the Church.¹²

Not all clergy at the Cape looked with favour on the reorganization Gray thought necessary, but in Merriman he had a colleague who shared his views.

Robert Gray returned to Cape Town on 21 December 1848, after a journey of three thousand miles and three months,¹³ and on 2 January 1849 the clergy of the western province, with their bishop and the new archdeacon met in synod.

The relationship between the Church of England and the Cape government, and the means of realizing the corporate nature of the church in the colony were discussed, but the most immediate question was how colonial parishes could be run on lines close to the pattern of the Church of England. It was clear that the change, though necessary, would have to be gradual and with the consent of the clergy and laity involved. The existence of the ordinances made the situation more complex in law, but the goal agreed upon was parochial government by sidesmen and churchwardens chosen at the Easter vestry by rector and parishioners. Colonially defined, a parishioner was anyone who paid pew rent. This view of the church as a secular corporation with a fee-paying membership was what Gray and Merriman wished to avoid. The intention of canon law, they argued, was that only those who communicated three times a year should exercise a vote, although they agreed that in some areas there was a very small percentage of communicants among church-goers, and that such a regulation could compound the problem by encouraging communication simply to qualify as a parishioner. No final decision was reached, and Merriman was commissioned to determine the opinions of the clergy in his eastern archdeaconry.¹⁴

¹²CNG, vol.I, p.248.

¹³Cape Journals, p.1.

¹⁴Ibid., pp.15-17. On the development of synodical government, see below, ch.3.

On 6 January 1849, the feast of the Epiphany, Merriman and his family, with the Rev. George Thompson, left by the steamer, 'Phoenix', for Algoa Bay, where they arrived four days later.

Merriman had no southern African precedent to guide him in his work as archdeacon. Archdeacons have been described as the ears and eyes of the bishop. They are clergy to whom the diocesan bishop delegates administrative authority in part of his diocese. Duties vary, but usually include general disciplinary supervision of the clergy of the archdeaconry, and responsibility for temporal administration of ecclesiastical property, including annual inspection of registers, parochial accounts and vestry minute books. Archdeacons induct clergy to new benefices, and admit churchwardens to office, and they examine and present candidates to the bishop for ordination.¹⁵ When in 1841 letters patent for the Bishop of New Zealand were drawn up, the right to appoint archdeacons was reserved to the crown. Selwyn contended that the office of archdeacon was not one of honour, as it had become in nineteenth century England, but one of partnership in the bishop's work, and that as such, archdeacons should be appointed by the local bishop. He prevailed,¹⁶ and Gray and Merriman were heirs of the principle he had established. In England too, especially among high churchmen, there was a revival of awareness of archidiaconal functions. Henry Edward Manning as Archdeacon of Chichester, and Robert Isaac Wilberforce as Archdeacon of the East Riding were among those who took their duties seriously.¹⁷ The shy, humble and conscientious Robert Wilberforce noticed a group of clergy laughing and chattering during a confirmation at Beverley:

After this spectacle Robert made a point of standing in a conspicuous place during confirmations and exhibiting his displeasure very noticeably when any cleric misbehaved.¹⁸

Six thousand miles away, Merriman saw in the church at the Cape a similar lack of respect and reverence, and his standard of duty and

¹⁵ ODCC, p.81.

¹⁶ H. Lowther Clarke, Constitutional Church Government, pp.169-170.

¹⁷ D. Newsome, The Parting of Friends, pp.268-271.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.279.

determination to raise the quality of church life and worship among clergy and laity echoed Wilberforce's own.

When John Armstrong became Bishop of Grahamstown in 1853, succeeding Robert Gray as Merriman's ecclesiastical superior, Archdeacon Merriman explained to him the principles on which he had worked during the years in which he alone had carried much of the responsibility for the discipline of the church in the eastern districts. He acted from conviction that

...the outward framework of our Church was to be maintained so far as it could mutatis mutandis, the same as is prescribed in the Canons and defined and supported by the Ecclesiastical Law of England.

I had no acquaintance with other Colonial precedents in the exercise of the Archdeacon's office but observing that the Canons of 1603 were professedly held in esteem and authority in N.America, Australia and N.Zealand... I took these Canons as my beacon and English practice so far as I was acquainted with it as my supplementary rule. Accordingly

1. I considered the Archdeacon's office as having an equal or even greater reference to the laity and their representatives the Church Wardens than to the Clergy within his jurisdiction. I regarded him as the receiving and returning officer who should first take the Subscriptions of the Church Wardens to a formal Declaration of office and then return their names to the Bishop for his confirmation and approval.
2. I considered the Archdeacon's Visitatorial functions to consist mainly in his receiving Presentments from the Church Wardens touching the due observance of order in the services of the Church, the Collection and due expenditure of Alms and other monies together with such other matters as belong to management. For this purpose that all Vestry Books, Account Books and Registers should be open for his inspection at his Visitation. ¹⁹

At the same time, neither Gray nor Merriman wished

...to exact conformity to the "Canons and Constitutions" beyond what is practicable and useful and apparently calculated to promote the peace and welfare of the Church in this land. ²⁰

¹⁹ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to J. Armstrong, 8 Nov. 1854.

²⁰ GDA 1630, Documents relating to the dispute between Merriman, Gray, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Graaff-Reinet Churchwardens, 1852-1853, NJM to Churchwardens, 9 May 1853.

Merriman took the practice of the Church of England as his standard, and the conditions of his admission to office conformed to those in the Church of England. By virtue of authority conferred on him in his letters patent, Robert Gray instituted Merriman to the archdeaconry of Grahamstown and invested him with the "functions powers privileges rights and appurtenances to the same."²¹ As required of the clergy in the Church of England, Merriman subscribed to the Thirty-Nine Articles, to the three articles in the thirty-sixth canon of 1603, and swore

...that he would be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria and that he renounced all foreign jurisdiction power superiority pre-eminence or authority Ecclesiastical or Spiritual within Her Majesty's Realm; and further that he had not...procured the said Archdeaconry...by any simoniacal payment...and that he would pay true and Canonical obedience to us and our Successors Bishops of Capetown in all things lawful and honest.²²

Merriman intended to establish strict rubrical observance, and to encourage kneeling during prayers, wearing of the surplice by the clergy, the offertory to replace pew rents, the principle of free seats in the church, frequent services including regular celebration of the Holy Communion, and improvement in church furnishings, including lower pews and pulpits and the beautification of the chancel. Far from superficial, these small changes hid great principles and pointed to a different view of the church from that laid down in the six church ordinances affecting his archdeaconry, and from that to which colonial Anglicans had become accustomed.

The way of change would not be easy, for the eastern Cape was a particularly tough and haggling province, fiercely independent, and yet at war within itself. Separatism²³ was an ecclesiastical as well as a political issue, and there was also great rivalry between Port Elizabeth and Grahamstown. Although by exercising supervision to which clergy and laity were unaccustomed, and by criticising the familiar

²¹UWL, AB867 : Bb3, Appointments of Bishops Welby and Merriman 1849-1871, Letter of Institution for Merriman as Archdeacon of Grahamstown, January 1849.

²²GDA 202, Merriman's subscription to required oaths, January 1849.

²³B.A. le Cordeur, The Politics of Eastern Cape Separatism 1820-1854.

and advocating change, he would make himself unpopular and expose himself to the ubiquitous charge of Puseyism, Merriman was a stranger to dull compromise, and where the truth was at stake, he could be stern in rebuke. Moreover he was secure in his own views, and could afford to be tactful and patient in introducing the reforms he believed necessary. Robert Gray was full of confidence in Merriman:

He will, I am sure, perhaps amidst some reproaches, do much, if spared, to extend the Kingdom of God in this land, for his whole soul is in the work, and he has great energy and ability. ²⁴

On 11 January 1849, the Merriman family set out in three wagons, each drawn by twelve oxen, on the six-day journey from Port Elizabeth to Grahamstown. Though plagued by the unaccustomed African heat and wind, they were refreshed by the unfamiliar loveliness of the land, "woods filled with flowering mimosa and cactus and aloes of various kinds, and many other strange and beautiful shrubs,"²⁵ but were nevertheless relieved to arrive at last at Grahamstown and a home of their own. Leaving the capable Mrs Merriman to organize the household, the archdeacon began at once to familiarize himself with the state of ecclesiastical affairs in the town.

In 1821, at the instance of Lord Charles Somerset, then the ordinary, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel had allocated £500 for the erection of a church in Grahamstown.²⁶ In 1822 the inhabitants of the new town had offered to raise subscriptions to build the church, but the proposal had come to nothing, and the rest of the money was provided by the colonial treasury. With no ecclesiastical authority to encourage the work, progress was slow, but by September 1824, building plans had been drawn up and the church was first used for services in about 1828.²⁷ No bishop en route to India was likely

²⁴CNG, vol.I, p.210.

²⁵Cape Journals, pp.19-20.

²⁶C. Gould, Grahamstown Cathedral, p.20.

²⁷R. Lewcock, Early Nineteenth Century Architecture in South Africa, p.282, gives the date as 1828, while C. Gould, op.cit., p.21 says 1830.

to be persuaded to visit Grahamstown, and the building remained unconsecrated until Robert Gray performed the ceremony on St Matthew's day, 1850. The first ministers in Grahamstown were colonial chaplains. William Geary was appointed in 1823, and was followed by Thomas Ireland (1824-1827), William Carlisle (1829-1832), and by John Heavyside, who was appointed in 1833²⁸ and was still the incumbent when Merriman arrived. In about 1830, a church committee was set up to run the affairs of St George's.²⁹ It dealt mostly with the payment of pew rents, and when necessary, with repairs to the fabric. In 1839, the ordinance was passed "for authorizing the appointment of a Vestry and Churchwardens for St George's Church, Graham's Town,"³⁰ and the provisions of this ordinance thenceforth regulated the government of the church in Grahamstown.

On the day of his arrival in Grahamstown, Merriman went to inspect St George's church. It was not an elegant structure, within or without, but Merriman was determined to be positive and to see potential where he could:

On the whole I like St George's Church here better than any which I have seen in the Colony, though the area of it is filled with pews, and the reading pew is turned towards the congregation with the back to the altar. Still it is much lower than the pulpit and neither of them are directly in front of the altar towards which there is a broad clear aisle from the entrance door. The Church stands more nearly east and west than others which I have seen in South Africa. The east end has a window of square panes of coloured glass of a poor description, yet even this pleased me, being the only thing of the kind I had seen in the Colony. There is a gallery all round the church, the room in which is free. The ceiling is quite new, being composed of deal planks...

The pulpit and reading pew are constructed mainly of stinkwood, with some beading of sneezewood, which has a handsome appearance. Mr Heavyside has succeeded in lowering the pews about three inches. I wish we may jointly succeed in lowering them 3 or 4 more, but we must "bide our time".³¹

²⁸ C. Gould, op.cit., p.xviii.

²⁹ Ibid., p.23.

³⁰ See Appendix B for the text of the church ordinance.

³¹ Cape Journals, p.21. No pew rent was charged on seats in the gallery.

Merriman was inducted to the archdeaconry of Grahamstown on 21 January 1849. At the same time he received an initiation of another kind, into the vagaries of Grahamstown weather:

The thermometer during the day was above 100 in the shade. The following day we felt it quite cold and should have been glad of a good English fire.³²

He attended his first vestry meeting on the sixteenth anniversary of his ordination, on 31 January 1849, and put before the vestry two proposals which, if carried out, he considered would improve the appearance of the church. Both proposals indicate his wise commitment to gradual change. He suggested to the vestry that two open stalls for the use of the Merriman family and the clergy of the district, replace the existing high box pews in the chancel. To this, Merriman records, they "politely acquiesced."³³

The vestry went on to discuss an application it had received for the erection of a memorial tablet in St George's without payment of the usual fifteen guinea fee. Merriman noted with some disgust:

There are already ten such appended to the walls of the church, recording the military or agricultural merits of different individuals who have fallen during the disturbances on the frontier...³⁴

The vestry, the archdeacon found, were reluctant to discourage the practice as it would mean loss of revenue. To Merriman this smacked of money changing in the temple, but he recorded that the vestry gave his suggestion that donors be encouraged to contribute towards stained glass windows, altar screens, altar cloths, Communion vessels, memorial porches or other artefacts to beautify the edifice rather than swell its coffers, a sympathetic hearing. Merriman went away from the meeting determined to take more positive action, and addressed a carefully-phrased letter to the officers of regiments in Grahamstown, in which he encouraged the practice of giving donations to the church, emphasized the continuity between his suggestion and practice in the Church of England, and avoided any suggestion of innovation on his own part:

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., p.24. See also CVMB, vol.I, 31 Jan. 1849, p.148.

³⁴ Cape Journals, p.24.

The tablets in question cannot be said to add much to the beauty or sanctity of the building while the vast increase of such records...in such a fabric as Westminster Abbey has at length convinced the more reflecting part of Christian worshippers of the inappropriateness of introducing a number of such monuments into the house of prayer.

Hence the practice has recently grown up in several churches in our native land of...beautifying the church itself...expressly in the way of a memorial to some departed friend or parishioner.

I need not say how greatly the Colonial churches generally, or how the Church of St George at Graham's Town in particular might be benefitted by such an application of funds raised in memory of a deceased friend... 35

Both proposals achieved only gradual acceptance, as the dates of memorial tablets still on St George's walls indicate, but whereas the question of memorial tablets was only of secondary importance, Merriman considered it necessary to pursue the question of pews.

On 4 October 1849, St George's grammar school was opened. The building was also to be the venue for the Sunday school which until then had been held in the church itself. Merriman hoped that this would lead to "increased reverence for the House of God."³⁶ He suggested to the vestry as a first step in this direction, and as a prelude to the consecration of the church, that the high and unsightly pulpit be given away, and that the existing reading desk be used in its stead. Anticipating the objection that the pews were too high and the reading desk too low to allow the congregation to see the preacher, and clearly having decided that the time had come to speak his mind, Merriman stated quite plainly:

...I would say that nothing would more contribute to the devotional character and appearance of the building than a lowering of the front of all the seats in the body of the Church - and a substitution of some ecclesiastical looking seat ends instead of pew doors, these latter being tokens of exclusiveness and of those human distinctions which are best avoided in the house of common prayer. 37

³⁵ Ibid., p.25.

³⁶ Ibid., p.78.

³⁷ GDA 1024, NJM to Minister and Churchwardens of St George's, 4 Oct. 1849.

He did not expect immediate achievement of the ideal, but suggested the removal of pew doors and the lowering of the front pews as a model for future improvements. He was careful to suggest rather than to order, to encourage in the churchwardens an awareness of their spiritual as well as administrative duty, and to make it clear that his proposals were not personal or purely aesthetic quirks, but based on the teaching of the Church of England laid down in the Book of Common Prayer. He reminded the churchwardens, "whose business it is to see that the Rubric is in all things complied with," that the height of the pews meant that

...the public celebration of Baptism during divine Service after the 2nd lesson as the Prayer Book directs, would hardly edify the congregation, who would be excluded from the sight and almost from the hearing of the office. ³⁸

The archdeacon's suggestion was discussed at the monthly vestry meeting in November 1849, and it was decided to use the reading desk, raised on a platform, as the pulpit, and to accept Merriman's offer of a new reading desk. The suggested lowering of the pews was ignored.³⁹ News of the change caused "fret and suspicion"⁴⁰ in the congregation, and by early December something like panic had set in among the vestrymen. An altar cloth, and Communion linen and plate which they had ordered from England had arrived, and they were alarmed at the rapid change they had set in motion. "Finding that they were haunted by the bugbear of Puseyism,"⁴¹ Merriman addressed a reassuring memorandum to them:

The Archdeacon has no wish to urge the church wardens and vestry of St George's Church to make alterations in the church which they are of opinion will be offensive to the great body of the congregation....The pulpit and

³⁸ Ibid. Public baptism was at this time the exception rather than the rule, but the practice of baptizing infants during Morning or Evening Prayer was gradually being reintroduced. (G.J. Cuming, A History of Anglican Liturgy, p.194.) In January 1850, a synod of clergy in the eastern province resolved to encourage this in their churches, and to perform the ceremony at the great feasts. (Cape Journals, p.87.)

³⁹ CVMB, vol.I, 21 Nov. 1849, p.169.

⁴⁰ Cape Journals, p.85.

⁴¹ Ibid.

reading pew had better remain as they are than that a change intended to promote God's glory should be converted into a handle for fostering angry and suspicious feelings. ⁴²

Patient though the tone of the memorandum was, Merriman must have been disappointed at his failure to carry any change. Nevertheless, he presented the reading pew to St George's, and it was accepted by the vestry although not used to replace the existing structure. The archdeacon's hopes for change received a further setback. At the annual general meeting of St George's congregation in March 1850, a committee was appointed to conduct an opinion poll among the congregation on the proposed changes. ⁴³ The April vestry meeting halted the forum of discussion this seemed to provide by their unreasoning interpretation of Merriman's memorandum. They argued that, as the archdeacon himself had stated that he had no wish to introduce change offensive to the congregation, no further discussion was necessary. ⁴⁴ An important principle was at stake, and Merriman still did not give up. Nevertheless, when in February 1854, five years after he had suggested the lowering of pews, the vestry agreed, upon receiving an objection, to restore the height of a pew which had been lowered, and to make no further alterations, ⁴⁵ he must have felt somewhat despondent. In 1843 Samuel Wilberforce defended the expediency of the pew system, but opposed the construction of large and luxurious pews and was indignant at the denial of the spirit of Christianity which the claim to exercise special private rights in the church implied. ⁴⁶ Merriman might have smiled ruefully at a contemporary satire on attachment to box pews, the exclusivism they encouraged, and the irrational but seemingly inevitable fears aroused by proposals of change. He might also have been comforted to know that the struggle was by no means

⁴² Ibid., p.86.

⁴³ CVMB, vol.I, 5 Mar. 1850, pp.173-174. There seems to be some confusion here. Merriman records in his journal that the congregation itself at the 1850 annual general meeting refused to hear of any change. (Cape Journals, p.113.) Clearly, resistance came from clergy and congregation.

⁴⁴ CVMB, vol.I, 3 Apr., pp.174-175.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 9 Feb. 1854, pp.262-263.

⁴⁶ D. Newsome, The Parting of Friends, p.272.

confined to Grahamstown:

O my own darling pue, which might serve for a bed,
 With its cushions so soft and its curtains of red;
 Of my half waking visions that pue is the theme
 And when sleep seals my eyes, of my pue still I dream.
 Foul fall the despoiler, whose ruthless award
 Has condemned me to squat, like the poor, on a board,
 To be crowded and shov'd, as I sit at my prayers
 As though my devotions could mingle with theirs.

...

'Tis a part, I'm afraid, of a deeply laid plan
 To bring back the abuses of Rome if they can.
 And when SHE is triumphant, you'll bitterly rue
 That you gave up that Protestant bulwark - your pew.⁴⁷

The news in May 1854 that the parishioners of St George's had agreed that pews should be lowered and the doors removed⁴⁸ must have been a cause of rejoicing to Merriman, though long delayed. In November 1854, the Bishop of Grahamstown, describing St George's church, paid direct tribute to the archdeacon's influence and efforts:

The interior, through the successful exertions of Arch-deacon Merriman, the colonial chaplain, and the vestry, has been made as comely as possible, and has, on the whole, a reverential and church-like aspect.⁴⁹

The pew issue was by no means the only debate between Merriman and St George's vestry and congregation in these early years. Clerical dress was yet another sensitive area. Robert Gray was anxious about settler reaction when Merriman appeared in a cassock in Cape Town, the first time such a high church garment had been seen in southern Africa,⁵⁰ and the archdeacon himself noted with satisfaction and as an encouraging sign in February 1849 that he had lived in Grahamstown for a month "wearing nothing but my Cassock and yet have not been stoned to death for a Puseyite."⁵¹ The surplice however was

⁴⁷ John Noake, The Rambler in Worcestershire, quoted in John Betjeman, English Parish Churches, p.38.

⁴⁸ CVMB, vol.I, 8 May 1854, p.267.

⁴⁹ T.T. Carter, A Memoir of Bishop Armstrong, p.278.

⁵⁰ PBH, p.36.

⁵¹ SPG mic., vol. C/AFS/5, Cape Town diocese, NJM to EH, 25 Feb. 1849.

another matter. Its use had been the subject of much controversy in the reign of Elizabeth I, one of the canons of 1604 had ordered it to be worn during services and the administration of sacraments, and in the mid-nineteenth century there was a good deal of anti-ritualist agitation against the wearing of the surplice in the pulpit.⁵² At Exeter in 1845, a crowd of five thousand protested against the wearing of the surplice during a sermon, and threatened with violence a clergyman who wore one.⁵³ Grahamstown was no ecclesiastical backwater, but fully informed on the surplice question. The congregation of St George's on the whole, did not think that the surplice should be worn in the pulpit, but in January 1849 an archdeacon came to reside among them, and as he displayed tender regard for their surplice scruples, they responded with anxious desire to please him:

The members of the vestry having been informed that the Venerable the Archdeacon has...abstained from preaching in the morning of Sacrament Sundays because he disapproves of the frequent changing of garments during Divine Service, and has been led to suppose that to keep on his surplice on such occasions gave offence to the congregation, resolved that the Archdeacon be assured that it is not the wish of the vestry or...of the congregation...to dictate to him in such matters, but that in the performance of his duties he should carry out the rules and usages of the Church of England as he may judge most conducive to edification.⁵⁴

This was a concession to Merriman's convenience, but not a yielding of principle and despite the high sounding conclusion, where change affected their own habits or their purse, the vestry were less eager to give the archdeacon his way or to welcome the edification he sought to bestow.

The surplice issue did not really catch the imagination of Grahamstown. It raised its head only once more, in 1854 after the arrival of a bishop for the city. The colonial chaplain preached in a surplice in St George's, although he did not afterwards preside at the "Communion table." Members of the congregation objected. But this time, a bishop had come to dwell among them, and he wished a

⁵²ODCC, p.1325.

⁵³O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church, vol.I, pp.219-221.

⁵⁴Cape Journals, p.47.

surplice to be worn by all clergy at the Holy Communion, and besides St George's was now a cathedral church, and on the whole, the vestry did not think it desirable that any further steps should be taken in the matter.⁵⁵ None were.

Members of the Church of England did not expect to contribute to the support of their clergy, except for obvious services rendered by performance of marriages and burials. In England, clerical income was derived from endowments. In southern Africa there was no such legacy, nor was there a church rate levied on the whole population to maintain the church. Clergy were paid by the S.P.G. and by the government, and the day to day running of the church was financed by pew rents. There was no poor rate, and the practice of almsgiving was neglected. Merriman was under no illusions about the state of religion among the colonists:

...reports about the great desire of people here and there to have a Church and a Clergyman settled among them differs too often from the stern realities of the case. There is often a great unsoundness in this wish or supposed wish - one man wishes his estate to be more valuable, another likes the respectability of the idea, another unconsciously perhaps wants something respectable to bully and ride roughshod over, and as long as the Government or the Bishop or anyone else will build the Churches and pay the Clergy they are very well content. But unless things are conducted exactly to their mind, they will not bestir themselves much, either in support of the minister or in building the fabric.⁵⁶

Merriman had set out to reverse this view, which regarded the church as an extension of the civil establishment and as every Englishman's birthright, and took it for granted. Merriman considered the principle of raising funds for church purposes by pew rents, subscription lists and bazaars, a wrong principle.⁵⁷ As archdeacon, Merriman received £400 a year from the colonial treasury, but like Robert Gray he believed that government grants would be withdrawn with the advent of responsible government at the Cape.⁵⁸ The alternative was voluntary

⁵⁵ CVMB, vol. I, 1 Dec. 1854, pp.279-281.

⁵⁶ SPG mic., vol. C/AFS/5, Cape Town diocese, NJM to EH, 25 Feb. 1849.

⁵⁷ Cape Journals, p.85.

⁵⁸ M. Nuttall, unpubl. ts; see below, ch.5.

anonymous giving without expecting any material return. Merriman knew that the introduction of the weekly offertory would meet with opposition and the usual charge of Puseyism, but perseverance would be worthwhile for, as with all his reforms, the underlying reason for change was to encourage a different view of the church from that which prevailed at the Cape:

The absence of the poor rates and church rates makes the introduction of the Offertory in the Colonies an affair which commends it to the plain common sense of men when their minds are not warped by the cry of no Puseyism, and I do think it ought in every way to be promoted - and I equally think that Pews ought to be strongly resisted...If in ten years time we have done something in checking this evil and substituting a sound system of almsgiving...we shall not I think have laboured altogether in vain.⁵⁹

On 18 February 1849 Merriman preached a sermon in St George's recommending the weekly offertory, and being careful to emphasize continuity not innovation. The practice began on 25 February, and on 15 March he recorded that he was "thankful to say that the offertory has been well received and the results of it are very encouraging - Esto perpetua."⁶⁰

The principle that the church in south Africa, if it was to take root, should be self-supporting, was clearly set out by Robert Gray in a pastoral letter to the laity of the diocese on 1 January 1850. He was convinced that the church should depend for maintenance and growth on the weekly offertory, which should pay for the repair of the church, the support of the minister, and for mission work. The bishop suggested that on Communion Sundays, the collection should be devoted to the poor and to the support of clergy widows and orphans, and that where there was a fifth Sunday it should be spent on education.⁶¹ Gray made allowance for the fact that local needs varied, but the congregation at St George's resolved to follow the basic guidelines set down by the bishop. At the annual general meeting of parishioners in April 1850, the vestry reported that out of a total income of

⁵⁹SPG mic., vol. C/AFS/5, Cape Town diocese, NJM to EH, 25 Feb. 1849.

⁶⁰Cape Journals, p.30.

⁶¹CNG, vol.I, pp.257-262.

£1367.9.0½, which included pew rents and donations, £330.4.8½ had been raised by offertory collections. The vestry found it "highly encouraging to observe the large sums that have been collected for several excellent purposes by this anciently appointed method."⁶² Despite the early acceptance of this scheme, Robert Gray's description of the colonial laity as "turbulent" and "self-willed"⁶³ was fully justified, as Merriman soon found.

St George's church in mid-1850 was in need of repair, but funds were not available. The vestry approached Merriman with the suggestion that two offertories a month be spent on the church fabric. This made Merriman "reflect sadly on the utilitarian spirit provoked by our seeming success in drawing out men's liberality through the offertory." His reply to the vestry was pointed:

I concur with you in deploring the state of God's house while so many of the congregation worshipping in it have comfortable and costly houses for themselves to dwell in.⁶⁴

He pointed out that the congregation was free to contribute to the fabric repairs separately from the offertory. He also stated his unwillingness to change a system which had been in operation a year, and expressed the hope that collections made on the fifth Sunday of the month would eventually be donated to areas where there was no church building. In the meantime, he allowed the vestry to use the collection made on the fifth Sunday of the month to be devoted to repair of St George's, thinking it wiser to let the matter die down.⁶⁴

In January 1851, Merriman found that the vestry had failed to raise £100 towards the stipend of a clergyman for Grahamstown as they had agreed to do, and £100 given specifically for a hospital had been used to pay off the debt on the school. Forty-eight pounds from the offertory which had been earmarked for other purposes had also gone towards the school debt.⁶⁵ The archdeacon asked for an explanation.

⁶²CVMB, vol.I, 1 Apr. 1850, p.174.

⁶³CNG, vol.I, p.257.

⁶⁴Material in this paragraph is in N.J. Merriman, unpublished journals, vol.IV, pp.1-10, now housed in Cory Library.

⁶⁵Cape Journals, p.114, pp.148-149.

The vestry replied that they were "not aware that the money was not at their disposal."⁶⁶ Here was the seed of future conflict. Ecclesiastical law vested regulation of parochial accounts in the archdeacon, but the ordinance conferred financial responsibility on the vestry and churchwardens, without mentioning an archdeacon. Merriman regarded the ordinance as a contravention of church law and thought it should be ignored, whereas the vestry, while accepting Merriman's oversight where it confirmed their administration, claimed the ordinance as their authority where it did not. Merriman deplored their attitude:

Alas! for the tone of church feeling as regards the sacredness of a trust, and alas! for the tone of commercial integrity which public opinion in a colony allows to pass current.⁶⁷

The churchwardens for 1850-1851 were D.H. Kennelly, a merchant of the town, and R. Holland, an agent of Bathurst Street; the vestrymen were F. Carlisle, deputy sheriff; F.H. Cole, apothecary and postmaster; J.G. Franklin, editor of the Frontier Times; E.L. Kift and J.G. Nicholls, merchants, and Charles Pote, auctioneer.⁶⁸ All were businessmen and public figures, capable and independent, men with considerable responsibility in their own secular sphere. Moreover, Cole, Kift, Nicholls and Pote had previous experience as vestrymen. The resistance of these sturdy and self-made colonists to what they regarded as Merriman's interference is not difficult to understand. His talk of trust and integrity and claim as archdeacon to regulate parochial funds must have seemed to them lightweight when compared with their solid duty to spend the money sensibly, by the authority vested in them by Ordinance 2 of 1839.

St George's continued to rely on government grants, pew rents and subscription lists for income throughout Merriman's life. Neither as archdeacon nor as bishop did he succeed in eradicating the insistence of church members upon controlling the money which they had contributed.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.149.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ CVMB, vol.I, 4 Mar. 1851, p.195.

Underlying this dispute over the control of money was the more profound question of authority in the church. Was the source of authority an ordinance passed by a civil government, as the vestry of St George's alleged, or was authority vested in bishops and the clergy ordained by them? There is evidence that Merriman sought legal advice on the action of the vestry in this case of misappropriation of funds, and on the broader question of the force of the canons of the Church of England at the Cape, but took no action. Nor was the legal status of the Anglican church at the Cape defined by the opinion of the attorney-general, but by long and painful litigation.⁶⁹

Merriman found among churchmen in the eastern province a deep attachment to the church of their fathers, the Church of England, which they equated with the status quo in the form of the ordinance churches. Any change was regarded with deep suspicion.⁷⁰ This prejudice, where bolstered by the law of the land, became doubly difficult to break down. Merriman's own loyalty to the Church of England, as deep as that of the colonists, was the reason for his opposition to the church ordinances. He commented soon after his arrival in Grahamstown:

It is mortifying to hear from colonial chaplains...how the will of the Church has been set aside under the arbitrary dictation of Governors, there being no Bishop to interfere in the chaplain's support, and spiritual matters have been hastily decided by a soldier or a sailor which the Committee of Privy Council with the Lord Chancellor at their head would have shrunk from determining.⁷¹

A difference of principle between Merriman and St George's vestry which arose over the status and function of churchwardens made clear the validity of this criticism.

⁶⁹GDA 145, Legal opinion taken by Archdeacon Merriman on the application of English ecclesiastical law at the Cape and on the extent of his own jurisdiction.

⁷⁰SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, J.C. Chase to NJM, 6 Dec. 1854; NJM to J.C. Chase, 7 Dec. 1854.

⁷¹Cape Journals, p.22.

In terms of Ordinance 2 of 1839, members of St George's vestry were appointed by a meeting of male inhabitants of Grahamstown, "being members of and holding communion with the United Church of England and Ireland as by law established..."⁷² This was originally understood to refer to communicants, but in 1841, the non-communicants staged an objection, and the attorney-general when consulted, defined church members as those who called themselves churchmen.⁷³ To Gray and Merriman, ecclesiastical government by ordinance and attorney-general's intervention was precisely the kind of Erastianism they were trying to overcome.

At the January 1849 synod, western province clergy had tentatively laid down the principle that only parishioners who were communicants should elect sidesmen and churchwardens, and by implication, that these officers should themselves be communicants. The aim was to apply, where possible, the pattern of government of the Church of England, despite the ill-defined position of that body at the Cape.⁷⁴ When Merriman went to Grahamstown, a majority of the members of the vestry were non-communicants,⁷⁵ but in February 1849 he wrote optimistically:

I am sanguine enough to entertain the hope that the next Church Wardens and Select Vestrymen of the Capital of the E. Province will be Communicants.⁷⁶

He must have been further encouraged when the April 1849 vestry meeting unanimously resolved

...that the Venerable Archdeacon be solicited to furnish for the guidance of the churchwardens a code of regulations suitable to the state of the Church in this Colony.⁷⁷

⁷² Ordinance 2 of 1839. See Appendix B.

⁷³ Cape Journals, p.22.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp.15-17.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.22.

⁷⁶ SPG mic., vol. C/AFS/5, Cape Town diocese, NJM to EH, 25 Feb. 1849. The "Capital of the E. Province" is a reference to Grahamstown.

⁷⁷ Cape Journals, p.47.

This resolution suggests that the vestry realised that the instructions laid down by the church ordinance fell short of the requirements of the Church of England. Merriman's subsequent experience indicates that it was the result of initial politeness shortly after the arrival of the archdeacon, and that in practice they were reluctant to change.

By August 1849, Robert Gray had decided to make attendance at Holy Communion the qualification in elections for churchwardens, and where this was not possible, to require voters to sign a declaration of membership of "the Church in the Diocese of Cape Town, in Communion with the Church of England."⁷⁸

In England, where in theory all citizens were members of the established church, payment of tithe and church rate qualified parishioners to vote at the Easter vestry. In practice, the church rate had become so unpopular that dissenters required by law to pay tithe and church rate and therefore eligible to vote, had attended Easter vestry meetings in large numbers, swamped the actual congregation, elected dissenting churchwardens and thus prevented the levying of a church rate.⁷⁹ Gray's decision to require a declaration of church membership was designed to prevent dissenting attendance at vestry meetings, and to increase the church's control over her members.⁸⁰ The bishop was requiring an affirmation of faith rather than the fact of citizenship as a qualification for church membership in an attempt to express his belief that the Church of England had life and authority beyond the establishment, where the establishment was represented by the national church in England and the ordinance churches at the Cape.

A synod of clergy of the eastern Cape agreed in January 1850 to Robert Gray's proposal that churchwardens who were not communicants would not be admitted to office.⁸¹ Despite the vestry's resolution of 1849, the bishop's decision,⁸² and Merriman's protest, one of the

⁷⁸CNG, vol.I, p.249.

⁷⁹O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church, vol.I, pp.81-89.

⁸⁰CNG, vol.I, pp.249-250.

⁸¹Cape Journals, p.87.

⁸²The regulations drawn up by Robert Gray were published in 1850 as a pamphlet, Instructions for the guidance and information of

churchwardens elected for St George's at Easter 1850 was not a communicant. In law, under the ordinance, there was nothing Merriman could do but recognize him as churchwarden, but as archdeacon he refused to admit him to office. As he told the vestry:

...it was vain to ask the Bishop and myself to make regulations and then expect that those regulations should so bend to the imperfect condition of the Church [at the Cape]...as that we should make no distinction between those who communicate with her and those who do not...⁸³

In 1850, Robert Gray's Instructions for the Guidance and Information of the Ministers and Parishioners in Parishes of the Communion of the Church of England in the Diocese of Capetown... was published. It laid down guidelines for the selection and duties of churchwardens and sidesmen, the summoning and conduct of vestry meetings and other parochial affairs "where these matters are not specially provided for by Local Ordinance." It seems that, in spite of this proviso, Merriman regarded the ordinances as so faulty that he was determined to introduce the pattern of parochial government formulated in Gray's instructions into all parishes in his archdeaconry, including the ordinance churches. In terms of Robert Gray's "Instructions..." churchwardens were required to make a declaration to the archdeacon at his visitation:

I declare that I will truly and faithfully execute the office of Churchwarden within my Parish, according to the best of my skill and knowledge.⁸⁴

In 1852 C.H. Huntley and Edward Booth were elected churchwardens of St George's as laid down in the ordinance. On 10 April 1852, Merriman issued a citation to attend his visitation of the church on 13 April, at which he would inspect parochial books and receive their declaration of office, "which it is my function to require before receiving him as Churchwarden according to the Customs and usages of

the ministers and parishioners in parishes of the Communion of the Church of England in the Diocese of Capetown, where those matters are not specially provided for by Local Ordinance.

⁸³Cape Journals, p.113.

⁸⁴Instructions for the guidance and information of the ministers..., pp.4-5.

the Church of England." Despite this assurance that Merriman's action conformed to the practice of the Church of England, Booth refused to sign the declaration because nothing in the ordinance under which he had taken office required him to do so.⁸⁵

In 1850, confronted with an errant churchwarden, Merriman had decided to work with him in practice, though refusing to recognize him as duly instituted to office. In 1852, confronted with a similar situation, he was not prepared to compromise in this way. The reason is not clear, but part of the explanation may be in the fact that the vestry and congregation at St George's had taken the first steps towards securing repeal of the church ordinance, and Merriman may have felt that as they were being weaned away from it, he should reinforce this process by behaving as if it were no longer in force. Booth's motive is not clear either. He was only twenty-eight at the time, employed as a clerk in Grahamstown, and he was serving on the vestry for the first time. Self-importance may be the key to his conduct, but he possessed strong prejudices. He told the vestry:

...I need scarcely remind you, that painful as it is, ... as the son of an Evangelical Clergyman of our Beloved Church, I feel myself bound by Law to continue to act as Church Warden, in accord^{ce} with the 17th Clause of the Ord^{ce}.⁸⁶

His father, the Rev. George Booth M.A., had been colonial chaplain at Fort Beaufort, and this suggests that young Edward had breathed the air of congregational Erastianism since birth, and found that it suited his constitution.

Merriman pointed out that it was as archdeacon that he ministered in St George's, and if Booth continued to refuse to recognize his archidiaconal authority and if the vestry supported their recalcitrant member, he could no longer minister in that church. Merriman appealed to the vestry to persuade Booth to sign the declaration of office, or

⁸⁵CVMB, vol.I, Mar.-May 1852, pp.217-236; GDA 1029 Documents relating to Merriman's Visitations at St George's, Grahamstown, 1850-1852, E. Booth to Select Vestry, 24 April 1852.

⁸⁶GDA 1029, Documents relating to Merriman's Visitations at St George's, Grahamstown, 1850-1852, E. Booth to Select Vestry, 17 Apr. 1852.

to elect another churchwarden. In law, the vestry could not dislodge Booth from office, as he had been duly elected under the ordinance, but pressure was brought to bear and after numerous vestry meetings in April 1852, he resigned, protesting profusely. Merriman had prevailed, but his triumph was not complete. The vestry were motivated by a desire for peace rather than by a wish to please the archdeacon. Furthermore, they only acted as they did because there was no conflict between the church ordinance and the declaration Merriman required. If it had been necessary to choose between the two, their decision might have been different:

...this Vestry is of opinion that as there is nothing in the said declaration contrary to the Spirit and intention of the Local Church Ordinance No 2. 1839, Mr Booth is not justified in refusing to comply with the injunction of the Archdeacon. ⁸⁷

Booth had not permanently lost the confidence of the congregation or the vestry. Each year from 1853 to 1867 he was elected to the vestry, and on ten occasions he served as churchwarden. But perhaps Merriman did have the last word, for Booth on each occasion signed the required declaration of office.

It is clear that Merriman found Booth a trying young man, and that he exercised both patience and firmness throughout the episode. The incident gave warning of the disruption a determined individual could cause, and of the potential danger he posed when the law supported him. The time for such a trial had not yet come.

St George's, Grahamstown, was not the only church in which Merriman took an interest, although he hoped that improvements there would filter through to other churches in his archdeaconry. ⁸⁸ The area for which he was responsible stretched to Richmond in the west and the Kei in the east, and took in the Orange River Sovereignty to the north. ⁸⁹ On 7 February 1849 he went on the first of many archidiaconal journeys,

⁸⁷ CVMB, vol.I, 21 Apr. 1852, p.225.

⁸⁸ Cape Journals, p.86.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp.27-30.

visiting Sidbury, Uitenhage, Bethelsdorp and Port Elizabeth, and returning to Grahamstown on 15 February.⁹⁰ Far from encouraging change, news of reforms in Grahamstown was exaggerated and colonists in Karoo towns became alarmed at the activities of the archdeacon. Rumours of this nature were not confined to southern Africa. In 1845 Newman had been received into the Church of Rome, and in 1851 Manning was to follow him. In the same year the Roman Catholic hierarchy was restored in England.⁹¹ Accusations of papal aggression were in the air, and suspicion of high churchmen was rife. In August 1849, Merriman visited Graaff-Reinet. "I was grieved during my stay here," he wrote,

...to find how busy the "father of lies" had been in propagating stories respecting our Graham's Town church doings, to terrify this people with the bugbear of Puseyism. Mr L. [Long] is a good but timid man, and I tried not to wound his prejudices or excite his alarm by suppressing even my poor vessels for the celebration of the H. [Holy] Communion which I carry with me, lest offence should be taken at the use of them, and we made use instead of a common silver drinking cup and small metal waiter to which Mr L. is accustomed, so much will the bugbear of a word frighten men even out of common decorum.⁹²

Graaff-Reinet and William Long were independently to prove thorns in Robert Gray's flesh.⁹³ Nathaniel Merriman was particularly tried by the ecclesiastical climate of Port Elizabeth.

The problems which confronted Gray and Merriman in Port Elizabeth resembled those of Grahamstown, except in degree. St Mary's was one of the ordinance churches.⁹⁴ The colonial chaplain, who had been in Port Elizabeth since 1825, was the eccentric Francis McClelland.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.68.

⁹¹ O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church, vol.I, pp.291-309.

⁹² Cape Journals, p.68.

⁹³ PBH, pp.51-53, 91-92; see below, pp.71-75.

⁹⁴ A.T. Wirgman and C.E. Mayo, The Collegiate Church and Parish of St Mary, Port Elizabeth.

⁹⁵ PBH, pp.14, 26; G. Churchouse, The Reverend Francis McClelland, Colonial Chaplain to Port Elizabeth 1825-1853 : a family history.

When Robert Gray visited the town in September 1848, he found it in a state of "spiritual slumber",⁹⁶ characterized by much quarrelsomeness among churchmen,⁹⁷ who were nevertheless united in devotion to church ordinances and pew rents.⁹⁸ The appointment of an Archdeacon of Grahamstown did nothing to improve this situation, as Robert Gray noted:

...Port Elizabeth always looks with a jealous eye on Graham's Town, to which it is a sort of rival, and so it calls the Archdeacon names.... It is our weakest point, and they think we do not sufficiently estimate the importance of the place, or do enough for them.⁹⁹

Ironically, despite their resentment at Grahamstown's acquisition of a senior ecclesiastic, churchmen in Port Elizabeth were opposed to episcopal or archidiaconal or even clerical supervision of church government. Robert Gray described their attitude as "republicanism",¹⁰⁰ while Merriman called Port Elizabeth potentially "a very dangerous Plymouth",¹⁰¹ adding, "There is no place in the Diocese where the Laity have their Pastor so much under their thumb."¹⁰² Merriman's attempts to induce the churchwardens to sign the declaration of office, to improve church furnishings and the quality of services met with stiff

⁹⁶CNG, vol.I, p.315.

⁹⁷Ibid., p.197.

⁹⁸Cape Journals, p.18.

⁹⁹CNG, vol.I, pp.248-249.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p.249.

¹⁰¹SPG mic., vol. D, Cape Town diocese, NJM to EH, 2 Aug. 1852. What Merriman meant by this description is not clear. Robert Gray refers to a similar phenomenon at Wynberg among civil servants on leave from India. (CNG, vol.I, p.249.) The history and doctrine of the Plymouth Brethren may be the key to an explanation. First established in Ireland by J.N. Darby, a former Anglican priest, their first English centre was Plymouth. In 1848, they split into the "open" and "exclusive" brethren, and so had recently been in the news. Their view of the church was a complete contradiction of that held by Gray and Merriman. Their teaching was a blend of Calvinism and Pietism. Most significant is the fact that they stressed the complete autonomy of the local church. (ODCC, p.1104.)

¹⁰²SPG mic., vol. D, Cape Town diocese, NJM to EH, 2 Aug. 1852.

resistance from Port Elizabeth.¹⁰³ Eventually, when McClelland died, Merriman moved there, to "run the gauntlet" himself, at "this selfish ungrateful, money-making Corinth."¹⁰⁴

Accounts of Merriman's locum tenens of the parish of St Mary vary. Clearly, he was unpopular when he went to Port Elizabeth. As archdeacon, he was bound to maintain conformity with the rubrics in the parishes under his charge, and he could not be seen to be countenancing breaches of it at St Mary's. It was alleged after Merriman left Port Elizabeth, by a source not unsympathetic to the archdeacon,¹⁰⁵ that he had preached in a surplice, introduced the offertory and used the Prayer for the Church Militant at the end of the office of Morning Prayer,¹⁰⁶ and that, as a result, sixty members of the congregation seceded, held services in an unlicensed room, and appealed to Robert Gray to appoint a minister to serve them.¹⁰⁷ In 1858, in a private

¹⁰³ A.T. Wirgman and C.E. Mayo, op.cit., p.23; CNG, vol.I, p.248.

¹⁰⁴ SPG mic., vol. D, Cape Town diocese, NJM to EH, 2 Aug. 1852.

¹⁰⁵ The account of Merriman's work in Port Elizabeth appears in T.T. Carter, Memoir of Bishop Armstrong, pp.280-281. T.T. Carter (1808-1901) was educated at Eton and Oxford. He became rector of Clewer in 1844. Strongly influenced by the Tractarians, in 1852 he founded a religious order for women. Throughout his life he took a prominent part in the high church movement.

¹⁰⁶ G.J. Cuming in A History of Anglican Liturgy, points out that nineteenth century doctrinal disputes were accompanied by a movement towards more faithful observation of the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, which led to adoption of now ordinary usages such as preaching in the surplice, public administration of baptism, vesting choristers in surplices, use of the credence table, daily recitation of Morning and Evening Prayer, and reading of the Prayer for the Church Militant on Sundays when there was no celebration of the Holy Communion. (G.J. Cuming, op.cit., p.194.) The colonial churches were in advance of the Church of England in introducing stricter observance of the rubrics. At the time that Merriman introduced the practice of reading the Prayer for the Church Militant at the Cape, the bishops of the Province of Australasia advocated a similar practice, as did the Canadian bishops. (H. Lowther Clarke, op.cit., pp.101, 213.) By contrast, in 1851, the English bishops in a joint pastoral letter defended those who followed accepted custom rather than the letter of the rubric.

¹⁰⁷ A.T. Wirgman and C.E. Mayo, op.cit., pp.27-28.

letter with a small circulation, Merriman denied these charges : he had not preached wearing a surplice, nor had he introduced the offertory, and he had only used the Prayer for the Church Militant after careful consideration and after attempts to consult the churchwardens had failed. He also pointed out that the secession had occurred after he had left Port Elizabeth.¹⁰⁸ Merriman issued no public denial of the charges in the interest of clearing his name, as he realised that it would do the church no good. Enough damage had been done. It is difficult to measure Merriman's role in provoking the secession, but it is clear that soon after he left Port Elizabeth, a separate congregation was formed. Robert Gray was not inclined to blame Merriman:

A few years hence...we shall look back with wonder at our fears and apprehensions, and may even learn to thank those who braved our displeasure in their zeal to restore order and reverence in our churches.¹⁰⁹

When John Armstrong arrived in Port Elizabeth in October 1854, he attempted to re-unite the members of the church in Port Elizabeth, without success. The bishop refused to appoint a clergyman to serve the breakaway congregation,¹¹⁰ and of them, Merriman wrote: "such secession was an event infinitely more prejudicial to the Seceders than to the Church from which they secede."¹¹¹ It was Armstrong's successor, Henry Cotterill, who drew the secessionists once more into the diocesan orbit.¹¹²

What were referred to as the "church troubles" in Port Elizabeth illustrate no new constitutional point. They do provide an example, writ large, of the consequences of weak clerical leadership over a long period, of the unreasoning obstinacy with which south African churchmen clung to local custom, and of the uninspiring and uncharitable legalism which passed for the Church of England at the Cape.

¹⁰⁸GDA 213, Memorandum giving Merriman's account of his ministry at St Mary's after the death of the Rev. F. McClelland, 4 Feb. 1858.

¹⁰⁹M. Nuttall, unpubl. ts.

¹¹⁰T.T. Carter, op.cit., p.281.

¹¹¹SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to J.C. Chase, 7 Dec. 1854.

¹¹²See below, p.142.

In spite of conflict and opposition, Merriman persevered, patiently encouraging the clergy, instructing the laity and holding to the truth as he understood it. It was a lonely life, with few encouragements. Much as he enjoyed the long walks between the small colonial towns in his archdeaconry, at times the enforced solitude gave way to an unwelcome awareness of isolation. On Sunday, 9 September 1849, while he was in Cradock, he wrote:

I must record my singular weakness. On this morning I woke after a good night's rest which I much needed almost or quite in tears from the remembrance during sleep of those beautiful lines "How cheerful along the gay mead the daisy and cowslip appear, The flocks as they carelessly feed rejoice in the spring of the year," and the consciousness that I was at this beautiful spring time in a vast arid tract where for hundreds of miles nothing but brown and withered looking plains and big bare mountains meet the eye. In vain I tried to think upon the beautiful bulbs and other flowers that the children gather near Graham's Town. Then of the almond and peach blossoms around the different farms here. It would not do. I rose, said my prayers, ate my breakfast and went out but was quite unnerved not being able to shake off the thought of the beautiful fields between Overleigh and Marshall's Elm. At length I gave vent to a good flood - heartily ashamed of myself all the time, for I knew how many real causes of grief there were in the state of things around me that I was regarding with comparative coldness while the imaginary grievance of not being able to see daisies, cowslips and grass quite overcame me. Truly man is a strange being unable to fathom his own weakness and his own mystery. I walked slowly about mine host's garden and twice repeated over Heber's hymn "I praised the earth in beauty seen - with garlands gay of various green, etc" and as I was going to preach that morning on the ingratitude of the 9 lepers I heartily strove that I might not preach to others in a strain of reproof that I felt might deservedly attach to myself. 113

Equally characteristic of Merriman is the practical note appended to this account:

Mem. On Friday night I had not slept at all tho' after a walk of 40 miles. This was in consequence of indulging too freely in Mr Campbell's (the innkeeper's) coffee and then sitting conversing briskly with Mr Warren till 12 o'clock. Hence the above folly. 114

When H.M. White, who had travelled with Merriman on the 'Gwalior', and

¹¹³ Cape Journals, pp.76-77.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p.77.

who had remained in Cape Town to head the diocesan grammar school, was able to visit Grahamstown in June and July 1851, the archdeacon wrote:

...no little comfort have I found in being able, after so long a period, in which I have been thrown quite on my own resources to take counsel again with so able and judicious a friend as Mr White. ¹¹⁵

Merriman had looked forward to working closely with John Heavyside,¹¹⁶ colonial chaplain at Grahamstown, but their relationship was complicated when at the end of 1851, Heavyside's daughter was received into the Church of Rome.¹¹⁷ Embarrassed by this, and perhaps under pressure from members of St George's congregation, Heavyside complained to Gray of Merriman's Romanizing tendencies. Whatever his personal feelings, the bishop recognized his primary duty to investigate and correct unsound doctrine, but Gray had complete confidence in Merriman, and was vigorous in his defence:

The original, bold, and masculine mind of the Archdeacon may very probably lead him to state his views with all plainness and all the more plainly, if perchance they should be unpopular. But, though I have conversed freely with him on most points, I have never heard him express a view which is not in strict accordance with the Prayer-book. And I believe no man in the Diocese would express greater abhorrence of Romish corruptions, did the occasion seem to call for it. ¹¹⁸

Gray was full of praise for the work which Merriman had done in Grahamstown within a year:

...the Church has had a great rise there, through his energy, zeal, self-denial and power. ¹¹⁹

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¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.154.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.21.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.112. Elizabeth Heavyside subsequently entered the convent of the Sisters of the Assumption, Grahamstown, and was professed as Sister Xavier. H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.II, p.101.

¹¹⁸ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A2, pp.238-239, RG to J. Heavyside, 2 Dec. 1851.

¹¹⁹ CNG, vol.I, p.248.

As Blomfield, Bishop of London, had emphasized in 1841, the Church of England without bishops was a contradiction in terms.¹²⁰ Although in theory the arrival of a bishop for Cape Town redressed this wrong at the Cape, Robert Gray found the task of episcopal oversight too much for one man. The needs of the huge colony taxed his financial resources, but the drain on his health was more serious. The committee of the Colonial Bishoprics Fund had envisaged a dual episcopal ministry, not only to white colonists, but also to supervise "the exertions of those who are labouring to spread the Gospel among the heathen tribes who adjoin the Cape Colony,"¹²¹ and to facilitate this, had suggested in 1843 that the bishop settle at Grahamstown or Uitenhage.¹²² Cape Town eventually became the first seat of a bishop in southern Africa, but the advantages of a bishopric in the eastern districts were not forgotten. One of Merriman's reasons for encouraging improvement of the interior of St George's was the hope that it might one day become a cathedral church.¹²³ A frontier war broke out in December 1850, and this reinforced Gray's resolve to found a separate see for the eastern province. He was convinced that if a bishop at the head of a band of missionaries had been at work there two or three decades earlier, the war, which he regarded as chastisement for failure to fulfil the catholic nature of the church, would have been prevented.¹²⁴ By the end of 1851, Robert Gray was determined to divide his diocese, and to place bishops in Natal, and on the Cape eastern frontier, where either Uitenhage or Grahamstown would be the cathedral city. Uitenhage had been a drostdy since de Mist, and the Colonial Bishoprics Fund committee had suggested it in 1843 as the site for a bishopric, but Grahamstown's claims were strengthened by the improvement in the quality of church life there since the arrival of Merriman. Moreover, the blunt and individualistic archdeacon was

¹²⁰ W.F. France, The Oversea Episcopate, p.9; see above, p.20.

¹²¹ PBH, pp.7-8.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Cape Journals, p.86.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p.178.

an obvious candidate for the bishop of the proposed diocese.¹²⁵ But Robert Gray was determined that the future bishop would not start off with his own disadvantages. Amidst the difficulties of negotiating with the imperial government and ecclesiastical authorities in England, and the search for men and money which formed a prelude to the division of his see, another matter was not forgotten. The Grahamstown church ordinance was an obstacle which had to be repealed : it symbolized an attitude to church order which Robert Gray opposed and was, as he politely said, "in some respects at variance with the express Canons of the Church."¹²⁶ Gray, like Merriman, found that neither attitude nor ordinance was easily eradicated.

In October 1851, Gray sent a confidential circular to the clergy of Merriman's archdeaconry to sound out their views on the appointment of the archdeacon as bishop of the projected see.¹²⁷ At the same time he began a correspondence with the colonial chaplain at Grahamstown and the churchwardens and members of St George's vestry, aimed at securing repeal of Ordinance 2 of 1839. There was a sense of urgency, as Gray wished the ordinance to be repealed before the advent of representative government at the Cape. He made it clear that he would ^{not} recommend Grahamstown as the centre of a new diocese which would have St George as the cathedral church unless the ordinance, with its Erastian overtones, was repealed.¹²⁸

On 6 November 1851 a general meeting of male parishioners of St George's resolved firstly "in Conformity with the Letter of the Bishop" to apply to the Governor and Legislative Council to repeal Ordinance 2 of 1839¹²⁹ and secondly,

¹²⁵This discussion of the relationship between Gray and Merriman, and of the division of the Cape Town diocese, owes much to M. Nuttall, unpubl. ts.

¹²⁶UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A2, p.206, RG to Minister and Churchwardens, 15 Oct. 1851.

¹²⁷UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A2, p.214, Circular to clergy, 15 Oct. 1851.

¹²⁸UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A2, pp.205-206, RG to J. Heavyside, 15 Oct. 1851, RG to Minister and Churchwardens, 15 Oct. 1851.

¹²⁹CVMB, vol.I, 6 Nov. 1851, pp.206-207.

...that the Parishioners do not wish to have the Ordinance repealed unless a resident Bishop be appointed to Grahamstown. 130

To meet the intention of both resolutions, a petition was drawn up requesting that the repealing ordinance only take effect after the arrival of the new bishop in the colony.¹³¹ Robert Gray described this proviso as "very offensive"¹³² and told Heavyside:

I am not disposed to bargain and traffic in spiritual matters, nor am I insensible to the unbecoming language used by the Parishioners, or the suspicion which it implies. 133

Clearly it was not only the ordinance that was at fault, but the attitude of the parishioners themselves. Gray sternly told the churchwardens:

The sole object I had in view was to remove a difficulty which stood in the way of a great spiritual benefit to the Parish of Graham's Town...I had hoped that my proposition would have been met by the Parishioners in the same spirit in which it was made....It seems that they regard the matter...as if it were some mercantile transaction in the conduct of which it is necessary to impose conditions, and negotiate terms, and be upon their guard. 134

In response to this rebuke, the parishioners met on 1 December 1851, and passed a resolution expressing confidence and respect for Robert Gray's action and person, and asked him to forward their petition.¹³⁵ This most recent resolution was "in point of feeling and temper...all that I could wish"¹³⁶ Robert Gray wrote, but he felt that the congrega-

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ GDA 1059, Papers dealing with the repeal of Ordinance 2 of 1839, 1851-1855, G. Thompson to RG, 11 Nov. 1851, Minister and Churchwardens to RG, 13 Nov. 1851.

¹³² UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A2, p.228, RG to J. Heavyside, 18 Nov. 1851.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A2, p.229, RG to Minister and Churchwardens, 18 Nov. 1851.

¹³⁵ CVMB, vol.I, 1 Dec. 1851, pp.208-209; GDA 1059, Papers dealing with the repeal of Ordinance 2 of 1839, 1851-1855, Minister and Churchwardens to RG, 2 Dec. 1851.

¹³⁶ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A2, p.247, RG to J. Heavyside, 10 Dec. 1851.

tion had missed the fundamental point. His primary objection had not been personal. The ordinance was at variance with the constitution and canons of the church, and he could not understand why the parishioners, when offered an alternative, clung to it. He did not abandon the proposed foundation of the see in Grahamstown, but the existing church ordinance, with its congregational and Erastian implications, was incompatible with Gray's episcopal and catholic view of the church:

...I feel so deeply the need of a hearty sympathy and ready co-operation, and a oneness of view, between a Bishop and those with whom he would be in daily contact, and who must of necessity greatly influence the whole Diocese, that I cannot recommend an arrangement which does not appear to me to promise well in this respect. 137

Robert Gray's forebodings about the possibility of a quarrel ^{with} between the St George's congregation were to be fulfilled when Merriman was Bishop of Grahamstown.

After yet another meeting of parishioners on 22 December 1851,¹³⁸ the vestry "without making reserve or stipulation",¹³⁹ resolved to request Gray to forward their petition to the Governor and Legislative Council to have the local ordinance "wholly and unconditionally repealed and annulled,"¹⁴⁰ much to the bishop's gratification. He assured the churchwardens in return that

...no effort shall be wanting on my part to induce the Church at home to found a separate See in the Eastern Province at an early period : and that I shall cordially recommend Graham's Town to be the seat and residence of the future Bishop. 141

On the same day he forwarded the memorial to John Montagu, the colonial

¹³⁷ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A2, pp.247-248, RG to Minister and Churchwardens, 10 Dec. 1851.

¹³⁸ CVMB, vol.I, 22 Dec. 1851, p.210.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.211.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p.210.

¹⁴¹ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A2, p.270, RG to Minister and Churchwardens, 30 Dec. 1851.

secretary.¹⁴²

In January 1852, however, a group in Grahamstown drew up a counter-petition, which was more heavily subscribed than the original.¹⁴³ Hopkins Badnall, bishop's commissary at the Cape in the absence of Robert Gray who was en route to England, withdrew the memorial Gray had submitted, convinced that the bishop had only done so under the impression "that it expressed an almost unanimous feeling on the part of all who were concerned" and that he had not intended "to place himself in the position of advocating the change in question,...while in fact, a majority were opposed to any such change."¹⁴⁴

Robert Gray must have decided that the advantages of Grahamstown as an episcopal residence outweighed the disadvantage, for the first Bishop of Grahamstown was consecrated in 1853. Nevertheless, Gray did not abandon his conviction that the anomalous ordinance ought to be repealed.¹⁴⁵

In 1854,¹⁴⁶ 1855¹⁴⁷ and 1856,¹⁴⁸ with the full concurrence of St George's congregation, private bills to repeal the ordinance were

¹⁴²UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A2, p.269, RG to J. Montagu, 30 Dec. 1851.

¹⁴³GDA 1059, Papers dealing with the repeal of Ordinance 2 of 1839, 1851-1855, D.H. Kennelly to J. Montagu, 31 Jan. 1852; CVMB, vol.I, p.213, 26 Jan. 1852. It is not without significance that one of the leading opponents of repeal was George Gilbert, who had been elected churchwarden of St George's at the first election under Ordinance 2 of 1839.

¹⁴⁴GDA 1059, Papers dealing with the repeal of Ordinance 2 of 1839, 1851-1855, H. Badnall to J. Montagu, 10 Feb. 1852, J. Montagu to D.H. Kennelly, 17 Feb. 1852.

¹⁴⁵UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A3, p.138, RG to Minister and Churchwardens, 13 Oct. 1853.

¹⁴⁶CVMB, vol.I, 2 Dec. 1853, 23 May 1854, 2 Jun. 1854, 21 Jun. 1854, 31 Jul. 1854, 17 Aug. 1854, pp.259-271; GDA 1059, Papers dealing with the repeal of Ordinance 2 of 1839, 1851-1855, C. Pote to J. Heavyside, 21 Jul. 1854; UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A4, p.76, RG to J. Heavyside, 16 Jun. 1854.

¹⁴⁷CVMB, vol.I, 6 Mar. 1855, 27 Apr. 1855, pp.285-288.

¹⁴⁸CVMB, vol.I, 4 Feb. 1856, 15 Feb. 1856, p.293; GDA 1059, Papers dealing with the repeal of Ordinance 2 of 1839, 1851-1855, Notes by H.M. Matthew.

introduced into the new Cape Parliament, but ignorance of parliamentary procedure impeded their passage. A synod was held in Grahamstown in 1860, a product of efforts by Gray and Merriman to cultivate a new view of the church, and to enable the church to legislate for her own members. Merriman moved that attempts to bring about parliamentary repeal of the ordinances be renewed, and the motion was carried,¹⁴⁹ but again the move came to nothing. Ordinance 2 of 1839 remained in force, a relic of congregational Erastianism which was yet to prove troublesome, and a contradiction of the episcopal and synodical government which replaced it.

Earl Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies gave permission in 1852 for the creation of three dioceses, Natal, Grahamstown and Cape Town, out of the original diocese of Cape Town.¹⁵⁰ The relationship between the Church of England and branches in the colonies was not clear, but colonial bishops were nominated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, appointed by the crown, granted letters patent and consecrated under royal mandate. A bishop would have to be found for Natal, but from the first Robert Gray hoped that Nathaniel Merriman would continue as Bishop of Grahamstown the work he had begun as archdeacon. While Merriman supported Gray's view of the church, he opposed this scheme where it affected himself. He told Ernest Hawkins, Secretary to the S.P.G., in June 1851:

And now for another subject - pray do me the kindness to prevent my hearing any more about my designation to the future See of this Eastern Province. It would indeed be a great injustice to the Church here, and utterly alien from my wish or purposes of usefulness. I am a thoroughly needy man with six small children - numbers may possibly be doubled. My last surviving parent has just died without a farthing's increase accruing to my small patrimony which is only £2000 - and this together with £1000 of my wife's is literally all we have and...a very small addition on her part, all we ever expect.

Now it is plain that the church here requires strengthening by some few men of entire independence. Poor if you like it but not absorbing the only revenues of a very poor Church in maintaining a large family as I must do. I can work well under another man and back him up I believe with valuable assistance.

¹⁴⁹ LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, p.85.

¹⁵⁰ M. Nuttall, unpubl. ts.; PBH, p.43.

But if, as I hope, the Church here is to be set afloat with something of native vigor, in tolerable independence of State shackles, and receiving as little as possible of state funds, then we require a man not encumbered with such a weight of family cares nor one who lives from hand to mouth in the way I do - to watch over her interests and foster the development of her native principles. If on the other hand we are to grow up amidst Pew rents, and unpaid Subscription lists, and Select Vestries, and Churches built by Shareholders and Government Ordinances to mould our discipline and all the like paraphernalia,...why then it is utterly necessary to send some one who can work this sort of Machinery with more of tolerance than I can do...

But it strikes me that throwing the maintenance of their clergy a good deal on the people i.e. the Church people...while it is a real blessing...yet it requires a peculiarly unencumbered and strong handed Bishop to deal with it.

Our having no chance of increased or renewed Ecclesiastical Grants here seems to me greatly in our favour. But whilst hampered with this and kindred convictions, (and in especial a mortal objection to any Colonial Minister nominating his friends to the established Chaplaincies of this Province and a willingness to die rather than have heretic wastrels thrust upon the Church in spite of the Bishop's teeth) I am not the man to fight this Battle. But I do think I could materially assist another man in fighting it.

At all events I am quite willing to go elsewhere whenever my tarrying here obstructs instead of advancing Church work.

I have also to add that my defective eyesight which entirely prevents my reading or writing by candle light, and will bear very little of the former by daylight is of itself a sufficient barrier to my embarking on an office where the increased correspondence requires a man whose faculties are all in a vigorous state of health and usefulness. The "Call of the Church" is what I hope I never shall slight or neglect where it is known to me, but I cannot consider what you contemplate as the "Call of the Church."

...this is a time when so many hearts are sore and distressed with the troubles at home that I am sure you will find no difficulty in persuading some good and courageous man to come out here who either has not a host of children - or has something on which to keep them (I tell my excellent friend Id John Thynne that he is the man to make the Colonial population greedy to build up the Church of their fathers) and such a man might walk through all rubrical and legal difficulties and so help to prove to Christendom that we are not one sort of Church on paper and another sort in practice.

Either a tough Celibate, or an endowed family man that will not sicken in the transplanting, and can endure the

provoking of all men without impatience and without yielding, is the sort of ruler we require. ¹⁵¹

Despite Merriman's reluctance, Gray did not lightly abandon his proposal, and as he found that a majority of the clergy of the eastern districts supported the nomination of the archdeacon, in December 1851 Gray formally asked Merriman to allow his name to go forward. ¹⁵²

Gray's wish for Merriman as an episcopal colleague, in addition to the archdeacon's clear qualifications for the office, had financial advantages. By August 1852, Gray had raised £8000 for the endowment of the see, and though not in itself enough, Gray hoped that the colonial government would supplement the bishop's income with the annual £400 it paid the archdeacon. Clearly this could not with justice be done unless Merriman became bishop. ¹⁵³ In spite of the urging of his diocesan and the consent of the clergy, Merriman held back. Nevertheless, in September 1851, Robert Gray formally put his proposal to the Archbishop of Canterbury, J.B. Sumner, who as Bishop of Chester had ordained Merriman priest. ¹⁵⁴ By coincidence, Sumner had recently heard Merriman's name from quite a different direction, and on a different but not unrelated issue.

In June 1852, in the course of an archidiaconal tour, Merriman had visited Graaff-Reinet, where the church of St James was governed by an ordinance. Here, a by now familiar experience was repeated. The churchwardens, with the support of the minister and vestry, refused to sign the declaration of office. Furthermore, they gave notice of their intention to consult the Archbishop of Canterbury on the extent of the archdeacon's jurisdiction. ¹⁵⁵ Sumner replied on 26 August 1852.

¹⁵¹ SPG mic., vol. D, Cape Town diocese, NJM to EH, 4 Jun. 1851.

¹⁵² UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A2, p.264, RG to NJM, 27 Dec. 1851.

¹⁵³ M. Nuttall, unpubl. ts.; GDA 214, Correspondence between Gray and the Archbishop of Canterbury relating to the appointment of Merriman as Bishop of Grahamstown and the dispute with the Churchwardens of Graaff-Reinet, RG to J.B. Sumner, 18 Sept. 1852.

¹⁵⁴ GDA 201, Ordination certificate, N.J. Merriman, 31 Jan. 1836.

¹⁵⁵ Cape Journals, pp.189, 202-203; GDA 1630, Documents relating to the dispute between Merriman, Gray, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Graaff-Reinet Churchwardens, 1852-1853, J.B. Sumner to Churchwardens, 26 Aug. 1852.

His letter was a direct denial of all Gray and Merriman had been trying to achieve in southern Africa. "The Archdeacon," he told the church-wardens,

...seems to have framed his Questions on the Canons of the Church of England, which are not binding out of England. Your church is governed by the Local ordinance, and you yourselves as church-wardens are bound by its regulations. 156

Of his own right to give an opinion on a matter arising in Gray's diocese, and not referred to him by or through the diocesan bishop, Sumner made no mention. Gray and Merriman had turned their backs on legislation for the church by civil government, and regarded government by bishops, priests and deacons, according to the canons of the church, and with lay co-operation, as vital. To Sumner, establishment, whatever form it took, was the essential characteristic of the Church of England.

In this context, in September 1852, Sumner received Gray's enthusiastic recommendation of Merriman for the see of Grahamstown:

Of his personal qualifications...I need say but little, for Your Grace knows him; but I should not be doing justice to my own feelings, if I did not bear testimony to his zeal, devotion, self-denial and soundness in the faith. Few have equalled, none can have surpassed him in singleness of mind, patient endurance, and entire forgetfulness of self. He has won the respect of all, and the affectionate regard of many of the best of our people in S. Africa. 157

The Archbishop did not reply in similar vein:

...I feel the greatest hesitation about recommending the Archdeacon...I am well aware of his excellent qualities, and fully agree with you in your estimate of his character. But his views of church discipline appear to me so unsuited to the present state of our church anywhere, and more especially in a colony, and above all in such a colony, as the Cape, that I think it would be dangerous to arm him with authority, and place him in a situation where he would be tempted to act on principles not shared, not even understood by the population of the country.

¹⁵⁶ M. Nuttall, unpubl. ts.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.; GDA 214, Correspondence between Gray and the Archbishop of Canterbury relating to the appointment of Merriman as Bishop of Grahamstown and the dispute with the Churchwardens of Graaff-Reinet, RG to J.B. Sumner, 18 Sept. 1852.

I have been long entertained by this apprehension. But it has been confirmed by an Appeal made to me recently by the Churchwardens of Graaff-Reinet, the particulars of which I enclose... 158

The second part of this letter deflected Gray's attention from the question of Merriman and the bishopric, and he took up the cudgels in opposing what he regarded as Sumner's intrusion into the affairs of his diocese. Gray objected firstly to the fact that Sumner had given an answer at all, and secondly to the nature of the answer, which undermined the pattern of discipline he sought to enforce in his diocese. Gray's attitude was based on opposition to the church ordinances and on the twin assumptions that English canon law applied at the Cape, and that his letters patent gave him authority to enforce it. The Archbishop on the other hand, saw the churchwardens' letter in pastoral terms and thought it natural that they should ask his advice.¹⁵⁹

In November 1852, Merriman again visited Graaff-Reinet, and there read Sumner's August letter to the churchwardens,

...which gave me great astonishment as it declared that the Canons were of no force out of England; that the churchwardens had no occasion to make a declaration of office as I had required them;...

This receiving an appeal from churchwardens without reference to their own Diocesan seemed such an exorbitant stretch of intermeddling power on the part of the See of Canterbury that I felt assured matters could not stand where they are. The end remains yet to be seen. 160

This was Gray's response exactly. After consultation between the Bishop of Cape Town and the Archbishop, Sumner wrote a second letter to the churchwardens of Graaff-Reinet which amended the first and vindicated Gray:

¹⁵⁸GDA, Correspondence between Gray and Archbishop of Canterbury relating to the appointment of Merriman as Bishop of Grahamstown and the dispute with the Churchwardens of Graaff-Reinet, J.B. Sumner to RG, 20 Sept. 1852.

¹⁵⁹M. Nuttall, unpubl. ts. On the applicability of English ecclesiastical law at the Cape, see below, ch.3.

¹⁶⁰Cape Journals, p.203.

I now understand, that the local ordinance to which you referred me, was antecedent in date to the appointment of a bishop to the Cape : and that the Attorney General of the Colony...has given his opinion that "the Archdeacon, being appointed by the bishop under the authority of the Letters Patent, to that effect, is authorized to exercise the control and inflict the censures which by the Rubric and Canons of the Church of England an Archdeacon may exercise over or inflict upon church wardens." And further "that the local Ordinance does not seem to except any officers named in it from episcopal or archidiaconal visitation." So that the Church wardens, in whatever manner chosen, are bound to make the usual declaration of office at the Archdeacon's Visitation.

I request you therefore to observe that the opinion which after advising with my law-officers here I sent in reply to your inquiry was different from what it would have been had I been in possession of the whole case,...

I also think it right to observe, that I looked upon your letter as merely asking for my counsel and opinion. My answer is no legal or authoritative document. As Metropolitan, I have no jurisdiction or right of interference with the diocese of Cape Town, except in the case of a formal appeal from a judicial sentence; and to such it is my wish that any future communications may be confined. 161

Sumner's original letter had in the interim done much damage to Merriman's authority at the Cape, by giving the stamp of Canterbury's approval to an attitude he sought to change. The churchwardens not only at Graaff-Reinet but in Port Elizabeth felt justified in their adherence to the ordinances, and in their resistance to the archdeacon.¹⁶² Edward Booth wrote to Graaff-Reinet to ask for details of the Archbishop's original letter, and was clearly intent on further action:

Not seeking this information for myself only, being of so much importance to the Church generally to know the sentiments of the Head of Church, I shall hope to be at liberty to make free use thereof. 163

¹⁶¹GDA 1630, Documents relating to the dispute between Merriman, Gray, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Graaff-Reinet Churchwardens, 1852-1853, J.B. Sumner to Churchwardens, 27 Dec. 1852.

¹⁶²Cape Journals, p.207.

¹⁶³GDA 1630, Documents relating to the dispute between Gray, Merriman, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Graaff-Reinet Churchwardens, 1852-1853, E. Booth to Rev. W. Long, 21 Jun. 1853.

As a result, in April 1853 Merriman requested that the Archbishop's retraction, which strengthened his own archidiaconal authority, be given as much publicity as the first letter had received.¹⁶⁴

Merriman had no wish to crow over the churchwardens, and suggested a letter from them to the press, quoting Sumner's second letter, as "the most unexceptional way of setting the matter at rest."¹⁶⁵ With this request, the churchwardens were willing to comply.

Sumner did not change his mind about Merriman's suitability for episcopal office, but he allowed Gray to nominate him. Gray told the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for the Colonies, that the nomination "did not altogether meet" with the Archbishop's approval.¹⁶⁶ By February 1853, Robert Gray had come round to Merriman's view that the colonial church would benefit from "an infusion of new life and energy...from the Mother Church,"¹⁶⁷ and he was optimistic that a suitable man could be found in England. This, Gray added, would "relieve Archdeacon Merriman from a burden which I know he is most unwilling to bear, and might possibly decline."¹⁶⁸ Several clergymen were approached to serve, but in September 1853, John Armstrong was appointed, and was consecrated Bishop of Grahamstown, with John William Colenso, Bishop of Natal, on 30 November 1853.

Bishop Armstrong arrived in his diocese in October 1854, and Archdeacon Merriman, reporting the principles on which he had acted to his new ecclesiastical superior, aptly summed up his first five years at the Cape:

...my official life in this Province has been a good deal made up of struggles of one kind and another.

¹⁶⁴GDA 1630, Documents relating to the dispute between Gray, Merriman, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Graaff-Reinet Churchwardens, 1852-1853, NJM to Churchwardens, 26 Apr. 1853, H. Badnall to NJM, 20 May 1853.

¹⁶⁵GDA 1630, Documents relating to the dispute between Gray, Merriman, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Graaff-Reinet Churchwardens, 1852-1853, NJM to Churchwardens, 1 Jun. 1853.

¹⁶⁶M. Nuttall, unpubl. ts.

¹⁶⁷UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A3, p.8, RG to Duke of Newcastle, 8 Feb. 1853.

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

Grahams Town, Graaff-Reinet and Port Elizabeth have all successively been Battle fields...on which the cause of Church Order and Archidiaconal i.e. in other words Episcopal Jurisdiction has been fought I may say Inch by Inch. ¹⁶⁹

Though he felt able to record a modicum of success, Merriman looked forward to handing over primary responsibility to Armstrong and to turning his attention to mission work, which the arrival of the bishop promised to revive.

¹⁶⁹ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to J. Armstrong, 8 Nov.1854.

CHAPTER TWO

MISSION

Honour and dishonour, praise and blame, are alike our lot : we are the imposters who speak the truth, the unknown men whom all men know; dying we still live on; disciplined by suffering, we are not done to death; in our sorrows we have always cause for joy; poor ourselves, we bring wealth to many, penniless, we own the world.

II Corinthians, 6, vv.8-10

Controversy has always surrounded the work of Christian missionaries, and because of the nature of their gospel, the debate has extended from the religious sphere to focus on their political, social, cultural and economic influence. Nathaniel Merriman was never to practise the dedicated missionary life for which he longed, and for this reason, his limited and tantalising experience, though part of the history of the Cape eastern frontier, sheds more light on the man himself than on the problems of which he was part.

Two major themes running through the history of the Christian church are the formulation of a policy for preaching its gospel, and the definition of its relationship with civil authority. Although the church points to another world and another society, it is called to be world transforming. Thus linked to time and place, the church as often conforms to and perpetuates the worst aspects of the society around it as it succeeds in transforming it.

The problem of preaching the gospel by people of one culture to people in another is as old as the church itself,¹ but approaches have varied. The apostle Paul opposed Judaizers and Hellenizers of the gospel, yet himself laboured to translate it into Greek forms of

¹Literature on the subject is vast : see for example C.N. Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture; H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture.

language and thought.² Gregory the Great advised the band of monks he sent to convert the Angles and Saxons to adopt the principle of accommodation:³

...the temples of the idols among that people should on no account be destroyed. The idols are to be destroyed, but the temples themselves are to be aspersed with holy water... For if these temples are well-built, they must be purified from the worship of demons and dedicated to the service of the true God... For it is certainly impossible to eradicate all errors from obstinate minds at one stroke...⁴

A thousand years later, Matthew Ricci (1552-1610), sought to present Christianity to the Chinese court in the thought language of imperial China,⁵ and Robert de Nobili (1577-1656), in India to convert the Brahmans became a Brahman.⁶ Opposed to this policy of identification and accommodation is an approach more often found where a dominant meets a recessive culture. Christian missionaries, seeing nothing worth preserving in the indigenous culture, and believing it was possible to start with a blank state, sought to impose their own culture, as well as their religion. This was the policy followed among the South American tribes in the wake of the voyages of discovery,⁷ and adopted to a large extent by nineteenth century missionaries in Africa.⁸ In both cases, it was a policy dictated by

²H. Richard Niebuhr, op.cit., p.10.

³J.T. Addison, The Medieval Missionary, deals with medieval missionary motives and techniques.

⁴Bede, A History of the English Church and People, bk.I, ch.30, translated by Leo Sherley-Price, pp.86-87.

⁵S. Neill, A History of Christian Missions, pp.163-165. Ricci's two major problems, translation of the word 'God' and Chinese reverence for their ancestors, and his policy of gradual change, echo Bishop Colenso's in Natal three hundred years later. See B.B. Burnett, Anglicans in Natal, ch.4.

⁶S. Neill, op.cit., pp.183-187.

⁷Ibid., pp.166-176.

⁸A.F. Walls, "Black Europeans, White Africans : some missionary motives in West Africa", in D. Baker (ed.), Studies in Church History, vol.XV : Religious Motivation : Biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian, pp.339-348, is a study of an area where both policies were attempted consecutively.

an era of self-confident and expanding imperialism.

The danger of so close an identity between church and state had been illustrated by the caesaropapism of Constantine, and in the mission field it was spelt out again and again by incidents from the massacre of Japanese Christians at Nagasaki⁹ to the Boxer rebellion, without evidence that the church had learnt from its mistakes. Not only did the missionary link with European governments pose a political threat to leaders of the societies among whom they worked, but the attendant association between western culture and Christianity created tension in the hearers' society which the missionaries could neither understand nor control. Henry Venn (1796-1873) pioneered the principle that the local church should be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating.¹⁰ Roland Allen was a twentieth century prophet of this missionary method which encouraged the use of local resources and indigenous leadership to build a Christian community which was not a foreign importation or imposition.¹¹ His teaching was largely ignored in his own lifetime : not only did enunciation of this theory imply criticism of existing missionary policy, but the real challenge lay in the difficulty of applying Venn's and Allen's proposals.

History is a continually changing view of the past, as mission historiography abundantly illustrates. Missionary annals of the nineteenth century belong to hagiography,¹² but in the twentieth century the focus has diversified, ranging from Kenneth Scott Latourette's attempt at a comprehensive world survey¹³ to Roland

⁹S. Neill, op.cit., p.159.

¹⁰S. Neill, G.H. Anderson, J. Goodwin, eds., Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission, p.636.

¹¹S. Neill, op.cit., p.343. Roland Allen's books, Missionary Methods, St Paul's or Ours?, and Essential Missionary Principles were written in 1912 and 1913 respectively. D.M. Paton (ed.), Reform of the Ministry, is an analysis and appreciation of Allen's life and work.

¹²For example, see Thornley Smith, The Earnest Missionary (1864), or C.D. Michael, James Hannington, which is subtitled "The merchant's son who was martyred for Africa." The book has no date of publication, but Hannington died in 1885.

¹³K.S. Latourette, A History of the Expansion of Christianity, in seven volumes.

Oliver's analysis of the missionary factor in empire building in east Africa.¹⁴ More recently, there has been a shift away from this European emphasis, towards an attempt to analyse the African response to Christian missionaries and their message.¹⁵

Aware of the dangers of presuming a one to one correspondence between missionaries and the colonial power, and of depicting the missionaries as an independent motor of social change while ignoring the dynamic of change within African society, Robert Strayer points out the necessity of using the rich resources of missionary archives to write history which focuses on African religious history, social change and political protest.¹⁶ Three historians who have thus addressed the main themes of African history in the light of missionary activity are J.F.A. Ajayi, who argues that the creation of a black Christian elite in Nigeria was the aim and result of missionary effort; E.A. Ayendele echoes Philip Hobsbawm's thesis on the role of Methodism in England, in arguing that organisational and administrative experience gained by African church members was later applied in secular circumstances; and Robert Rotberg sees Zambian political activism as the product of African resentment at white missionaries who practised racism while preaching the brotherhood of man.¹⁷

Awareness of the significance of the African response and criticism of nineteenth century missionary activity is not the monopoly of historians of the Africanist school. In the twentieth century, Christian missionaries and their apologists are more sensitive to the culture of the third world, and after two world wars, more sensible of the deficiencies of their own. Furthermore, the end of European imperialism has changed the political context in which

¹⁴ R. Oliver, The Missionary Factor in East Africa.

¹⁵ N. Etherington, The Rise of the Kholwa in Southeast Africa, pp.5-6.

¹⁶ R. Strayer, "Mission History in Africa : New Perspectives in an Encounter", African Studies Review, vol.XIX, no.1, April 1976, pp.1-15.

¹⁷ J.F.A. Ajayi, Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891 : The Making of a New Elite; E.A. Ayendele, The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914; R. Rotberg, Christian Missionaries and the Creation of Northern Rhodesia.

missionaries work, and they have a new set of African rulers with whom to define their relationship. Missionaries and missiologists plead for indigenisation of the African church under African leadership, with the gospel translated into African thought patterns and liturgy incorporating traditional African music and movement. They have increasingly seen their need to heed the investigations of anthropologists.¹⁸ In 1938 D.W.T. Shropshire argued in The Church and Primitive Peoples,¹⁹ that Christianity would only take root in Africa through the preservation and transformation of African religious and cultural institutions and beliefs. After a careful anthropological analysis of these institutions, Shropshire discusses how missionaries could adapt them to meet the needs of a Christian community.²⁰ Shropshire takes up the anthropologists' position that African society must be preserved and combines with it the Christian view that conversion and Christian life means acceptance of change, but his thesis does not deal with the reality of increasing urbanisation and detribalisation which have taken place quite independently of the missionaries. Basil Pauw shows how, despite an overlay of western habits, deeply-felt African customs prevail.²¹ John Gatu, an African Christian voice, pleads together with his white colleagues for an end to a view of mission which sees the faith as the gift of an enlightened Christian Europe to a benighted heathen world;²² mission is the task

¹⁸ M. Wilson, Some Possibilities and Limitations of Anthropological Research, inaugural lecture, Rhodes University College, 1948. She records, p.14, that Jack Driberg, her teacher in African anthropology at Cambridge, "disliked the presence of intending missionaries at his lectures, as his teaching would make them what he called 'too damned efficient.'"

¹⁹ D.W.T. Shropshire, The Church and Primitive Peoples. P.B. Hinchliff discusses the value of this approach in "Letter from South Africa", Theology, vol.LXII (1959), pp.17-24, and in correspondence on pp.155, 201, 287.

²⁰ D.W.T. Shropshire, op.cit., pp.375-378, suggests how the rite of initiation can be transformed into a Christian ceremony.

²¹ B. Pauw, Christianity and Xhosa Tradition. See also M.Wilson, Religion and the Transformation of Society.

²² T.A. Beetham, Christianity and the New Africa; J.Gatu, "Five Years without Missionaries", Pro Veritate, 15 Aug. 1974, p.24f; A. Hastings, African Christianity and Church and Mission in Modern Africa; E. Kendall, The End of an Era; K.S. Latourette, A History

of a self-governing local church to the non-Christian world around it. The writings of Wilhelm Andersen and Hendrik Kraemer are an attempt to give theological underpinning to this concept of mission.²³

Nathaniel Merriman, innocent of the criticism which the twentieth century would bring down on the missionary work of his own age and the change in policy that would ensue, began his own missionary endeavour in an area of southern Africa which then was a field of military conflict and which remains a subject of historical debate.²⁴ It would be impossible to pretend that Merriman's influence as a missionary on the frontier was deeply significant. The Anglicans were late in the field and had no converts until after the 1857 cattle killing,²⁵ and even in the history of early Anglican missionary work, Merriman's role was very small. Nevertheless, his missionary activity was part of the story of the frontier, and the broader debate about the role of missionaries there cannot be ignored.

Nineteenth century interpretations of the frontier laid great though varying emphasis on the missionaries' political role. If Sir Benjamin D'Urban believed that missionary influence at Exeter Hall had ruined his frontier policy,²⁶ Sir George Grey two decades later

of the Expansion of Christianity, vol.V; S. Neill, Christian Faith and Other Faiths, and Colonialism and Christian Missions; B. Sundkler, The Christian Ministry in Africa; W. Ward, Fraser of Trinity and Achimota; M.A.C. Warren, Social History and Christian Mission, and The Missionary Movement from Britain in Modern History.

²³W. Andersen, Towards a Theology of Mission; H. Kraemer, The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World, and Religion and the Christian Faith.

²⁴See for example, W.B. Campbell, The South African Frontier 1865-1885, a study in expansion; A.E. du Toit, The Cape Frontier : A study of Native Policy with special reference to the years 1847-1866; W.M. Macmillan, Bantu, Boer and Briton; OHSA, vol.I; J.B. Peires, The House of Phalo.

²⁵OHSA vol.I, pp.256-260; M.M. Goedhals, Anglican Missionary Policy in the Diocese of Grahamstown 1853-1871, ch.2.

²⁶J.C.S. Lancaster, A Reappraisal of the Governorship of Sir Benjamin D'Urban at the Cape of Good Hope 1834-1838, pp.197, 213. On D'Urban, see D.S.A.B., vol.II, pp.205-207.

saw mission stations as the means of bringing peace to the frontier.²⁷ White frontier farmers credited missionaries with great political influence, blaming them for the Black Circuit and Ordinance 50 of 1828, and naming them as a contributory cause of the Great Trek.²⁸ Dr Philip himself does not appear to have doubted his own political influence,²⁹ and missionaries of a later generation, though more cautious than Philip, believed their work to have political as well as spiritual consequences.³⁰ The Xhosa chiefs clearly believed that missionaries had influence with the imperial government, and may not have heeded them at all otherwise.³¹ In the early twentieth century, historians such as Macmillan and de Kiewiet continued this emphasis on the missionary role in an expanding empire.³² The Majeke thesis asserts that missionaries were a fifth column of British imperialism,³³ an interpretation echoed by the Manisi poem.³⁴

The oral tradition, of which the Manisi poem is a product, suggests what modern historians have seen as a more fruitful line of investigation.³⁵ The missionaries' role in the formulation of Ordinance 50 and

²⁷J. Rutherford, Sir George Grey, K.C.B., 1812-1898, pp.304-389. Grey was Governor of the Cape from 1854 to 1861. See D.S.A.B., vol.I, pp.326-331.

²⁸E.A. Walker, The Great Trek, ch.3.

²⁹W.M. Macmillan, op.cit., passim.

³⁰The missionaries did act as go-betweens and political agents: see for example, D.G.L. Cragg, The Relations of the Amapondo and the Colonial Authorities 1830-1866, with special reference to the role of the Wesleyan Missionaries.

³¹For example, in 1848 the chief Bhotomane remarked to Robert Gray, "...after all he had heard the Governor say of me, that I must have great influence with him." R. Gray, A Journal of the Bishop's Visitation Tour through the Cape Colony, p.34.

³²C.W. de Kiewiet, The Imperial Factor in South Africa; W.M. Macmillan, op.cit.

³³N. Majeke, The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest.

³⁴J. Opland, "Imbongi Nezibongo, The Xhosa Tribal Poet and the Contemporary Poetic Tradition", Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, March 1975, pp.185-208.

³⁵J. Peires, The House of Phalo, bases his account on traditional written sources and on oral evidence.

the influence of Dr Philip have been scaled down to a more realistic level. According to J.S. Galbraith, and in contradiction of the Macmillan thesis,

The nature of missionary influence on Cape policy between 1834 and 1854 has been misunderstood, by the perpetuation of the Philip legend, its power has been overstated.³⁶

Instead, historical study has come to focus on the complex subject of contact between Nguni and European culture, and on the cultural impact of missionary activity.

Donovan Williams's thesis³⁷ incorporates both the earlier and the more modern historical emphasis. He sees the period 1799 to 1853 as a time of triple missionary failure : failure to spread Christianity among the Xhosa, to retain the goodwill of white colonists and to influence the Cape administration.³⁸ Williams argues that the missionary failure was due to poor organization and administration and inadequate finance. Denominational division was an additional obstacle to what Williams regarded as missionary necessity, the formation of "a powerful and well organized front against the Kaffirs."³⁹ Although he pleads for an anthropological investigation to prevent missionary history from becoming white-orientated and one-sided,⁴⁰ he regards Christianity and the Nguni way of life as mutually exclusive.⁴¹ To Williams, the biggest single obstacle to missionary success was the continued existence of Xhosa custom, and he argues that if the missionaries had recognized its tenacity, "Many more would have left Kafirland thoroughly convinced that they could achieve nothing."⁴²

³⁶ J.S. Galbraith, Reluctant Empire, p.97.

³⁷ D. Williams, The Missionaries on the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony 1799-1853.

³⁸ Ibid., p. i.

³⁹ Ibid., p.99.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. ii.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp.196, 218.

⁴² Ibid., p.321.

Norman Etherington⁴³ is much more sympathetic than Williams to the work of the missionaries and does not measure their work on a success-or-failure scale. He argues that only Africans who were outcasts from their own society could adjust to the cultural changes demanded by nineteenth century missionaries.⁴⁴ Etherington too shows how missionary work was conditioned by the political context in which they worked, rather than vice versa.⁴⁵

In an age in which a popular history could argue that "to teach the love of one's country is almost a religious duty,"⁴⁶ it is not surprising that missionaries required their converts to adopt outward evidence of conformity to European culture, as an adjunct to their acceptance of Christianity. Williams and Etherington have shown the failure of this policy to have any large-scale impact on tribal society. Monica Wilson, perhaps the ablest defender of mission work done on the eastern frontier, acknowledges that much of what the missionaries did was ignorant and destructive. She argues nevertheless, that they provided not only a religious ethic, but the tools with which a society under pressure from a European system of government and economic pattern could come to terms with a changing world. The missionaries achieved this by introducing modern farming implements and improved agricultural methods. They were the first to reduce an Nguni language to writing and they introduced the printing press. Mission schools, which gave agricultural and industrial training, taught academic subjects as well. While acknowledging that the missionaries spread western civilization as well as Christianity, so that often even in their own minds, the former was indistinguishable from the latter, Monica Wilson argues that their primary motive was the spread of the gospel, and by implication the building of a community in which loyalty to Christ transcended all racial, tribal, cultural, linguistic or educational barriers.⁴⁷

⁴³N. Etherington, The Rise of the Kholwa in Southeast Africa.

⁴⁴Ibid., ch.7.

⁴⁵Ibid., ch.3.

⁴⁶Maria Calcott, Little Arthur's History of England.

⁴⁷M. Wilson, "Missionaries : Conquerors or Servants of God?" South African Outlook, March 1976, pp.40-42.

Missionary prohibition of initiation rites, lobola and polygamy nevertheless cut deep into established patterns of society, and was one factor in the failure of the Xhosa to accept Christianity on a larger scale. If one stumbling block was tribal custom, another was the existence of racial barriers in the church, which was not always the fault of the missionaries, but of white colonial opinion. A frequent and justified complaint was that educated Africans could find work only on mission stations, but their schools remain a major missionary achievement, and among these schools, the name of Lovedale stands high. Sheila Brock⁴⁸ looks particularly at the growth of an educated African elite as the fruits of missionary work. Missionary failure lies in the fact that bound by the prejudices of race and class, they failed to identify with the aspirations they themselves had created. Nevertheless, Sheila Brock echoes Monica Wilson in stating that

...Lovedale gave to many Africans their first experience of a common identity to counter the divisive tendency of tribal loyalties and established itself as a symbol, still potent, of academic excellence and racial harmony.⁴⁹

It would be a mistake to regard missionary influence on the frontier as a one-way process. The Xhosa were not merely passive, but capable of active response. Where the missionaries failed to translate Christianity into Xhosa thought patterns, the work was done by African evangelists they employed, often without missionary consent. Nxele is an example of an African who rejected Christianity, Ntsikana one who made it his own. Peires has described the two men as symbols of the African response to Christianity.⁵⁰ Janet Hodgson describes Ntsikana's hymn as an African response to Christianity rooted in the indigenous culture. Ntsikana was a nineteenth century exponent

⁴⁸S. Brock, James Stewart and Lovedale : a reappraisal of missionary attitudes and African response in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, 1870-1905. On the missionary role in African education, see also R. Hunt Davis, Nineteenth century African education in the Cape Colony : a historical analysis, and see below, ch.6.

⁴⁹S. Brock, op.cit., abstract.

⁵⁰J. Peires, "Nxele, Ntsikana and the origins of the Xhosa religious reaction," in Journal of African History, vol.XX, no.1 (1979), pp.51-61.

of a missionary method which twentieth century missionaries have recognized and adopted as a more authentic expression of African Christianity⁵¹ than the Eurocentric version which their Victorian counterparts attempted to enforce.

The text, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel," provided much of the inspiration for the missionary movement from Europe in the nineteenth century.⁵² For high churchmen of Merriman's stamp, conversion meant not simply a spiritual experience, but incorporation into a visible institution, the church. This belief, underlying the formation of the Colonial Bishops Fund and the growth of the overseas episcopate was fully worked out as a missionary theory by Anthony Grant in the 1843 Bampton lectures.⁵³ Grant argued that the structure of the Church of England was particularly suited to mission. With his thesis that mission was the duty of the whole church and that missions should be headed by a bishop, went the argument that the expansion of the British empire was part of a divine plan for the evangelization of the whole world:

...the wonderful expansion of the Empire of Great Britain, whereby, through her colonies, she is brought into contact with almost the entire heathen world; -

⁵¹ J. Hodgson, Ntsikana's "Great Hymn" : A Xhosa Expression of Christianity in the Early Nineteenth Century Eastern Cape, pp.81-82.

⁵² M.A.C. Warren, The Missionary Movement from Britain in Modern History, ch.2; S. Piggin, "Assessing nineteenth century missionary motivation : some considerations of theory and method," and A. Porter, "Late nineteenth century Anglican missionary expansion : a consideration of some non-Anglican sources of inspiration," in D. Baker (ed.), Studies in Church History, vol.XV : Religious Motivation : Biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian, pp.327-337, and pp.349-365. These works deal with the vexed question of motivation.

⁵³ A. Grant, The Past and Prospective Extension of the Gospel by Missions to the Heathen. John Bampton, Canon of Salisbury (d.1751) set up a trust to endow eight annual lectures to be delivered in St Mary's, Oxford. The subject was to be an exposition and defence of the Christian faith, as set out in the creeds, and based on Scripture and the Fathers. The first series of lectures was delivered in 1780. ODCC, p.124.

the great national responsibility which lies upon her, and upon the Church within her borders, to discern God's Hand in this conjecture and to execute His will...⁵⁴

This apparently providential grand alliance between empire and mission explains why, whatever their attitude to the established church, high churchmen did not easily rid themselves of the idea of establishment. Robert Gray read Grant's Bampton lectures in October 1844, and described them as "a very sound and most interesting volume,"⁵⁵ and Merriman read and approved them before he embarked on his work in southern Africa.⁵⁶

In addition to the theory underlying their missionary enterprise, there is no shortage of evidence in the Anglican archives for Nosipho Majeke's thesis that the missionaries were agents of an imperial plan to dispossess the indigenous population of their land and to establish white supremacy.⁵⁷

On 7 October 1848, in the course of his primary visitation, Robert Gray was introduced to the assembled Xhosa chiefs at King William's Town,⁵⁸ by the governor, Sir Harry Smith:

At twelve o'clock we walked in procession to the place of meeting, I on the Governor's right hand, Colonel Mackinnon, the Chief Commissioner, on his left. As we approached, the band struck up "God save the Queen," and the chieftains hurraed.⁵⁹

Then followed a long harangue from Sir Harry in which he addressed the chiefs as children,

...pointed out to them the evils of the late war, and the blessing of peace - scolded them for one thing,

⁵⁴A. Grant, op.cit., p.xi. For an echo of this in Merriman's own words, see Cape Journals, p.31, where he speaks of the Xhosa being "...placed by the Providence of God under British rule and influence."

⁵⁵M. Nuttall, unpubl. ts.

⁵⁶Cape Journals, p.13.

⁵⁷N. Majeke, op.cit.,

⁵⁸Among the chiefs present were Sandile, Maqoma and Mhala.

⁵⁹R. Gray, A Journal of the Bishop's Visitation Tour..., p.32.

praised them for another, and addressed them at one time in a tone of great authority and sternness, and then changed his manner, using expressions of kindness. ⁶⁰

Gray failed to see the impropriety of such conduct, nor did he perceive the incongruity of Smith's introduction of himself to the assembly as

...the Great Father of the Christians - the Lord Bishop the chief Minister, in this land, of the Church and religion of our Queen, who was appointed to teach him and all in this land the way to Heaven,... ⁶¹

The governor and the bishop told the chiefs of the Anglicans' wish to establish schools among their people, to which Mhala and another chief politely and conventionally replied that

...they had never had so great a man of God come before amongst them and they knew not what to reply; but they wished for schools, and to be taught to know God. ⁶²

Gray was satisfied that Anglican missionary work had been given an auspicious start. Nor is there any evidence that Merriman questioned his approach. In March 1849 he wrote that he was

...impressed with the belief that we have as a nation exhibited a degree of forbearance and longsuffering towards this nation of thieves which no other European community with half our power would have shown... I cannot but hope that this our national patience and forbearance, which they still despise, may eventually be instrumental in winning them from their obstinate unbelief...and inducing them to embrace the Gospel of Christ. ⁶³

Soon after his arrival in his archdeaconry, Merriman addressed the Kafir Police, ⁶⁴ mustered for his inspection at Buck Kraal, Fort Peddie,

⁶⁰ R. Gray, A Journal of the Bishop's Visitation Tour..., p.33.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., p.34.

⁶³ Cape Journals, p.34; CNG, vol.I, p.350.

⁶⁴ The Kafir Police, composed of men of the frontier tribes under white officers, were raised on the Cape eastern frontier in 1835, and again between 1847 and 1853. Their strength varied from one hundred-and-fifty to four hundred men, and their headquarters was at Fort Cox near King William's Town. The Police mutinied in 1851, with a few exceptions. G. Tylden, The Armed Forces of South Africa, p.98.

in similar vein:

I told them through an interpreter of the pleasure it gave me to see them now in the service of the Queen; that it was much better than meeting us with assegai in hand;...telling them that the Bishop often thought of them, had mentioned them to me and was wishful to send a teacher among them. ⁶⁵

Merriman was perceptive enough to notice the scepticism with which this speech was received. He nevertheless persisted in the one-sided point of view that the Xhosa were entirely to blame for the frontier conflict. One night in October 1849, when Merriman was encamped in a tent on the banks of the Tamacha, his company and conversation were sought by a group of Xhosa, many of whom "expressed a wish to have a missionary among them, at the same time mixing it up with complaints against the English for having driven them beyond the Keiskamma." Merriman took this opportunity to urge them to obey the ten commandments, and expressed his opinion that

The Kafirs might have been inhabiting freely to the Fish River, and even beyond it, if they had kept their hands from their white neighbours' cattle. The English, in self-defence, had restricted them to their present bounds. God would not allow teachers to remain amongst them, unless they learned these first elements of his law. ⁶⁶

Galbraith has pointed out that the Wesleyan missionaries, with their headquarters on the frontier and their ministry directed at white as well as black congregations tended to identify with the grievances of the white settlers rather than with those of the Xhosa. ⁶⁷ By contrast, the mission work of the London Missionary Society was largely among people of colour, and their agents had little contact with or sympathy for the settler point of view. There was no Anglican mission station until 1854, and like his Wesleyan counterparts, Merriman tended to support white frontier farmers in their grievances, in spite of the courtesy and unstinting hospitality invariably offered to him at Xhosa kraals, ⁶⁸ while boer farmers, suspicious of one who claimed to

⁶⁵ Cape Journals, p.37.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.88.

⁶⁷ J.S. Galbraith, op.cit., p.87.

⁶⁸ Cape Journals, p.38.

be a predikant yet travelled on foot, on occasion relegated him to the outbuildings with meagre rations.⁶⁹

The outbreak of the seventh frontier war increased Merriman's sympathy for the lot of frontier farmers. On 24 December 1850, Merriman "walked quietly home" to Grahamstown after a visitation to Bloemfontein.⁷⁰ On Christmas eve 1850, the war of Mlanjeni broke out, and Merriman commented:

One cannot help deeply sympathising with a set of colonial farmers, who, for the third time within sixteen years, have been put to the loss and inconvenience of a Kafir war. It is a melancholy thing to see every homestead deserted, ...and to hear tales of ...houses burnt, relatives butchered, and cattle swept off, ...Impatience with the Government, whose mistaken levity has helped to cause all this, is, of course, a large feature in the discourse...⁷¹

The war prompted Merriman to draw an even firmer link between political loyalty and Christianity. When the Khoi of the Kat River settlement⁷² rose against the colony he was shocked:

These men had all partaken of the Holy Communion together the Sunday previous, and yet could make their escape to join banditti, ...⁷³

One aim of mission was to achieve the opposite result. The belief that dissent in religion meant rebellion against the state, in the spirit which had made the Test and Corporation Acts, lived on, and was clearly part of Merriman's pattern of thinking. "It is a very remarkable circumstance," he wrote,

...that the teaching of the Independents appears to have produced in this land a re-enactment of those very scenes which were the first of their predominance in England two hundred years since : viz. as the Prayer

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp.66, 70, 75, 110-111.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.146.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.152.

⁷² Ibid. On the Kat River Settlement, see T. Kirk, "Progress and decline in the Kat River Settlement 1829-1854," in Journal of African History, vol.XIV, pp.411-428.

⁷³ Cape Journals, p.155.

Book expresses it, "the turning religion into rebellion, and faith into faction." Our rebels, like Cromwell's soldiers, or worse, read their Bibles, pray, and even receive the Holy Communion today, when they are going to dedicate the morrow to rebellion and wayside murder... Truly the Kat River Mission may be pronounced both a failure and an enigma. ⁷⁴

The evidence that Merriman, together with other frontier missionaries, saw identity of interest between British rule and their own work is substantial, but Majeke's thesis is not therefore irrefutable. Merriman and his fellow missionaries were no mere imperial automata, but men of wider perception and compassion.

The former Lieutenant-Governor of the Cape, Sir Andries Stockenstrom was regarded with odium by frontiersmen. Merriman's view was more generous : he was "much pleased" on a visit to Stockenstrom's household, with the "simple arrangements and frank hospitality" as well as the conversation of his host. Merriman added:

His political measures during his Lt. Governorship may have been injudicious, but he seems a real Christian philanthropist and an error in favour of black men is at least an error on an unusual side. ⁷⁵

While Merriman saw empire and Christianity as going hand in hand, he was determined that the empire and its officers be seen to be Christian. In May 1852, while both Merriman and Sir George Cathcart, ⁷⁶ were at Fort Beaufort, the governor failed to attend the Sunday church service. The archdeacon ascertained that Cathcart had hurt his head in a fall from his horse, and did not like to appear in church wearing a bandage, although he attended other public functions. Merriman had left his card on the Saturday afternoon and thus paid his respects to this representative of the crown, but

...his non-attendance at church though he could so well perform every other duty and hold levees, prevented me from waiting upon him, for I did not wish to pay a visit of mere politeness until he had been to say his prayers

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.58.

⁷⁶ Cathcart was Governor of the Cape from 1852 to 1854. See D.S.A.B., vol.II, pp.123-125.

in the House of God, which I thought the more incumbent on him after such an accident as that from which he had just recovered. ⁷⁷

He made his displeasure known to members of the governor's household, and subsequently learnt that Cathcart had appeared at church the following Sunday wearing a black cap.

Grant's theory of mission left no room for a racially divided church, and one of Merriman's first observations after his arrival at the Cape was how one-sided the ministry of the Church of England there was. On 3 December 1848, he preached in Trinity Church, Cape Town, and noted with disappointment:

...alas, there were no coloured people there. In fact, they looked just like a smart London congregation... and I reflected painfully that in the midst of such a population as that by which we were surrounded, the congregation before me was not quite the only sample that the Church of England should prefer to see attending the Lord's Courts in her communion. ⁷⁸

Nor was the imbalance a result of neglect, but of prejudice. A week later, in St George's, Cape Town, three Malays came into the church:

When, proh pudor - the attendant official turned them and shut the door in their faces!!! ⁷⁹

Wherever Merriman found prejudice among white colonists against people of colour and against missionaries, he combatted it firmly by word ⁸⁰ and by example. Wilhelm, his black servant, ⁸¹ accompanied him on

⁷⁷ Cape Journals, p.184.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.7.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.8.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.80.

⁸¹ Etherington's analysis of the motives which brought Africans to live on mission stations cannot be applied to the Anglicans at this stage because their work had not begun. (N. Etherington, The Rise of the Kholwa in Southeast Africa, ch.7.) Even of Wilhelm, Merriman's servant, little can be learnt. He was known as Wilhelm Goliat, names presumably given to him at his baptism by Wesleyan missionaries. He could speak Dutch, but wished to learn English, and by June 1849 had attached himself to Merriman. (Cape Journals, p.52.) In October 1850, he went to Southwell to conduct the school there. (Ibid., p.127.) Early in 1853, having "...for some time continued too lazy to work...", according to Merriman, Wilhelm was

visitations, and with him the archdeacon shared bread and board, even though this brought down the wrath of his boer hosts upon his head. On one occasion, the sight of "an Englishman sitting cheek by jowl and parting his bread to a Kafir servant,"⁸² was too much for one "vrow" and

...she commenced a tirade about wicked Kafirs, English skellums..., shamefulness of interfering with Boers at Natal..., hypocrisy of any Kafir..., wickedness of English missionaries in encouraging them and the like. ⁸³

Merriman was inclined to be patient and understanding, even if he would not compromise:

Wilhelm argued stoutly, and I only smiled, and told her I was sorry I could not talk Dutch enough to set her right...Let me here say, in palliation of the Boers' seeming rudeness to me, that my walking and treating Wilhelm with familiarity are both of them such marks of low life and folly in their eyes, that I can scarce wonder, especially as I talk no Dutch, that they do not regard me favourably. ⁸⁴

Although Merriman was aware that the boers did not share his principles, he found much in their way of life that was admirable, and he passed this respect for the Dutch farmers on to his son. John X. told his mother in 1890:

Nothing that I could write would ever convince you that a Boer must not of necessity be a blood-stained villain, though I am sure if you read Father's journal you will not find that this was the view he formed of their character. ⁸⁵

guarding the Merriman children on a farm three miles from Grahams-town. (*Ibid.*, p.205.) Merriman described him as a "Kafir" as distinct from "Fingoes", and it is possible that tribal loyalties became too strong, for he left Merriman's service some time in 1853 or 1854. Forty years later, Mrs Merriman suggested that he may have returned to the Wesleyans or the London Missionary Society, "...but that he died in the faith and daily life of a Christian I have no doubt." (GDA 284, JM to Canon Baker, 20 Oct. 1896, GDA 285, JM to Canon Baker, 30 Oct. 1896.)

⁸² Cape Journals, p.111.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ P. Lewsen (ed.), Selections from the Correspondence of J.X. Merriman, 1870-1890, JXM to JM, 24 Apr. 1890, p.301.

The archdeacon and the Dutch farmers, whatever their differences on racial and religious questions, shared qualities of ruggedness and simplicity. Merriman found the informality of their farmhouses attractive. After a walk through the rain,

...I must confess, arriving wet as I did, I felt it convenient to be at my ease, and stump about like Mynheer and his sons, without either shoes or stockings in-doors or out, and to feel that I was giving no offence by sitting down to breakfast or dinner in this guise. This free and easy life is very well for a change; and at one time could almost persuade myself, that a shirt and a pair of leathern trousers, with a felt hat (which is the Boer's wet-day costume), contained all the necessary articles of clothing a man could require.⁸⁶

Observation also taught Merriman to

...modify much my ideas of Dutch harshness towards the coloured people who serve them. It may be true that, if not restrained by law, they would often inflict severe corporal chastisement on their servants, and it is true that they seem generally to disregard the duty of providing them any Christian instruction; but it is also true that there is much kindness exercised towards them,... The Dutchman will allow the coloured man to have all his relations and belongings come and live with him, which an Englishman rarely will. Moreover, he acts peremptorily, but speaks kindly and less haughtily to the natives than an English gentleman is used to do to his inferiors; nor has he, like the latter, any drawing-room in which himself and his wife are secluded. They all live...in the great "fore-house;" here sits the vrow, usually with a coloured woman occupied in some domestic work, in the same apartment; the coloured woman has always her baby, and sometimes two, and I have even seen three, children besides, playing about in the room. If the baby cries, the vrow will perhaps send one of her own children to nurse it;... Yet I could easily tell tales, which might carry weight at Exeter Hall, about diverse slaps and approbrious words which I have witnessed an angry Noie bestow occasionally on these little creatures. What farmer's wife does not get in a pet sometimes?⁸⁷

Merriman early encountered the settler argument that missionaries ruined the labour market. By contrast, in the twentieth century,

⁸⁶ Cape Journals, p.173.

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp.173-174.

Victorian missionaries are seen as the spearhead of a capitalist attack, promoting change in the pattern of labour and cultivating a market for metal and cotton goods. Merriman's own shrewd remarks are an answer to both sets of critics, and are remarkably clear-sighted in the light of his sympathy with the lot of the white farmer:

...I cannot see that we have a right to complain of them if they do not willingly work for wages as hard as English labourers are forced to do in order to maintain themselves and their families...I cannot at present see why they may not as reasonably expect of us to forego some of the comforts and luxuries of European life and come down to their simple mode of existence, as we express anger against them for not selling their strength and happiness to us in order that our crops may be more abundant, our gains greater and provisions cheaper. ⁸⁸

He also wrote:

Though I am not inclined to set aside these common objections as things not worth the considering, nor do I think it safe to hold out the temptation of an highly improved temporal condition without increased industry to those whom we are inviting to receive the Gospel, yet I plainly see that these objections against missions are mainly grounded on a jealousy lest the labour market should not be duly supplied, and anything which takes a few hands from this is regarded with the same suspicion that the silversmiths of Ephesus...regarded the spread of Christianity.⁸⁹

If Merriman's sympathies in the frontier struggle lay with white settlers, the war of Mlanjeni,⁹⁰ far from hardening these, stimulated his concern for victims of war and injustice and his awareness of the Christian role of mediator. To some extent, Merriman saw the war as an instrument of divine retribution. Although in time of peace, settler herds had always increased rapidly,

...it has not seemed to occur to them that they were bound to give up a due portion of their substance to the service of God, and the maintenance of the ordinances of religion. God seems through the Kafirs to have taken from them that which they refused to give Him. Yet, to state this to them broadly requires much of boldness,

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.4.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.6.

⁹⁰ D.S.A.B., vol.II, pp.475-476; O.H.S.A., vol.I, p.256.

and...seems untimed...when they are actually fretting under new losses. ⁹¹

Merriman was aware that war produced

...a very un-Christian tone of feeling in the minds of a large part of the European population towards these natives, and there is now a great disinclination to missionary operations among them in consequence of this. ⁹²

Merriman never lost his conviction that missions were the means to end war. On Easter day 1851, he recorded that

It was to me a peculiarly gratifying sight to see my Kafir man Wilhelm kneeling to receive the Holy Communion, side by side with my friend Corporal Burnside, who is hardly yet recovering from wounds which had well-nigh proved fatal, from the hands of Wilhelm's countrymen... I take this as a proof of the power of the Gospel, the more so considering the suspicion and dislike with which every individual Kafir amongst us is regarded. ⁹³

He was aware that settler justice fell short of Christian standards, ⁹⁴ and at times his loyalty to the settler community vied with his sense of equity and his Christian compassion. In June 1851, Khoi dwellings near Fort England were razed by an angry white mob of Grahamstown residents:

Much suffering to women and children was the result of this; but it must be admitted...that concealed arms and stolen property...were found in the huts. Yet, as the Government had not interfered before that morning (though often appealed to...) to disarm the Hottentots of the town, their possession of quantities of arms and ammunition, though doubtless very dangerous, could scarcely be considered unlawful. ⁹⁵

There were situations which demanded the outspokenness which came naturally to Merriman. Wilhelm drew his attention to the plight of seventy Xhosa who had been confined to Grahamstown gaol before the

⁹¹ Cape Journals, p.152.

⁹² Ibid., p.32.

⁹³ Ibid., p.150.

⁹⁴ e.g., ibid., p.180.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p.153.

outbreak of war, and

...whose only proved crime now I fear is in some instances their former masters' inability or unwillingness to give them employment, and also those masters not knowing sufficiently of the men to make them willing to answer for their fidelity if set at liberty. In fact, however faithfully disposed any of them might have been at the beginning of the War...it would be impossible to expect anything but treacherous hostility from them now that they have been some months in confinement on half rations. What is alleged against them is, a conspiracy to burn the town...On suspicion of this, and from information given by their deadly enemies the Fingoes, these men were surrounded in their huts by night, and carried off in a body to prison.⁹⁶

Merriman pursued his enquiries, and found that the men had been imprisoned, heavily shackled, for three months, with a daily diet of half a pound of bread, and an equal amount of meat, "together with a pint of greasy water which with a cruel mockery was called soup!!!"⁹⁷ A doctor considered this adequate but the Civil Commissioner invited Merriman, with John Heavyside, and the Wesleyans William Shaw and Henry Dugmore to visit the gaol. The missionaries were "fairly shocked at the emaciated condition of these poor men."⁹⁸ On the day of the visit, an order had come to release some of these prisoners, and to put the others on full rations:

This order, I imagine, proceeded from the enquiries and interest which now began (alas that it should only now have begun) to arise on the subject.⁹⁹

Later, in response to an appeal from Merriman to the Governor of the Cape, other prisoners were released on certain conditions. The arch-deacon was well aware of the snare and delusion of purely nominal Christianity professed by the state or its representatives:

I must remark that during our visit to the prison there was neither the candour that I should have expected, nor the sympathy that I should have hoped for, exhibited on the part of our showmen the officials. Several

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.150.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p.151.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

delusive statements were made, calculated to throw dust in the eyes of a stranger, and the clerk very impertinently and obtrusively observed, ...that "the men had quite enough and were treated a great deal better than they deserved."

This way of speaking of mere prisoners of war I thought unEnglish and unChristian, and in attempting to privately reprove him for it...he tried to vindicate himself by making hazardous false statements, which made me sincerely regret that he was a nominal churchman and, I believe, a clergyman's son. ¹⁰⁰

The Majeke thesis casts missionaries in the role of imperial agents not only in the political and economic, but in the cultural sphere. An abundance of evidence supports this, and shows that the missionaries regarded Nguni social and religious institutions as valueless. Of the African religious system, Grant had written

The third form of idolatry and darkness to be assailed by the Gospel, is the debased superstition which prevails...among the African...Among these the idea of the Great Spirit is obliterated in proportion as the tribes are more or less barbarized. Yet, commonly the superstition is rude and formless, with no creed or system of worship, accompanied by cruel rites and a belief in a magical virtue, attended by a degraded state of civilized life. It is the religion...of barbarism, of the primaeval tradition run to its very dregs, varying its form according to the state of the savage understanding, and modified by local custom and peculiarities. ¹⁰¹

There is nothing to suggest that Merriman questioned this view, or thought otherwise himself. He knew little of the dynamics of Nguni society, and assumed the technological, political, moral and religious superiority of his own culture.

Nevertheless, the Majeke interpretation is an oversimplification of the complexity of human motivation and response, and of the reaction of missionaries of one culture, even those of limited imagination, to men in another.

The classical scholar in Merriman found much that was familiar in the Xhosa way of life:

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ A. Grant, op.cit., p.230. More recent writers stress the common denominators between African traditional religion and Christianity. See J.S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy, and G.M. Setiloane, The Image of God among the Sotho-Tswana.

While sitting among them quaffing their bowl of milk, observing also how their whole thoughts and affections were centred in their cattle, which they talk to as their children, and love them too much to kill for their eating (except very rarely...), I could not help thinking it was from some such type as this that Homer draws his picture of the Cyclops:... ¹⁰²

Etherington has shown how local circumstances acted as a great leveller, so that no matter what diverse views on policy missionaries arrived with, in practice, stations of various denominations tended to follow a similar pattern.¹⁰³ The seeds of this tendency towards assimilation were apparent when Merriman wrote in 1849:

All the missionaries in South Africa agree in saying that the pastoral life (which poets set up as the model of simple virtue, and which certainly God allowed, if not enforced upon the early patriarchs) is of all states the most irreclaimably vicious; and that to improve men you must first get them to cultivate the soil. ¹⁰⁴

This was the line eventually taken on Anglican missions, but although he concurred in the policy, Merriman to his own regret, was to have little say in its formulation and practice. He had some understanding of the need to adapt to meet changed circumstances, but this was largely limited to suggesting outdoor services and the use of unpaid lay ministers as agents of evangelism. He recognized the need for services in the vernacular, but beyond this point he failed to see any need for accommodation with African custom.¹⁰⁵ At the same time he was no narrow-minded bigot. He did not express the usual Victorian distaste at the sight of tribal dancing, but described carefully what he saw. On a visit to Mhala's kraal,

...I heard the rattling of reeds outside, and on looking out...I found some lads practising the circumcision dance. They were too young for the rite, but were apparently practising their exercises against the time when they should be of the number of the Amakweto. ¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Cape Journals, pp.38-39. Merriman is quoting from Odyssey, bk.9.

¹⁰³ N. Etherington, op.cit.

¹⁰⁴ Cape Journals, p.42.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp.9, 11-13, 49-50.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p.102. The correct term is Abakhwetha.

The next day, he saw fifteen young men

...freshly done over with red clay, leaping vigorously into the air, with as much regularity as a regiment of foot guards would go through their exercise, chanting at the same time as an accompaniment...the young men who danced were, excepting what their law of decency required, naked, and their limbs moved with such regularity that they looked to me like one red animal. 107

To the usual charges that missionaries taught the building of square houses and encouraged the wearing of clothes, it can be pointed out that Merriman himself used a round hut in his Grahamstown garden as a study, and that he expressed regret when the Mfengu at Bathurst were

...under the persuasion of their teachers and governors, changing their round huts for miserable mud hovels built in European shape. The only advantage they gain by this is the power of dividing the hut into 2 rooms, but as they have no fire places...I could not see that much was gained by this sort of reform. 108

A man who explained to Merriman that he could not attend church because he had no clothes was told "that Christianity did not consist in clothes, or the arts of life." Merriman sadly noticed that the man

...could scarcely comprehend the distinction, so unhappily has the Gospel been lowered in this land, and made to appear merely as a part and parcel of European civilization. 109

The missionaries faced more fundamental problems than those of dress and house design. Though his suggestion was untried, Merriman had something new to offer on the proper way of responding to the practice of witchcraft. Where other missionaries insisted "that there is in fact no such thing as witchcraft...that they will not have such lies and stuff believed in at all,"¹¹⁰ Merriman suggested that the wiser approach was to point out

...to the heathen that it at least has no power to hurt a Christian, who may defy the power of all the witch doctors in Kafirland...But the zeal of the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp.102-103.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p.84. See also opposite p.51.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.89.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.99.

Christian of the nineteenth century on the subject seems to me to take a wrong direction. I feel assured the Apostle Paul would have treated the matter differently. 111

If on this question he followed the wisdom of Gregory the Great, Merriman had much less constructive counsel to offer on the thorniest missionary problem of all, polygamy. Though an admirer of the Moravians, he disapproved of their attitude to polygamy:

I was rather surprised at the Brethren's indulgence of the natives' heathen practices. Thus, they do not at present forbid them to settle on the station and enjoy the watercourse, though they may bring with them more than one wife; they hope these things will die out in time. 112

Soon after his arrival in Grahamstown, Merriman's advice was sought by Henry Tempest Waters, catechist at Southwell, who found that when Mfengu attended his church services, white members of the congregation stayed away. The archdeacon advised Waters to go to "all lengths in combatting the unchristian feeling which exists against the Coloured people"¹¹³ but nevertheless to "deal tenderly but slowly and cautiously," with the white congregation. He suggested that Waters should

...endeavour to see to it that the coloured people do not come in a state of undress or of dirt for which you would reprove an European. Nor should I invite any to the Service except they understood English and were baptised. The best way undoubtedly to exercise your zeal in their behalf would be to have a separate service in a tongue...which they understand. 114

Politicians and traders brought change without helping the people most affected to come to terms with it. Whatever their limitations, the missionaries offered their converts an alternative set of values and a new way of life. The means they chose led directly to the Majeke thesis that they were imperial agents. Merriman's response to the

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., p.121. Bishop Colenso in Natal took the Moravian view. B.B. Burnett, op.cit., ch.4.

¹¹³ Cape Journals, p.49.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p.50.

community built up by the Moravian Brethren at Genadendaal¹¹⁵ sums up the achievements and limitations of nineteenth century missionary activity and of Merriman's own mind. He was impressed by the

...village of several thousand inhabitants, each with his house and bit of ground in good condition,... workshops of all kinds...schools, and all other civilizing elements of life, as well as numerous Sunday and week-day congregations worshipping God together-...¹¹⁶

Shortly before Merriman's visit to the mission, a canteen had been set up just outside the borders of the mission, which at first seemed to him

...a direct work of the devil, forming...such a temptation to the frail population close at hand : but, on further reflection, I could not but think that the population of this large village was in an unhealthy state, from the very absence of some of those temptations which try the stability of men's virtue.

They are, in fact, a set of children, carefully nursed and tended, whom, however, their parents cannot trust out of their sight without the most painful anxiety; meanwhile much of evil goes on within the nursery itself, which escapes the parents' eye..., it seemed to me, that other elements were required to make a community what it should become...; a set of cottages, all exactly on a footing, watched over by a body of good men of another race,...seemed to me to lack the elements which are necessary to train men for anything like an advanced social state.¹¹⁷

Merriman's clear mind had picked out two major failings of the missionary work of his day : its failure to root Christianity in the culture of the converts and its paternalism. It is characteristic of Merriman and his age that the solution he proposed was the introduction of a resident magistrate.¹¹⁸

Merriman did not doubt, as many settlers did, that Africans were capable of receiving the gospel, and as deserving as their white fellow frontiersmen. Though undoubtedly Merriman saw conversion to

¹¹⁵ B. Kruger, The Pear Tree Blossoms, is a history of the Moravian missions in south Africa, 1737 to 1869.

¹¹⁶ Cape Journals, pp.163-164.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.164.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.165.

Christianity as the solution to the frontier conflict, his chief concern was to make disciples of all nations and to bring men into free and equal brotherhood in the church. He had the limitations of his age, one of which was a tendency to regard western civilization as superior to all others and to undervalue African social institutions. It is unfortunate but not surprising that he and his fellow missionaries regarded the easiest way of bringing about their goal among the Xhosa as the creation of ersatz Europeans. They did not envisage the next stage, the formulation of a black Christian culture and theology by black Christians. Nevertheless, the most revolutionary offering, the gospel in their own language, had been made to the Xhosa.¹¹⁹

In February 1849, Merriman's missionary hopes were not ambitious. He would consider himself "highly blessed," he wrote, if he could found an Anglican mission for the Mfengu in Grahamstown.¹²⁰ He had already taken the first steps towards equipping himself for mission work by starting to learn Xhosa. Grant had stressed in the Bampton lectures the importance of all missionaries having a command of the vernacular,¹²¹ and Merriman wrote:

Kafir seems the only foreign tongue worth studying for Missionary purposes here (except a smattering of patois Dutch)...So I am setting to work next week to make an attempt at learning a little of the language under the Tutorage of the Government interpreter - and as people are jabbering in Kafir around me all day for happily it is the mother tongue of the Fingoes I do not despair old as I am of picking up a little - at least enough to read prayers in Kafir...I tremble when I think of the work that lies before me in the language - which I have small eyes to master like a scholar and I fear no great aptitude to pick up orally.¹²²

Apart from learning to speak Xhosa, the other obvious way for Merriman to prepare himself for mission work was to draw on the

¹¹⁹ OHSA, vol.I, p.266.

¹²⁰ SPG mic., vol. C/AFS/5, Cape Town diocese, NJM to EH, 25 Feb. 1849.

¹²¹ A. Grant, op.cit., p.250.

¹²² SPG mic., vol. C/AFS/5, Cape Town diocese, NJM to EH, 25 Feb. 1849.

experience of missionaries already in the field. Another of the major criticisms levelled against nineteenth century missionaries is that they exported religious divisions rooted in European history to a world where they had no significance.¹²³

The theory that the Church of England was itself missionary underlay Anglican missionary policy. This did not augur well for co-operation with missionaries of other denominations, but common problems led to co-operation and adoption of similar solutions by the missionaries in southern Africa.

Although convinced that African converts should be brought into the church, Merriman was aware that the Anglicans had been late in the field, and had much to learn from missionaries of other denominations. When Robert Gray organized the publication of Merriman's journal for the years 1850 to 1852 without the archdeacon's knowledge or consent, Merriman was mortified and recorded his intention to be "more close, cautious and reserved in future,"¹²⁴ in what he wrote. Similarly, he deplored any excessive publicity given to missionary work. He criticised an article on Anglican missionaries which appeared in the August 1856 Guardian¹²⁵

...as it lays them open to the reproach too justly cast upon Missionary operations generally of making outrageously self-glorifying reports of their own proceedings.

You must pardon me for using strong expressions on this head. I have seen and read enough to warrant it. The sentence I complain of says "...Kafirland with its thousands and thousands of Kafirs has scarcely a

¹²³The International Missionary Conference and the younger churches of the third world, products of mission work, have, together with conferences on Life and Work, and Faith and Order, formed an important strand in the modern ecumenical movement. See A.R. Vidler, The Church in an Age of Revolution, ch.23.

¹²⁴Cape Journals, p.xiii. The 1853 title was The Kafir, the Hottentot and the Frontier Farmer.

¹²⁵The Guardian was an Anglican newspaper, started in 1846 by Frederic Rogers, which appeared weekly. It was a product of the Tractarian movement, and aimed to uphold their principles and show their relevance to the leading secular thought of the day. It ceased publication in 1951. ODCC, p.606.

Mission station except our own." ...Surely the S.P.G. cannot be unaware that the wilds of Africa swarm with Missions of at least a dozen different societies...I much fear we have not a single baptized convert of our own making in Kafirland, and perhaps shall not have one (an adult) for some time to come. ¹²⁶

He drew attention to Yellowwoods, a London Missionary Society station, Shiloh, run by the Moravians, and the work of the Berlin Society and the Wesleyan Methodists:

...all are in a state of vigour and forwardness from which we may draw many a lesson...These stations have at least many professing Christians, many wearing Clothes, and living in houses, and attending schools, and looking respectable.

Really it makes me sick and sad at heart to think of our ignoring all this work before we have put our feeble plough into the furrow. I implore you to cancel this sentence if you can from your report, any how here is once for all my solemn, deliberate, earnest protest against it. ¹²⁷

Merriman did not look with favour on the work of the London Missionary Society, but even here there was no room for proud boasting:

I believe all here feel a confidence that if the Church took up Missions to the Heathen in earnest it would be with a very different result to what has been shown at the Institutions of the London Miss^y Society. But as we have done nothing in this way we can very ill afford to call others over the coals for their errors, ¹²⁸

Both Gray ¹²⁹ and Merriman admired the work done by the Moravians. The archdeacon wrote:

I never wish to go twice (at least for the sake of learning anything) to the common missionary stations, though the worthy missionaries often lecture me there most abundantly. Indeed, with all their kindness, many of them cannot help showing me that they regard

¹²⁶ SPG mic., vol. D61, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 25 Aug. 1856.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ SPG mic., vol. D, Cape Town diocese, NJM to EH, 2 Aug. 1852.

¹²⁹ CNG, vol. I, p. 269.

me as a benighted Churchman; but to Shiloh I am always glad to go...and learn something every time. 130

There were strong historical ties between the Wesleyans and the Church of England, but missionaries of the former were at work on the frontier long before those of the latter. Merriman clearly hoped that the Anglicans would take over the Wesleyan missions:

It is a most pleasing feature to me in our position here that the Head Methodists...are in no wise... hostile to the Church. Mr Shaw has expressed to me his wish that he could see the Church of England taking a part in the Missionary field here. And when we think that in every Wesleyan Missionary Station in this District...the prayers of our Church are offered week by week - (not entire but in John Wesley's Abridgement) it is a hopeful sign that God has permitted them to go before us to prepare the way for the Church, to rear Catechumens who may be her future members, and even to do the work of translating her liturgy - ...So that when we are enabled to occupy the land things may be somewhat prepared to our hand - and our Lord's saying again fulfilled "Other men have laboured and ye have entered into their labours." 131

Merriman was aware of the effects of division. On one occasion he was travelling with a wagon train under government escort. It was indicated to him that on the Sunday, the Wesleyan minister with the party would officiate for most of the travellers,

...while I went to my poor congregation of three in the Churchman's wagon. But after a bit I summoned courage, and took up my parable, telling them that though a stiff Churchman who could not forego any of my principles, I thought it was a scandal in the sight of the heathen, as well as a disgrace to ourselves, that an isolated party of Christians, close to the bush where lurked so many Kafirs, and with a host of Fingo protectors round us, should exhibit our hateful religious disunion by worshipping God in separate congregations...I could not forego the use of those prayers which bound me in spirit to my fellow Churchmen in Africa, in England, and all over the world; but if they would all join me in our Church prayers, I would gladly give up the office of preaching...to my Wesleyan brother...

They applauded my discourse, and to a man assented... 132

¹³⁰ Cape Journals, pp.93-94.

¹³¹ SPG mic., vol. C/AFS/5, Cape Town diocese, NJM to EH, 25 Feb.1849.

¹³² Cape Journals, pp.194-195.

It was eventually decided that Merriman would address the white congregation, and the Wesleyan minister the Khoi and Mfengu, as he spoke Dutch and had a good interpreter, "...and so the knot of a very difficult and delicate matter was amicably cut through."¹³³ On this occasion, rain prevented the fulfilment of this plan, which if a satisfactory conclusion to this particular incident, was nevertheless a temporary measure and not a long term plan of action.

In March 1849, while the archdeacon was in King William's Town, Col. Mackinnon pointed out suitable sites for an Anglican mission. Merriman was grieved to reply that there were no missionaries to take up the work,¹³⁴ and suggested to Robert Gray that he be allowed to spend six months putting the mission on its feet, but the bishop decided that the pioneering work the archdeacon was doing among white congregations was more important.¹³⁵ On 5 February 1850 however, in a perfect exposition of Grant's missionary theory, Gray wrote:

The time has...arrived, when it becomes the duty of the Church in this diocese to enter upon direct Mission work. Any longer delay on our part would, I think, be evidence of unfaithfulness to the great task committed to us. Our internal organization has been now for nearly two years completed by the addition of the Episcopate... The bloody and destructive wars which have so frequently taken place between the Colonists and these noble savages, have tended to alienate them from us and from Christianity... Two courses seem open to us - their conversion, or their entire subjugation. We know how this last course would terminate. It would issue with them as with other tribes who have been brought under our yoke. They would fade away before us. ¹³⁶

The clergy of the Cape Town diocese agreed that the church had a solemn duty to preach the gospel to black as well as white frontiersmen,

¹³³ Ibid., p.195.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p.41. Col. Mackinnon was Chief Commissioner of British Kaffraria.

¹³⁵ CNG, vol.I, p.244.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.271.

and that this call should not be delayed.¹³⁷ As a step in this direction, the clergy of Merriman's archdeaconry had requested Gray to form a mission, and had promised to raise £100 a year to support it. Gray's resolve to found a mission near King William's Town was precipitated by a memorandum from Col. Mackinnon and a letter from the governor, inviting Gray to found a mission in Mhala's territory, thirty miles east of King William's Town.¹³⁸ The bishop wanted a mission team headed by an unmarried priest prepared to do manual labour, who would work without stipend. He hoped that such a man would be found in England, but Merriman pressed to be sent:

You ask me, Do I know of a fit man to head the Mission? I really do not; but I can say that I know a willing man, and what is of more consequence, a man willing with his whole house. Myself, my wife, Miss Short, Jethro White, and Kafir Wilhelm, would all think ourselves honoured if we were sent on this Mission together. I know of some more agents that would join us. I should be quite willing, and my wife concurs, to resign my office here to another, salary and all, should you deem it more easy to find a fresh Archdeacon than a fitter Missionary; and this may possibly be the case, especially a year hence, when the work of the Archdeaconry is a little more consolidated... But all this I leave entirely to your judgment,... My young family might render the Mission expensive, as they could not all live quite 'Kafiricè', though I am sure they could and would live very simply. 139

Merriman had no time for missionaries who expected to live comfortably, and there is almost a modern ring about his argument that the missionary

...should go and live a hard self-denying life in a Kafir kraal, eating, like Kafirs, sour milk and mealies, and working with and for Kafirs... 140

It is clear, nevertheless, that Merriman did not imply by this that missionaries should work through existing social institutions to convert the Xhosa. He was rather emphasizing that the missionary should live a life of self-sacrifice. Gray hoped a missionary would be found

¹³⁷ Ibid., p.272.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid., pp.273-274.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

in England : he set aside Merriman's offer, but not on grounds of unsuitability:

The Archdeacon is admirably suited for the conduct of such a Mission... But I cannot spare him, for he is almost necessary to the existence of the Church in the East. He is a very remarkable man - his self-denial and energy, both of body and mind, are greater than in any other man I have ever met with;...I wish I could but give you a record of his life for the last year;- I am sure it would astonish any one. But I only have slight glimpses of it, for he never mentions himself or his work beyond what is necessary, though I hear from him on the business of the Diocese by nearly every post... 141

Without a man to work it, the mission to Mhala began in faith. On 12 March 1850, Merriman set off on foot to King William's Town to make preliminary arrangements, and from there, carrying a blanket, some tobacco and small coins to exchange for mealies and sour milk at kraals on the way, he walked the thirty miles to the chief's homestead.¹⁴² He declined the offer of a mount and would not allow Mhala to be summoned to King William's Town:

...for I said to myself, "If this mission is to succeed, the seeds of it must be sown in sweat and labour, and not in luxury or even comfort. The craftiest, and perhaps the most hardened chief in Kafirland, is not to be won by a dainty approach in kid gloves; and if I am not honoured to commence this great work, I will at least endeavour to prepare the way according to the best of my notions... 143

At evening, Merriman and Wilhelm approached Mhala's hut, and waited outside:

At length, Umhala, a dirty, scrubby-looking savage, in an old blanket, red with clay like the rest, crawled out and stood before me... After eyeing one another for what seemed to me an age, I wondered that he did not begin to ask questions, and converse readily, as the other Kafirs had done; and not knowing how long this dignified silence was to last, I turned to Wilhelm, and bade him say who I was; that I came from the Bishop whom Umhala had seen at King William's Town about a year before; that I bore a message, to ask if he was desirous to have a teacher, and if he would receive

¹⁴¹ Ibid., pp.269-270.

¹⁴² Cape Journals, pp.97-100.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p.100.

two teachers, kindly protect them, and see that they did not starve, and keep his people from robbing and injuring them. 144

Merriman clearly had not studied African custom, but his companion soon corrected him:

Wilhelm looked shocked at the vulgar volubility of my ideas, though condensed into one sentence, which he heard patiently to the end, and then said coolly, but in a low voice, "No, I must not say all that; that is not Kafir law... The captain (chief) will ask you all that." 145

At last, Mhala broke the silence : "A vela pina?".¹⁴⁶ and Merriman was able to ask his questions. Mhala

...shook hands, thanked me, and welcomed me; and being somewhat tired, I sat down upon the ground. He soon followed, and we entered into further conversation. I mention the above, because I think it of consequence to deal with men after their own way; and as I had purposely thrown off the Inkose ingesi, or English gentleman, to approach as a messenger of good tidings, I think I was bound to study Kafir politeness, and not to do, as I was grieved to hear that the Slambie Commissioner had done; 147

When Mhala displayed apathy on being told that Gray wished to send him a missionary, Maclean had "called him an ungrateful old dog, and other such epithets."¹⁴⁸ Mhala lost no time in asking Merriman for a blanket, but although presenting tobacco and coins to those who provided him with food and sleeping accommodation, Merriman made it clear to the chief that

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., pp.100-101.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. The words mean "Where do you come from?"

¹⁴⁷ Cape Journals, p.101. The Commissioner to the Ndlambe was Col. John Maclean (1810-1874). He arrived at the Cape in 1835 as a captain and served in the sixth frontier war. In 1845 he became diplomatic agent to the Mfengu, and was in 1847 appointed Commissioner for the Ndlambe. In 1852 he succeeded Mackinnon as Chief Commissioner of British Kaffraria. In 1858, he had a Compendium of Kafir Laws and Customs drawn up, to guide magistrates. It was the first attempt at systematic study of tribal law. D.S.A.B., vol.I, pp.490-492.

¹⁴⁸ Cape Journals, p.101.

...he was not to look for gifts from those who came to confer a benefit on him, and besides, we were poor men... I also added the missionaries who came would not be men of gifts, and if they worked for him, he must pay them, in giving them plenty of food, the same as they ate themselves...such as mealies... 149

To this Mhala agreed, promising also to give the missionaries a hut. Merriman repeatedly made it clear to the chief that the Gospel was not to be valued for its temporal advantages. The chief clearly took this with a pinch of salt.

...Umhala commenced a speech by saying, "he knew God was good; He gave them water, He gave them grass, He gave them gum; and would I give him a blanket?" I replied somewhat peremptorily, "Hai" (no) : when he smiled, or rather laughed, and did not ask me any more. 150

The chief had a more serious request to make:

...he said I was the man he wanted : the Bishop must send me. Wilhelm had told him what sort of man I was, and how I walked over the country, and he wanted such a man; he knew I was a kind man. I explained to him that the Bishop would not allow me to come - he wanted me elsewhere. Then he said, "You must carry a message to the Bishop from me, and say you are the man I want." 151

Chief and archdeacon parted on amiable terms:

...Umhala came to shake hands and bid me good bye,... He was very gracious, and thanked me for my visit, and said he should anxiously look out for the missionaries,... 152

At about this time, Robert Gray was on a visitation in the eastern province, and it seems that Merriman's wishes nearly prevailed, for Gray wrote to his commissary in England:

Pray, be on the look out for an Archdeacon for the east. I believe Merriman's vocation is to be a missionary. I have been reading his Journal of late, often with tears. He abounds in graces and gifts. If I can see

149 Ibid.

150 Ibid., p.103.

151 Ibid., p.102.

152 Ibid., p.104.

my way clearly in the matter, I shall probably before very long have put him at the head of my Mission work. 153

The notion passed, as Gray saw in the course of his visitation how much Merriman was needed as archdeacon:

...it is impossible to spare him, though he would make a wonderful Missionary. His heroic character is, however, telling powerfully in the diocese. 154

Gray's decision meant that another missionary priest had to be found. If the principle underlying Anglican missionary policy was the Cyprianic ubi episcopus ibi ecclesia, Merriman looked to the church's history to provide other guidelines. When Henry Douglas¹⁵⁵ offered to lead the mission to Mhala, Merriman wrote:

He is a young man of the right spirit to endure hardships, of an ardent zeal and gentle temper. Being a man of good birth and breeding, and good family connexions, he has something to sacrifice in the cause. Let our early English missionaries, as Boniface, who was chosen abbot of Nutsal, Willebald, who was of royal birth, and, I believe, several others of noble birth in that same century, be our example. Whether in this instance such a vocation may be recognized and allowed in a man of noble birth, in these our effeminate days...we must wait and see. 156

Douglas did not come, nor was a man found in England, and hope of an early start to the mission finally ended when war broke out in December 1850. Part of the reason for the failure to get mission work off the ground lay in the fact that a bishop in Cape Town could not

¹⁵³ CNG, vol.I, p.280.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p.315.

¹⁵⁵ Henry Alexander Douglas (1821-1875) was a nephew of the sixth and seventh Marquesses of Queensbury, and brother of John Douglas who became Premier of Queensland. Educated at Glasgow University and Balliol, he was appointed Dean of Cape Town in 1855. Soon afterwards, his high church practices provoked opposition from the congregation of St George's church, Cape Town. Douglas was one of Colenso's three accusers. He was consecrated Bishop of Bombay in 1869.

¹⁵⁶ Cape Journals, p.105. See P.B. Hinchliff, "The selection and training of missionaries in the early nineteenth century," in G.J. Cuming, ed., Studies in Church History, vol. VI : The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith, pp.131-135, and A. Grant, op.cit., pp.252-254.

give his attention to the work. As the archdeacon wrote in April 1849,

It really is an "unco" thing to be 600 miles from one's Bishop when at the nearest, with all the budding difficulties of a country waking up to a new Church life. ¹⁵⁷

The distance between the bishop and the scene of missionary operations made a mockery of Grant's scheme. As Merriman himself wrote:

It is not so much the cattle or the money that we so much need; but we want the men, we want the system, we want a director or directors; we want the spirit of command, to give the call to those zealous spirits who, I believe, would be found ready in numbers to undertake the work. ¹⁵⁸

In brief, what was needed was a bishop for Grahamstown but Merriman resigned himself to the thought that his own role in the mission work of the diocese would be very different from what he had at first hoped:

...I look forward to the time when I can send a son to St. Augustine's Canterbury. That is the only way in which I ever expect now in my own person to benefit the missionary cause. ¹⁵⁹

With the consecration in November 1853 of the longed-for Bishop of Grahamstown, thoughts of mission revived. Merriman hoped that "five years talking" would at last result in action, so that, as he quaintly put it,

...this Kafir part of the vineyard...may perhaps after all yield some good clusters of black grapes. ¹⁶⁰

These hopes were fulfilled. In July 1854, before the new bishop's arrival in southern Africa, Edward Clayton, priest, and William Garde, catechist, began the mission with Mhala. The foundation stone of the church was laid on St Luke's day, 18 October 1854, a week after

¹⁵⁷ SPG mic., vol. C/AFS/5, Cape Town diocese, NJM to EH, 20 Apr. 1849.

¹⁵⁸ Cape Journals, p.105.

¹⁵⁹ SPG mic., vol. D, Cape Town diocese, NJM to EH, 2 Aug. 1852. St Augustine's College, Canterbury, was opened in 1848 as a training college for ordinands for mission service. H.P. Thompson, op.cit., p.113.

¹⁶⁰ SPG mic., vol. D7, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to EH, 17 Apr.1854.

Bishop Armstrong sailed into Algoa Bay. Sir George Grey had recently become Governor of the Cape; his frontier policy required active missionary involvement, and his offer of financial assistance prompted Armstrong to plan the formation of four more missions, one in Grahamstown, one to the Mfengu at Keiskammahoek, one to the Gcaleka, and the fourth to the Ngqika.¹⁶¹ Early in 1855, the clergy of the diocese met in synod with their new bishop, chiefly to discuss mission work. Merriman was invited to become Superintendent of Missions and agreed. He was to be based at St Luke's, and to itinerate between the other projected missions.¹⁶²

Domestic troubles, however, intervened to prevent the operation of this scheme. After the arrival of Bishop Armstrong, to avoid concentration of senior clergymen in one centre, Merriman had moved from Grahamstown to Uitenhage.¹⁶³ Life there had been unsettled, and Mrs Merriman, whom a holiday in Cape Town had failed to invigorate, was glad to leave. Although the family enjoyed living a gipsy life on the wagon journey to Grahamstown, en route for St Luke's, it was a prelude to disaster:

...alas, our sojourn of 2 days at Graham's Town under the roof of our kind friends the Colonial Chaplain and his wife had anything but an improving effect on Mrs M.'s spirits or tone of mind. The remembrance of happy days in Graham's Town and of subsequent disagreeables at Uitenhage seemed to extinguish all remains of missionary spirit - and on our arrival at King William's Town the poor and uncomfortable lodgings to which we were forced to have recourse so entirely depressed Mrs. M. that it soon became apparent to me that what I had for some weeks anticipated was too surely the case, viz. that my presence on a mission station was likely to prove anything but an aid and support to the good cause.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ M.M. Goedhals, op.cit., pp.12-14.

¹⁶² Cape Journals, p.213.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p.212.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p.214. Merriman gives no precise dates at this stage but the move to King William's Town was within eight months of their move to Uitenhage, where they had arrived on 1 November 1854³⁴ i.e. towards the end of June 1855. Mrs Merriman gave birth to a daughter on 3 March 1856.

Twenty years later, Mrs Merriman wrote sympathetically to John X. about his wife's state of mind:

...sorry I am indeed that Agnes is not what Father calls "a bullock" - it is I know by experience a very distressing thing to be weak and nervous, and one cannot get the better altogether of low spirits and a wretched feeling of want of interest in anything by trying one's best not to give way to it - it is like sea sickness - quite beyond personal control. ¹⁶⁵

Julia Merriman acknowledged later to her eldest son that she had been the obstacle, although not wilfully, to her husband's missionary work: "dear Father had all the will, but I stood in the way of the deed."¹⁶⁶ Faced with this disappointing end to his hopes, Merriman found Bishop Armstrong a true father in God:

...the Bishop of Graham's Town from whom my difficulties could not be hid wrote most kindly to me exhorting me to take Mrs. M. to England for a year and if I thought it best not to return to Africa - or at least to return and take up my quarters in Graham's Town and there build the long since projected church near the Market Square. To this last suggestion I listened after many struggles with myself, and many vain regrets at the abandonment on my part of a noble field of labour and of Christian enterprise for which however poorly qualified, I had nevertheless a strong predilection, and had been seemingly designed by Providence and chosen out by the spiritual and temporal authorities of the Colony. ¹⁶⁷

After a short visit to St Luke's, and a journey across the Kei to lay the foundations of what became St Mark's mission,¹⁶⁸ the Merriman family sailed to England in the "Ariel", a journey which took seventy days, and returned to Cape Town on 6 November 1856.¹⁶⁹ The archdeacon was back in Grahamstown on 3 January 1857.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ MP5-75, JM to JXM, January 1875.

¹⁶⁶ MP26-75, JM to JXM, 3 Jul. 1875.

¹⁶⁷ Cape Journals, p.214.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., pp.215-225.

¹⁶⁹ MP4-56, JM to JXM, 5 Nov. 1856.

¹⁷⁰ SPG mic., vol. D7, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to EH, 7 Jan. 1857.

John Armstrong had died in May 1856, and Robert Gray, in the absence of the senior clergyman of the young diocese, visited Grahamstown to counsel inexperienced missionaries caught up by the cattle killing.¹⁷¹ It was clear to Merriman on his return that a bishop was needed to concentrate solely on mission work:

...our greatest requirement for the success of the Kafir Missions is a Bishop devoted to that exclusive work. It can never be duly superintended by a Bishop whose seat is at Graham's Town and who has this large colony to look after,... A fig for the endowment. £150 a year is endowment enough, and double that would be ample. Talleyrand used to say "above all no zeal." I say "above all no picture drawing and exaggeration." A truthful Bishop on £150 a year would I think in a few years or perhaps half a century raise a black Church that would exhibit some new and vigorous phases of the Christian character.¹⁷²

Merriman's vision was to be partly fulfilled by the consecration of a Bishop of St John's in 1873,¹⁷³ but in 1857, Henry Cotterill succeeded John Armstrong as Bishop of Grahamstown, with responsibility for white parishes, as for a chain of missions which extended across the Kei. The Merriman family settled in Grahamstown, where the archdeacon began to build the church of St Bartholomew.¹⁷⁴

John Xavier Merriman turned fourteen in 1855. The archdeacon had seen little of his son since the family left England, and it seems likely that the relationship between parent and child had become formal and stilted.¹⁷⁵ The boy's names were expressive not

¹⁷¹ R. Gray, Journal of a Visitation of the Diocese of Graham's Town in July and August 1856.

¹⁷² SPG mic., vol. D7, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to EH, 7 Jan. 1857.

¹⁷³ M.S. Benham, Henry Callaway, p.267.

¹⁷⁴ See below, ch.4.

¹⁷⁵ P. Lewsen, unpublished extended version of the book John X. Merriman, Paradoxical South African Statesman, photocopy housed in Cory Library, pp.16-20.

only of Nathaniel's hopes for his own life, but as he told his son,

You know that I had from the day of your Birth
destined you to the calling of a Missionary. 176

Previously, the archdeacon wrote,

I have not written to you many directly Religious
letters, because I had hoped that my conversations
with you and your early Religious training under my
Roof and by your dear Mother would be of far more
value than Volumes of letters. 177

Merriman, however, had found evidence of what he considered excessive
frivolity in his son's letters, and as John X. was to spend his holiday
at Bishopscourt with the Grays, he decided that the time had come to
write seriously and firmly:

It will be very kind indeed of the Bishop if he has
you there again for the holidays now that he has no
son of his own. You must really be watchful over your
conduct if he does - and not give trouble and annoyance
to anyone...by injuring any part of the Bishop's
property in the house or out of doors...

And now for a small lesson in philology. I think
you have need to study a little adjustment of the rela-
tion between your adjectives and substantives. - "good
scrape" are words that have hardly a fitness of
coherence to recommend them. And giving chase to your
friend's pet - merely because he was an "unhappy look-
ing dog" seems to me calculated to arouse a not
undeserved wrath...

I wonder if you ever cast forward your mind with
hope and pleasure to the time when you may be engaged
yourself in Missionary work. Depend upon it. Fun
and its enjoyment will soon wear out. So you must
enjoy it now with that remembrance constantly before
you. And take care to have something a good deal
better to fall back upon when that pales upon the
appetite. 178

When the archdeacon next wrote to John X., his own missionary hopes
were at an end. Thwarted in his own vocation, Merriman's hopes came
to rest even more heavily on his eldest son. But the boy's school-
masters had complained of the quality of his work, and both parents

¹⁷⁶MP 2-55, NJM to JXM, 13 Jul. 1855.

¹⁷⁷Ibid.

¹⁷⁸MP 1-55, NJM to JXM, 23 May 1855.

were grieved to find in him "so little of that serious regard to the things of God."¹⁷⁹ It is a stern and demanding letter to have written to a fourteen-year-old, and one not a little coloured by his own bitter disappointment, but it also reveals the serious view Merriman took of his own priestly vocation, and his abhorrence of any service of the church which was shoddy or second rate. "Your Mathematical Prize," he told his son,

...would have been a source of greater pleasure to me if you had not been careless and negligent in your Classics, in which I know that you can, with a moderate amount of diligence easily keep at the head of the school.

However my dear Boy, Prizes and Senior places,... are of far less consequence in my eyes than self-discipline, and right aims and proper motives of conduct, and that we should act "not with eye service as men please but with singleness of heart as unto the Lord." 180

Merriman was no advocate of sanctimonious piety:

It is not that I want to see you putting on a long face and serious deportment beyond your years or to stop you from such enjoyments as are natural to your age... 181

He nevertheless expected John X. to share the same serious-minded attitude he himself had possessed. At fourteen, Merriman's own vocation had been clear, and to this

...my thoughts turned and did not let me forget that I was destined to fulfill a high and holy calling in after years. 182

His south African experience had shown the archdeacon the danger and uselessness of a priest who had no real vocation,¹⁸³ and he recognized

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ MP 2-55, NJM to JXM, 13 Jul. 1855.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ "Sir, the life of a parson, of a conscientious clergyman, is not easy... No, Sir, I do not envy a clergyman's life as an easy life, nor do I envy the clergyman who makes it an easy life." J. Boswell, Life of Dr Johnson, quoted in C. Smyth, Cyril Forster Garbett, Archbishop of York, p.98.

his son's right to choose his own career:

...I shall never attempt to force your inclinations,
unless you choose this path of life for yourself. ¹⁸⁴

It was a hard, if not a harsh decision to place before a young boy, but it had to be made for John X.'s decision would determine the future course of his education:

Before I take any farther steps in carrying on your most expensive education, which must be at the sacrifice of many comforts to your Mother and Sisters I should like you to consider and tell me candidly whether you have the same wishes for yourself that I have had for you.

I had rather far that you adopted an honest Layman's profession in this country than that I should send you to England to finish your education as a Clergyman and you all the while have no Tastes or inclinations in accordance with it. ¹⁸⁵

The blunt words hide the disappointment Merriman must have felt. He felt that he had failed as a missionary, but he now faced the fact that he would not give a son to the church. His concern was to awake in John X. an honest reply, and he urged him to consider carefully and to show the letter to Robert Gray, "your second father."¹⁸⁶

The letter ended:

It has been my constant prayer that God would give you a special measure of His Spirit to fit you for that to which I had destined you - but if it may not be, I must seek out another course for you. ¹⁸⁷

These letters are among the few from his father which John X. preserved.¹⁸⁸ They clearly made a deep impression on the young Merriman, who decided that his own hopes did not coincide with those of his father for him, and Nathaniel seems to have accepted his son's decision without reproach or bitterness.

¹⁸⁴MP 2-55, NJM to JXM, 13 Jul. 1855.

¹⁸⁵Ibid.

¹⁸⁶Ibid.

¹⁸⁷Ibid.

¹⁸⁸It is, of course, impossible to say how many were written.

When the Merriman parents went to England with their elder children in 1856, it was decided that John X. would remain there and go to school at Radley.¹⁸⁹ In a farewell letter, his father reminded him that it was only the "kindness of friends" that made this financially possible, and he hoped his son would be grateful. His advice had not changed : what mattered was not to win the praise of men, but to live in the love and favour of God. But the father had more practical advice to pass on to his son:

Take great pains to read and speak with a clear distinct enunciation.¹⁹⁰

On an even more prosaic level, he sent John X. a supply of stamps, reminded him that post for the Cape had to be dispatched by the fourth or fifth of each month and gave him the exact address to which letters to himself and Robert Gray should be directed,¹⁹¹ an endearingly practical and thoughtful act which contrasts strangely with the stern tone of his earlier letters, but perhaps attention to such trivia hid a deeper concern for a son to be left six thousand miles away from the home he had known.

His hopes of personal or vicarious mission work ended, Merriman's work as archdeacon gave him informal opportunities of preaching the gospel. He grew to love the long walks between frontier towns which his archidiaconal visits involved.¹⁹² Life on trek was Spartan : he travelled with a tent made of three yards of calico by Mrs Merriman, with umbrella sticks for tent pegs.¹⁹³ Walking also gave Merriman the opportunity to live a simple life and he found the experience

¹⁸⁹ St Peter's College, Radley, was founded in 1847 by the Rev. William Sewell, (like Merriman, a Wykehamist), to provide a public school education based on the principles of the Church of England. Radley had a reputation as a high church institution. The Public and Preparatory Schools Year Book, (1968), pp.419-421; Radley Register 1847-1923, p.11. John X. remained at the school until 1858.

¹⁹⁰ MP 3-56, NJM to JXM, 4 Nov. 1856.

¹⁹¹ MP 2-56, NJM to JXM, 27 Oct. 1856.

¹⁹² Cape Journals, p.146.

¹⁹³ Ibid., p.193.

invigorating.¹⁹⁴ He carried few books except prayer book and psalter

...but I felt no want of intellectual entertainment. It was a pleasure to sit for hours and stare at big mountains, and have no business letters to write, or no post to carry them. ¹⁹⁵

On some of the long expeditions, his companion was Jethro White who had come from England with the Merrimans. Under an African sun the opus Dei went on:

We offered the prayers of the Church together every evening, read the Psalms every morning, and the Litany on Fridays. ¹⁹⁶

Merriman occupied outspan hours practising his cobbler's skill:

...I had carried an awl and a piece of bush buckskin for riempies, as our shoes wanted frequent patching in so long a march. ¹⁹⁷

Merriman also enjoyed his companion's "homely chat":

...sometimes Oxford was his theme, where he had lived several years with his uncle, the porter of Queen's College; and tales from that quarter are generally interesting to an Oxford man (many an M.A., by the way, might learn much from scouts and porters). Sometimes he told me little stories and doings of my own children, which to a father are always entertaining;... ¹⁹⁸

Merriman undertook two major journeys in 1850 and 1851. Shortly after the birth of his seventh child, Sarah Agnes, he set off on 5 November 1850 to walk to Bloemfontein,¹⁹⁹ which was part of his archdeaconry. He travelled north via Cradock, Colesberg and Philippolis, and arrived at Bloemfontein on 23 November. After three days there, during which he laid the foundation stone of the church, he set off again on 26 November, visiting Smithfield, Aliwal North, Burghersdorp, Post Retief and Fort Beaufort on his way back to

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p.179.

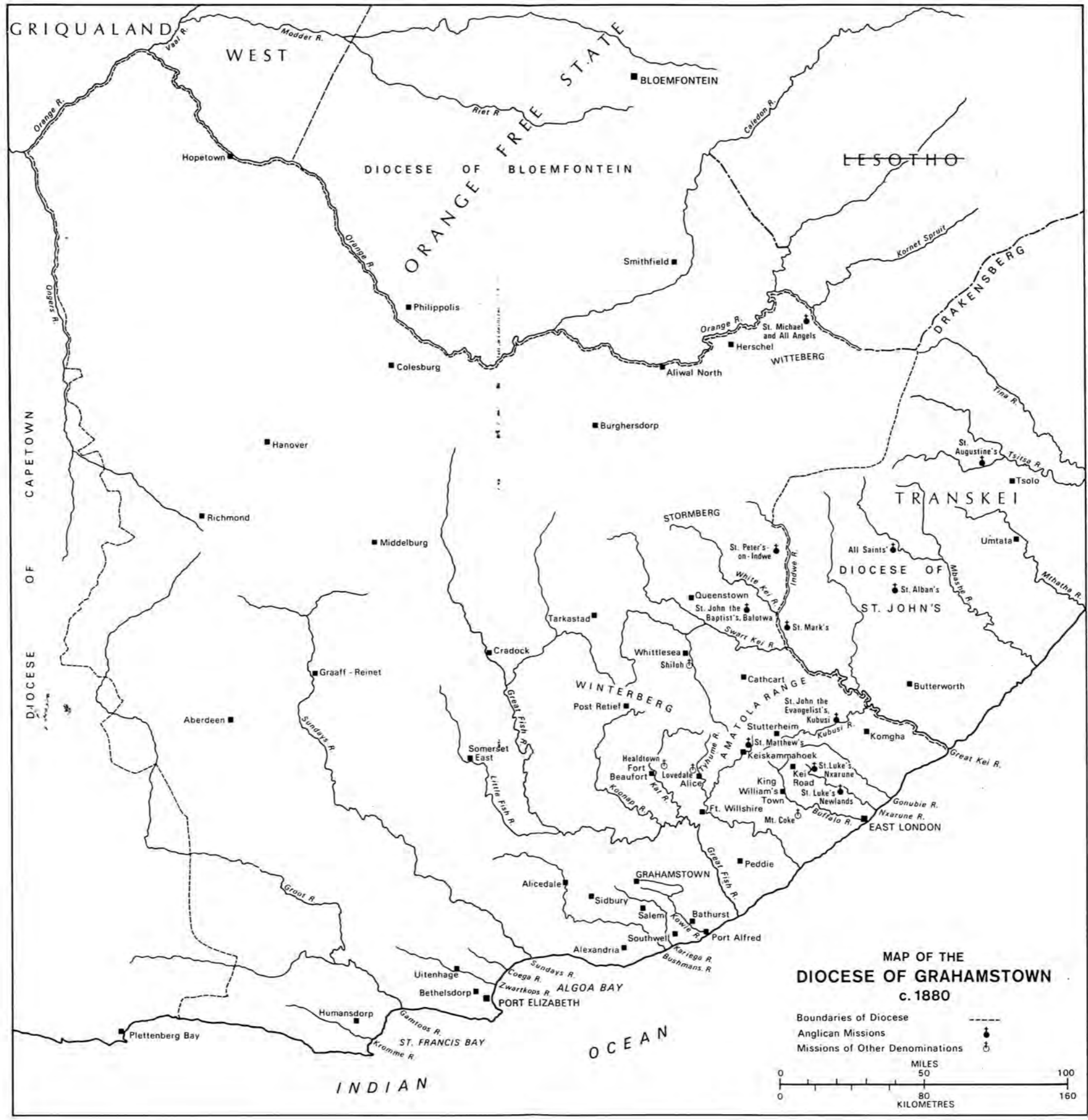
¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p.146.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p.147.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., p.146.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p.147.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., pp.127-146.



MAP OF THE
DIOCESE OF GRAHAMSTOWN
c. 1880

Boundaries of Diocese ———
 Anglican Missions ☙
 Missions of Other Denominations ☚

MILES 0 50 100
 KILOMETRES 0 80 160

Grahamstown, where he arrived on Christmas eve. During this journey he composed verses for his wife and children, including one for John X. who was then a schoolboy of nine, so his father had no axe to grind when he wrote:

The wolf's nightly howl, and quick jackal's cries
 Are music as under kombarse he lies...
 ...
 And Nature's calm beauties are lovelier far
 Than the hubbub of politics business and war. 200

On 25 September 1851, Merriman set off to Cape Town on foot.²⁰¹ He travelled an average of a hundred and fifty miles a week, calling at Sidbury, Uitenhage, George, Caledon and Somerset West on the way. The reason for this journey was the fact that Robert Gray had summoned a synod of clergy in Cape Town, but it gave Merriman a chance to visit the ten-year old John X., "...a matter of special joy to me during this visit."²⁰² The archdeacon travelled back through Paarl, Worcester, Swellendam, George, Knysna, Plettenberg Bay and Port Elizabeth, plagued during the last ten days of the journey by pouring rain and by mosquitoes. On the banks of the Bushman's River,

...not a wink of sleep did I get from the persecuting
 myriads of mosquitos, which devoured my hands, legs,
 feet, and face, in a way that I have never experienced
 before. One or two in the tent we had been accustomed
 to think an infliction...but now we had hundreds, or,
 I suppose, thousands. ²⁰³

A courtesy and friendliness which enabled him to win the affection of individuals, whatever their race, rank or sex, were Merriman's special gifts. On the Cape Town expedition, a man gave Merriman and Jethro White a share of his only loaf of bread:

We accepted his kindness; to have refused would have
 hurt him; and I have rarely tasted bread which I
 thought sweeter than that which I ate as the free
 gift of the poor African black. ²⁰⁴

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p.231.

²⁰¹ Ibid., pp.156-177.

²⁰² Ibid., p.166.

²⁰³ Ibid., p.171.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p.174.

On another occasion,

...a Hottentot, who overtook us on the way to the Knysna, and accompanied us late in the evening to the Great Zwart River, whipped off his nether garments without a word from me, and presented me his back to carry me through the stream. This I declined telling him I had already waded so many rivers, that this one, though broad and deepish, was nothing. He immediately dashed into the water, waded through and back again, and then came to show me exactly how far the water had come up on his body, and said he would go before me to show me the best course to take in crossing. This was at the very time when the Hottentots were beginning to be an object of alarm in the western province as well as the eastern. 205

Merriman returned to Grahamstown after this visit to Cape Town on 22 December 1851.

Four Merriman children were born after the family left England in 1848 : Sarah Agnes was born on 23 October 1850; James Arthur on 23 January 1854; Katherine Grace on 3 March 1856 and Esther Louisa on 31 January 1858. The home in which they were brought up was hardly an example of Victorian materialism, but life was not dull. Tales, perhaps apocryphal, are told of wild romps in rectory gardens, of Merriman children climbing trees and tossing the baby among them from tree to tree.²⁰⁶ Nathaniel James was not a stern and distant pater familias. He was an unashamedly affectionate parent. In 1852 he wrote:

My youngest boy I am afraid of admiring too much, and for my little girls, I seem to see none like them. On Christmas day they all said to me the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, and the day following the whole of Parnell's Hermit. This, I told them, especially the former, was the best Christmas box they could give me. 207

It was a secure and happy family that he left behind when he set out on his long visitations. Not only did Merriman enjoy walking,

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p.175.

²⁰⁶ SAL 1100, Notes made by Sarah Agnes Merriman in January 1913 concerning the arrival and early experiences of the Merriman family in South Africa.

²⁰⁷ Cape Journals, p.177. At this stage, in 1852, Merriman's youngest son was Thomas Reginald. The Hermit, by Thomas Parnell (1679-1718), Archdeacon of Clogher, begins, "Far in a wild unknown to public view, From youth to age a reverend hermit grew."

but by rejecting any other form of transport, he broke through the class distinction which separates those who can afford to ride from those who only have feet. The missionary in Merriman did not fail to turn this situation to advantage:

...I should never, unless by walking,...have had the opportunity which I enjoyed of going and sitting for an hour occasionally in the Kafir kraals, getting friends at least with the little children and women, drinking their sour milk...and very generally concluding by reading to them a Psalm...in their own tongue, to which they invariably listened with very devout attention. ²⁰⁸

On these walks, Merriman also had for his servant and companion, Wilhelm, and this provided him with yet another missionary opportunity. On 10 June 1849, at Post Retief, at a celebration of the Holy Communion,

...to my very great joy my Kafir attendant, into whose heart I had by this time wound myself, presented himself among the communicants, bringing at the same time his...quarterly ticket from the Wesleyan community of which he is a member. As this is to the best of my belief the first Kafir that has ever communicated with the English Church, which he did unsolicited and uninvited by me...I could not but call to mind the Bishop's words to me...that there seemed to be a special grace attending the first celebration of the sacraments in any place. This was the first time I believe that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper had been celebrated on that mountain...

This single circumstance I thought abundantly rewarded my going on foot...for I should never, unless by walking, have had sufficient communication with Wilhelm to win his confidence. ²⁰⁹

Nathaniel Merriman, for all the independent cast of his mind, his outspoken courage and remarkable dedication, is no exception to the conventional picture of the nineteenth century missionary who travelled to all corners of the globe, confident that western society was not only superior to all others, but that it was the pattern to which all people calling themselves Christian would conform. His missionary influence in the years before 1871 was clearly minimal, but whatever his faults, Merriman never lost sight of the goal of

²⁰⁸ Cape Journals, p.53.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., pp.52-53.

racial equality within the church, not an easy ideal to uphold among white colonists. Monica Wilson has pleaded for acceptance of white missionaries' motives, and pointed to their solid achievements.²¹⁰

Dom David Knowles goes a step further when he states: "Nor can the historian, whom even the play of motive eludes, catch the workings of grace."²¹¹

²¹⁰M. Wilson, "Missionaries : Conquerors or Servants of God?" South African Outlook, March 1976, pp.40-42; OHSA, vol.I, pp.260-271.

²¹¹D. Knowles, "St. Bernard of Clairvaux : 1090-1153", in D. Knowles, The Historian and Character, pp.33-34.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SYNODICAL GOVERNMENT, 1849-1870

"Change is not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better."

Quoted by Dr Johnson, as from Hooker, in the preface to the English Dictionary.

"Neither will I act without you, nor can you act without me."

George Augustus Selwyn, Bishop of New Zealand, quoted in S.C. Carpenter, Church and People 1789-1889, p.438.

Today, men look back on the Victorian church as the institutional embodiment of security and stability. To the Victorians themselves, it seemed that the church staggered from crisis to crisis, facing the intellectual, social and economic challenges of the age, at a time when the source of her authority was a subject of debate.¹ The conflict between the proponents of the royal supremacy and of episcopal authority in the Church of England was exported, with the church itself, to the colonies of the British empire. The constitutional development of these daughter churches,² and the responses they made to the debate on the limits of episcopal authority and whether or not the royal supremacy was essential to the Church of England, added another dimension to the understanding of the nature of the church in the nineteenth century.

The Church of England, the Royal Supremacy and Episcopal Authority

The Act of Supremacy, conferring on Henry VIII and his successors the title of "only supreme head in earth of the Church of England," was passed in 1534. This act, abolishing all foreign jurisdiction,

¹E.R. Norman, Church and Society in England 1870-1970, p.122.

²H. Lowther Clarke, Constitutional Church Government, is a history of the constitutional development of the Anglican church outside England. See also, P.B. Hinchliff, The One-Sided Reciprocity.

spiritual and temporal, in England, was repealed by Mary, but the principle of the royal supremacy was restored in a revised form by Elizabeth I, and acknowledged in the Thirty-Seventh Article of Religion. The 1559 Act of Supremacy declared the queen to be

the only supreme governor of the realm, and of all other her highness's dominions and countries, as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes as temporal. ³

The act was an assertion of the monarch's responsibility before God for the welfare of the church, and reserved the power of reforming abuses to the crown. It gave the monarch the right to nominate to archbishoprics and bishoprics, and to control Convocation. After the revolution of 1689, much of the supremacy exercised by the monarch was inherited by Parliament. ⁴

In terms of the Act of Supremacy, ecclesiastical law was recognised as part of the law of the land, and litigants in church courts had the right to appeal from the decisions of ecclesiastical tribunals to the crown. The 1559 act laid down that nothing was to be adjudged to be heresy except what had been so adjudged by the authority of the canonical Scriptures, or of the first four General Councils, and except what would after 1559 be adjudged to be heresy "by the High Court of Parliament...with the assent of the clergy in their Convocations." ⁵ Until 1832, the final appeal from church courts to the crown was heard by the High Court of Delegates. In 1830, a royal commission investigated the working of this court and suggested that its jurisdiction be transferred to the Privy Council. This was done in 1832, and an act of 1833 created a Judicial Committee consisting of Privy Councillors with legal qualifications, to hear appeals to the king-in-council.

³ODCC, p.1394. On the constitutional development of the Church of England and the royal supremacy, see also L. Dibdin, Establishment in England, ch. 2; H. Gee, W.J. Hardy, Documents Illustrative of English Church History; A.C.S. Gibson, The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, pp.759-782. F. Makower, The Constitutional History and Constitution of the Church of England; N. Sykes, Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century.

⁴L. Dibdin, op.cit., p.43.

⁵Ibid., p.94.

In 1840, bishops who were Privy Councillors were included in this committee if the case to be heard was an ecclesiastical one, but no distinction was made between appeal on points of doctrine and other ecclesiastical matters.⁶

Whereas Erastians argued that the Church of England without the royal supremacy would lose an essential characteristic, in the Victorian age, high churchmen, notably the leaders of the Oxford Movement, re-asserted the principle that real authority in the church derived from the apostolic succession and was vested in the bishops. The existence of these two parties in the Church of England set the scene for conflict between spiritual and temporal authority, with echoes of the medieval struggle between church and empire.

The middle years of the nineteenth century provide two striking examples of the way in which exercise of the royal supremacy was able to override episcopal opposition and the decisions of ecclesiastical courts of the Church of England.

In 1847, the Rev. G.C. Gorham, an evangelical clergyman, was presented by the Lord Chancellor to the living of Brampford Speke in the diocese of Exeter. The Bishop of Exeter, Henry Phillpotts, was in the habit of examining clergy before instituting them, but Gorham was subjected to an unusually lengthy examination, at the end of which Phillpotts found him unsound on the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and refused to institute him. Gorham appealed to the Court of Arches, the consistory court of the Province of Canterbury, where on 2 August 1849, the Dean of Arches found that Gorham maintained a doctrine opposed to that of the Church of England. Gorham then appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The committee, which included lay members not thoroughly trained in Christian doctrine, attributed to Gorham a view he did not hold, and declared this view not contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England. The Gorham judgment meant not only that the royal supremacy deprived the church of the right to exclude heretics, but that the Judicial Committee could define Anglican

⁶ODCC, pp.764-5; O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church, vol.I, pp.257-258; E.R. Norman, op.cit., p.121.

doctrine.⁷ These implications drove some Anglicans, including Henry Manning and Robert Wilberforce, to Rome. Among high churchmen who remained, there was uneasiness. In 1850, the Bishop of London, Charles James Blomfield, with the support of Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, introduced a bill into Parliament to transfer ecclesiastical appeals from the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council to the Upper House of Convocation, but the measure received scant support, even from the bishops of the Church of England.⁸ The spiritual leaders of the Church of England were not easily persuaded that their authority derived from the apostolic succession and not from the royal letters patent which elevated them to the bench.

In 1860, seven eminent academics, six of whom were ordained Anglican clergymen, each produced an essay aimed at reconciling Christianity and contemporary intellectual advances. The essays were collectively published in a volume entitled Essays and Reviews. The arguments of the essayists, self-evident and even trite to the twentieth century, shook the nineteenth. At a time when the Christian faith seemed to depend on the church's ability to refute new scientific claims, it was shocking to find clergymen trying to bridge what the church believed to ^{be} an unbridgeable gap. Episcopal condemnation of the volume was initiated by Samuel Wilberforce in 1861, and on 25 June 1862, the essayists R. Williams and H.B. Wilson were condemned in the Court of Arches and suspended from office for a year. The two appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which reversed this judgment, finding on 8 February 1864, that what Williams and Wilson taught was not contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England. Lord Chancellor Westbury, three lay Privy Councillors, and Archibald Campbell Tait, Bishop of London, who had strong Erastian sympathies, cleared the two: the Archbishops, Longley of Canterbury and Thomson of York, dissented from the judgment.⁹ Once again, the exercise of the royal supremacy, through the decision of lay judges, imposed what the bishops regarded as heresy on the Church of England.

⁷O. Chadwick, op.cit., vol.I, pp.250-~~259~~²⁷¹, 279, 288, 301, 311, 314, 443.

⁸S. Meacham, Lord Bishop, p.237.

⁹ODCC, p.471; A.R. Vidler, The Church in an Age of Revolution, pp.123-131.

Despite the impositions and restrictions of the royal supremacy, the Church of England in the nineteenth century found new ways of expressing her life as a spiritual organisation. Dealing with the Licinian persecution, Dr B.J. Kidd trenchantly observed that

Licinius forbade the bishops to have intercourse with each other, and to hold synods, knowing as he did, like other tyrants, Maximin, the Vandal king Gaiseric, Henry VIII, and the minister Walpole, the powerlessness of the church when deprived of synodical action. ¹⁰

Awareness of her existence apart from the establishment found institutional expression in the Church of England in the mid-nineteenth century through the revival of synodical action. Synods as a means of settling ecclesiastical disputes date back to the early church, and the revival of synodical government in the nineteenth century owes much to the influence of the Oxford Movement with its emphasis on the apostolic succession and the history of the primitive church.

In 1847, the Convocation of Canterbury, which was assembled for the opening of Parliament, requested the crown to revive its powers. The request was refused, but pressure for church reform from this direction was stepped up after the Gorham judgment, with Samuel Wilberforce taking the lead. In 1851, Wilberforce argued that even if the revival of Convocation did not ensure peace, the peace the Church of England knew without it was shaky : referring to the Gorham case, Wilberforce said that "Peace in error was not peace; it was death instead of peace."¹¹ Convocation revived the practice of receiving petitions in 1851, but the Archbishop of Canterbury prorogued the assembly after one day. The following year, on the initiative of Bishop Wilberforce, Convocation met for three days, and each house appointed committees. The assembly met again in 1853 and 1854, and in 1855 Convocation asked the crown for permission to make a canon. Permission was not granted. As the crown had not refused assent to a law passed by Parliament since the reign of Anne, the refusal emphasised the church's subjection to the royal supremacy. It was only in 1860 that Convocation of Canterbury was permitted to make a canon. In 1861, the Convocation

¹⁰ B.J. Kidd, History of the Church to A.D. 461, ch. 2, p.4, quoted in N. Sykes, op.cit.

¹¹ S. Meacham, op.cit., p.237.

of York was revived and began to meet regularly.¹² Although its legislative power was restricted, the assembly was an important forum for the expression of views denied a hearing elsewhere. When the appeal of essayists Wilson and Williams, against the condemnation of their work in the Court of Arches, was upheld by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1864, the Church of England resorted to synodical condemnation of the volume in Convocation.¹³ Although purely a clerical assembly, and until 1871, largely a nominated body, Convocation gradually established for itself an influential advisory position. Samuel Wilberforce regretted the fact that the House of Commons, which contained men of varying religious beliefs, was regarded as the lay voice of the Church of England. Although Wilberforce thought that Convocation should hear lay opinion, he recognised that to ask for lay representation in Convocation was tantamount to asking for disestablishment, which was further than he, and certainly most of the bishops of the Church of England, was prepared to go.¹⁴

Despite the conditions governing its meetings, the revival of Convocation clearly infused new life into the Church of England, and the English bishops began to explore other ways for the church to meet in conference and council, although they were only prepared to operate within the limits of Article XXXI, which laid down that a general council with legislative power could not meet "without the commandment and will of Princes."

In 1851, fighting Bishop Phillpotts of Exeter held a clerical synod. Eighty clergy of the diocese, including Gorham, protested against the meeting, but this test case established that a diocesan synod could legally be held in England without leave from the crown, provided its intention was not to legislate but to advise the bishop.¹⁵ During the 1850s and 1860s, demand for diocesan synods grew, not to legislate, but to advise the bishop, to lessen the clergy's sense of

¹²On the revival of Convocation, see O. Chadwick, op.cit., vol.I, pp.309-324.

¹³S. Meacham, op.cit., pp.247-253.

¹⁴Ibid., pp.241-243.

¹⁵O. Chadwick, op.cit., vol.I, p.314.

isolation, and to assert the corporate identity of the church.

It was recognised in the course of the nineteenth century that a Parliament which included Roman Catholics, Nonconformists and Jews could no longer claim to represent the laity of the Church of England. Although legislative power remained with the crown, there was increased demand for a forum where the voice of lay members of the Church of England could be heard. In 1861, the first Church Congress was held. These annual gatherings, attended by eminent Anglicans, facilitated discussion between clergy and laity, and prepared the way for diocesan conferences of clergy and laity.¹⁶ Another valuable example for the bishops of the Church of England when summoning diocesan conferences was the pattern of diocesan synods of clergy and laity which had been held in the colonial branches of the Church of England.¹⁷ In 1866, the Bishop of Ely summoned the clergy of his diocese, and one lay representative from each rural deanery, to the first diocesan conference held in the Church of England.¹⁸ The invitation from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the bishops of the episcopal churches of America and Scotland, the bishops of the colonial church and of the Church of England, to attend the Lambeth Conference in 1867,¹⁹ was another product of increased awareness in England that the church benefitted from mutual consultation among her members, but the archbishop made it plain that the conference was not to infringe the royal supremacy by assuming legislative powers. After Lambeth, the new Bishop of Lichfield, George Augustus Selwyn, adopted the practice of summoning diocesan conferences, and by 1882, only the Bishops of Llandaff, Worcester and London had not followed suit.²⁰ In 1886, the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury agreed to the formation of a House of Laity, with the proviso that the lay house should not be consulted on questions

¹⁶ ODCC, p.289; A.R. Vidler, op.cit., p.98.

¹⁷ See H.Lowther Clarke, op.cit.

¹⁸ S.C. Carpenter, op.cit., pp.257-258.

¹⁹ A.M.G. Stephenson, The First Lambeth Conference, is an account of this conference.

²⁰ S.C. Carpenter, op.cit., pp.268, 278, 282, 366.

of faith and doctrine. This example was emulated by the Province of York in 1892.²¹

The revival of Convocation and the meeting of Church Congresses, diocesan conferences and the Lambeth Conference all illustrated the existence of vitality and creativity in the Church of England, but the new institutions were developed within the limitations imposed by the royal supremacy, which the Privy Council judgments in the cases of Gorham and Essays and Reviews revealed as a real and powerful influence on the Church of England. The questions which preoccupied the established church in England in the nineteenth century, the government of the early church and the reformation settlement, evolution and biblical criticism, episcopal authority and the royal supremacy, were reflected in the history of the daughter churches in the colonies, although the emphasis the issues received and the political context in which the colonial churches groped towards an answer, were vastly different.

Episcopal Authority, the Royal Supremacy, and the Church of the Province of South Africa

It has often been assumed that Tractarians, despairing of developing the pattern of church government they desired in England, sought refuge in the colonies, and that the colonial church was founded on Tractarian principles. The history of the Church of the Province of South Africa suggests that this interpretation requires modification.²²

Firstly, Robert Gray, first bishop of Cape Town, whose episcopacy was devoted to the constitutional development of an ecclesiastical

²¹ Ibid.

²² G.W. Cox, The Life of John William Colenso D.D., Bishop of Natal, vol.I, pp.338-341; P.B. Hinchliff, "Laymen in synod : an aspect of the beginnings of synodical government in South Africa," in G.J. Cuming and D. Baker (eds.), Studies in Church History, vol.VII : Councils and Assemblies, pp.321-327.

province in south Africa, was himself no Tractarian. Son of a Bishop of Bristol, he was familiar with the machinery of the established church. As letters patent Bishop of Cape Town, he assumed the position of a bishop of the established church, and used the support of the governor, Sir Harry Smith, to gain temporal advantages for the established church.²³ Like many clergymen of his generation, Gray had been influenced by the Oxford Movement, but he was a man of the Wilberforce stamp, and adopted the ideas of the Tractarians in the same modified sense as the Bishop of Oxford.

Secondly, ~~in refuting~~ ^{to refute} the theory that the constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa was inspired by the Oxford Movement, it can be pointed out that Henry Cotterill, Bishop of Grahamstown, fellow-architect with Gray of the constitution, and of very great service to the south African church,²⁴ was an ardent evangelical.

Thirdly, lay representation in synods has been, for one hundred and twenty-five years, a hallmark of the government of the Church of the Province of South Africa, a far cry from the clericalism associated with the Oxford Movement.²⁵

The history of the Church of the Province of South Africa suggests not an ideological adherence to Tractarian principles but a pragmatic response to the various crises which beset the church in its early years. There was however, one standard which shaped the thinking of the founding fathers. Gray, Cotterill and Merriman retained a deep loyalty to the Church of England, and the need for unity with the mother Church of England governed the development of machinery for the government of the south African province. As the church's relationship with the civil authorities at the Cape and with the established Church of England was clarified, especially through the need to provide judicial structure to deal with doctrinal and disciplinary disputes in the Church of the Province of South Africa, the understanding of what constituted

²³ CNG, vol.I, pp.161-162, 166; M. Nuttall, unpubl. ts.

²⁴ Historical Records, pp.260-266.

²⁵ M. Nuttall, Synodical Government 1870-1970 : The Making of a Tradition.

the true nature of the Church of England shifted from acceptance to rejection of the royal supremacy.

The Anglican church at the Cape, for which Robert Gray was consecrated bishop in 1847, was not the established church of the colony, and beyond proclamation of a number of church ordinances, the civil authorities showed no inclination to legislate for the colonial church, which was nevertheless clearly in need of organisation. At the Cape, parochial structures were unknown, and beyond the church ordinances, there was no provision for raising money to maintain or extend church work. Unless the bishop was to bear the burden of initial organisation and continuing administration, and to be accused of episcopal tyranny as well, some alternative pattern of church government would have to be adopted.

In England during the 1840s and 1850s, numerous pamphlets were produced on synodical government. Several of these came into Gray's hands,²⁶ and he was clearly aware of contemporary moves to revive Convocation and hold clerical synods in England, when, in August 1848, soon after his arrival in his diocese, Gray summoned those of his clergy who lived in the western districts of the Diocese of Cape Town to meet in synod with their bishop. The assembly had no formal legislative function, and therefore did not contravene Article XXXI.²⁷ Chief among the issues discussed was the desirability of requesting a general church ordinance from the government of the colony, to enable the church to draw up a constitution. The deliberations of the synod revealed a common determination to remain "as nearly as possible" united with "our dear Mother Church."²⁸ A similar assembly, of clergy of the eastern districts of the Cape Town diocese, met when Robert Gray visited Grahamstown in October 1848.²⁹ A third clerical synod was held in Cape Town in January 1849. Among the fifteen clergy present was

²⁶PBH/BD, p.27, n.1.

²⁷The Attorney-General of the Cape, William Porter, assured Gray that there was no objection to synods at the Cape, provided that they passed no legislation. PBH/BD, p.41.

²⁸CNG, vol.I, p.187.

²⁹Ibid., p.200.

Archdeacon Merriman, who had recently arrived on the "Gwalior." The question of an enabling ordinance was again raised, and two factors shaped the synod's decision not to approach the government with this request. Firstly, it was recognised that the church in the colony was not,

...as in England, an integral part of the legislature, or an Estate of the Realm, but simply one out of many religious bodies tolerated and at present assisted by the ruling power... 30

Secondly, the clergy objected to asking

...a Government composed of various discordant religious elements to define ~~or enact for us~~, who should be considered a church man and entitled to vote at vestry and then to procure that this government should declare and enforce other matters which seemed to belong to the spiritual functions of the Church alone... 31

The synod then considered how the church was to be governed. Continuity with the Church of England was the main theme of the discussion, and Merriman recorded:

...as we had the Canons and Constitutions of the Church ratified by Convocation for our guidance, our consideration was how closely we could adhere to the letter and how we could best carry out the spirit of these. 32

This meeting also resolved that future organs of government should involve the laity, but only laymen who were Anglican communicants. This was clearly divergence from practice in England, where all Englishmen were held in law to be members of the established church, but Merriman argued that the status quo in England diverged from the intention of the canons of the church.³³

Hinchliff accurately pinpoints the reason for Gray's insistence on the representation of laity in synod. The south African church was not established or endowed, and ultimately depended for support on lay

³⁰ Cape Journals, p.16.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., p.17.

³³ Ibid. See also above, ch. 1, p.44.

contributions. If the laity were to provide the funds, it was necessary that they be represented in the government of the church.³⁴ Furthermore, although Gray objected to the fact that a House of Commons no longer purely Anglican could legislate for the Church of England, the right of the laity to be heard was part of the reformation settlement, and an aspect to which Robert Gray had no objection.

Another clerical synod was held in November 1851. Archdeacon Merriman walked the seven hundred miles to Cape Town, covering the last hundred in three days, and arrived "fresh and energetic," to attend the assembly.³⁵ The seventeen clergy who had assembled, discussed church conferences, lay representation, and ecclesiastical discipline. Gray recorded with pride that the two archdeacons, Merriman and Welby

...shone most in our meeting, and discussed the several subjects with great ability, and in a beautiful spirit.³⁶

Unwilling to take decisive action without guidance from the mother church, fifteen clergy of the Diocese of Cape Town urged Gray to go to England and there to consult the ecclesiastical authorities on the best means of securing lay representation in synod.

As a first step towards securing his position, and that of the south African diocese, in 1852, in England, Robert Gray applied for membership of the Upper House of Convocation. Hinchliff suggests that Gray's intention was to determine his relationship to the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was held that colonial bishops were not suffragans of Canterbury in any sense that would allow them a voice in the government of the ancient province. This decision left Gray free to act as if the government of the church in his own diocese was a separate issue.³⁷

³⁴P.B. Hinchliff, "Laymen in synod : an aspect of the beginnings of synodical government in South Africa," in G.J. Cuming and D. Baker (eds.), Studies in Church History, vol.VII : Councils and Assemblies, pp.321-327.

³⁵CNG, vol.I, p.341.

³⁶Ibid., p.342.

³⁷PBH/BD, p.28.

Another possible means of clarifying the position of the colonial branches of the Church of England was an act of the imperial parliament for all colonial churches. This was an issue which greatly interested W.E. Gladstone, like Gray and Merriman, a devoted son of the Church of England who had been influenced by the Oxford Movement. From 1841, he was treasurer of the Colonial Bishops Fund, and although he supported the extension of the Church of England, he recognised the freedom of the colonial churches from the established mother church. In 1849, Gladstone advised the colonial churches to organise themselves on the basis of "voluntary consensual compact,"³⁸ and in 1852 he introduced a bill into the House of Commons which would have allowed colonial synods of bishops, clergy and laity to meet and legislate for the church. The bill met with favourable response in the diocese of Cape Town,³⁹ but was rejected in the House of Commons. Merriman wrote in August 1852:

I am much concerned to see that Gladstone's Bill is...out but hope good may come of it. Verily we do want something here to mould into one consistent whole our outward framework...⁴⁰

The permissibility of colonial synods was crucial to the government of the colonial church. In February and March 1853, the colonial bishops who were in London at the time, including Robert Gray, met to prepare draft enabling legislation, in consultation with the English bishops and W.E. Gladstone. The Archbishop of Canterbury introduced this second bill into the House of Lords, where it passed, but it was rejected by the House of Commons.

Nuttall notes that the failure of these bills did not retard the constitutional development of the colonial church. Gladstone's measure required the sanction of the local colonial legislature for synodical decisions, while the archbishop's measure laid down that all synodical regulations were to be subject to the Queen-in-Council. Both these clauses could have crippled synodical government in the colonies.⁴¹

³⁸S.C. Carpenter, Church and People 1789-1889, p.438.

³⁹M. Nuttall, unpubl. ts.

⁴⁰SPG mic., vol. D, Cape Town diocese, NJM to EH, 2 Aug. 1852.

⁴¹M. Nuttall, unpubl. ts.

A decade passed before there was any further attempt by the imperial parliament to regulate the constitutional arrangements of the colonial church. In the absence of such legislation, Robert Gray, like other colonial bishops, regarded the archbishop's measure as reflecting the mind of the church and acted in the spirit of the bill, free of the restrictions which would have operated had it passed into law.⁴²

In November 1856, Robert Gray summoned the first synod of the diocese of Cape Town to be attended by both clergy and laity. The clergy, lay representatives and the bishop met early in 1857 to legislate for the church in the diocese,⁴³ but just as Robert Gray's hopes for the government of the church in southern Africa seemed on the way to fulfilment, two apparent obstacles emerged, in the persons of Henry Cotterill and William Long.

The diocese of Cape Town had been divided in 1853 to form three dioceses, those of Cape Town, Grahamstown and Natal. Robert Gray had welcomed John William Colenso and John Armstrong as his suffragans, but the first Bishop of Grahamstown died in 1856.

Armstrong's death was a setback to the organisation of the diocese of Grahamstown and a blow to Robert Gray, on whom the burden of administration once again fell. The Bishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan sought as Armstrong's successor a man whose views on church government would coincide with his own, and with whom he could work in developing synodical government at a diocesan and synodical level. Nathaniel Merriman was an obvious candidate,⁴⁴ and Gray informed the archdeacon that he had written to the Archbishop of Canterbury to that effect:

...I told him that after weighing very anxiously the whole case, I thought that you ought to be invited

⁴²CNG, vol.I, p.340.

⁴³Ibid., pp.410-421.

⁴⁴UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A5, p.60, RG to EH, 23 May 1856; p.73, RG to EH, 3 Jun. 1856; p.76, RG to EH, 4 Jun. 1856.

to undertake the office...I added that if you were again passed over I thought it would give great dissatisfaction to the Clergy, and also to many of the Laity. I think if offered it will be your duty to accept the appointment. It has killed my dear brother, who was more sensitive than you are. I do not think that you will break down under the burden...⁴⁵

Archbishop Sumner however, influenced by the evangelical Earl of Shaftesbury and by a petition from the dissident congregation at Port Elizabeth, and thwarted over the Graaff Reinet dispute, had other ideas. He recommended Henry Cotterill for the office of Bishop of Grahamstown, and Cotterill, a man of pronounced evangelical views, was appointed by the crown.

Although he admired Cotterill's personal qualities, Gray spoke out strongly against the appointment. Firstly, Gray had played a major role in the nomination of Armstrong and Colenso for the sees of Grahams-town and Natal, and he regarded the appointment as an infringement of his authority as metropolitan. Secondly, Gray regarded the choice of Cotterill as a deliberate attempt by the Archbishop of Canterbury to change the character of the south African church and to hinder his plans for the government of the new province.⁴⁶

Merriman's own attitude is not clear, but to decline episcopal office was second nature to him, and he probably received news of Cotterill's appointment with some relief, although he shared Gray's anxiety about the policy Cotterill would pursue. It is unlikely that the archdeacon had any private axe to grind when he commented to John Heavyside in September 1856, that he considered Cotterill "a party man 'as alien from the present South African bench as well could be.'"⁴⁷

Henry Cotterill was consecrated on 23 November 1856, and arrived in his diocese on 7 May 1857. His first acts seemed to confirm Gray's worst fears.

⁴⁵UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A5, p.78, RG to NJM, 4 Jun. 1856.

⁴⁶PBH/BD, pp.44-46. See Appendix F.

⁴⁷H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historial Notes, vol. II, p.17.

Soon after his arrival, Cotterill corresponded with Bishop Colenso, suggesting that Robert Gray had no right to claim authority over them as metropolitan.⁴⁸

In his own diocese, Cotterill licensed a minister to serve the dissident congregation at Port Elizabeth which Bishop Armstrong had refused to recognise, and on 17 May 1857, he preached in the room used for services by this congregation before preaching in St Mary's. Gray and Merriman regarded these measures with foreboding, in spite of Bishop Cotterill's very reasonable explanation that he hoped to heal divisions and promote peace, and his wise refusal to inherit the quarrels of others.⁴⁹

Merriman and Gray also found little to reassure them in Cotterill's response to the case of Philip Walter Copeman. The roots of this controversy lay in the years preceding the appointment of a bishop for the Cape. Copeman was a graduate of Queens' College, Cambridge, and was ordained in England before taking up his appointment as colonial chaplain of Uitenhage in 1847.⁵⁰ In February 1849, on his first visit to Uitenhage, Merriman found the state of ecclesiastical affairs there at the mean colonial level. Services were held in the court house, "a peculiarly profane building," Merriman thought, "not made less so by the priest's ascending to the judge's seat to offer prayers." Clergyman and congregation were "mutually dissatisfied with the state of things."⁵¹ Copeman had been led to expect a contribution of seventy-five pounds a year towards his stipend. In the first four years he received a total of twenty-five pounds. To supplement his income, Copeman had a farm on the Coega river, and Merriman felt unable to blame him for this. The archdeacon thought that the removal of their chaplain might benefit the Anglicans of Uitenhage, but as such a drastic course of action was not open to him, he persuaded the churchwardens to introduce the weekly offertory to supplement Copeman's stipend.⁵²

⁴⁸ PBH/BD, pp.45-46; G.W. Cox, op.cit., vol. I, pp.338-341.

⁴⁹ AA 21 May 1857. See above, ch. 1, pp.60-61.

⁵⁰ GDA 331, Obituary of P.W. Copeman.

⁵¹ Cape Journals, p.28.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 29, 158.

In November 1854, after the arrival of Bishop Armstrong in Grahamstown, the Merrimans moved to Uitenhage,⁵³ where ecclesiastical affairs slumbered on:

The utter deadness of Church matters here has proved very trying, the Puseyphobia being almost the only sign of life that was traceable. ⁵⁴

Part of the difficulty seems to have been Copeman's lack of vocation, although, as Merriman remarked,

If he had come out simply as an emigrant farmer he might have been a highly valuable member of society - there is a good deal of plain honesty about him... ⁵⁵

The arrival of the archdeacon seemed to promise better things in Uitenhage. With Copeman's co-operation, Merriman bought and adapted a house where church services could be held, and presented it to the see of Grahamstown.⁵⁶ In preparation for the move to these new premises, Merriman sought to correct an aberration introduced into services by Copeman, who had put the offertory collection before the sermon. The archdeacon met with the usual resistance, first from a churchwarden, and then from Copeman himself,⁵⁷ who while unwilling to stir himself, resented reforms introduced by another. By May 1855, Copeman was not only refusing to change the order of service, but to transfer services from the chapel to the new house-church. Merriman told Armstrong:

...matters have come to a deadlock between Mr Copeman and myself (I am happy to say without any personal irritation) and I have informed him that he must take the whole responsibility of future proceedings in the parish upon himself...

I can see nothing now for the improvement of this place but waiting till your Lordship removes Mr Copeman to another sphere. I regret it has not been done before. ⁵⁸

⁵³ See above, ch. 2, p.115.

⁵⁴ Cape Journals, p.212.

⁵⁵ SPG mic., vol. D7, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to EH, 17 Apr. 1854.

⁵⁶ Cape Archives, CO 677, RG to Colonial Secretary, 20 Sep. 1856.

⁵⁷ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to J. Crowe, 13 Nov. 1854.

⁵⁸ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to J. Armstrong, 21 May 1855.

Copeman's unco-operative attitude, the opposition of the parishioners, and his own family's unhappiness in Uitenhage were a drain on Merriman's energy and a trial of his patience, and when he was offered the office of superintendent of missions, he accepted:

I had no prospect of usefulness before me in this place without a fellow labourer in whom I could in some degree confide. Uitenhage is a lovely spot but we left it without regret, and I fear I may add (with one or two exceptions) without being regretted. 59

On a visit to Uitenhage in October 1855, Bishop Armstrong requested Copeman to restore the offertory to its proper place after the sermon, which Copeman promised, but failed, to do. When news of this reached the bishop, he ordered Copeman to explain his action, but the instruction was ignored. This disobedience, together with reports of Copeman's pastoral carelessness, prompted Armstrong to withdraw his licence,⁶⁰ but the bishop did not see the affair to a conclusion. It is clear that the Copeman case was one of the anxieties which led to Armstrong's breakdown and death.

Robert Gray also tried to persuade Copeman to reform and failed. On the strength of authority bestowed on him in his letters patent, Gray then served on Copeman an order inhibiting him from carrying out his spiritual duties:

He is now consequently no longer a Minister of the Church in the Diocese of Grahams Town in which he cannot lawfully exercise the functions of a Clergyman. His present position is that of a Minister deposed from the exercise of his Ministry by the lawfully constituted authorities of the Church. 61

The relationship between church and state and the position of colonial chaplains, however, was far too complex to be clarified by an episcopal fiat, nor was Gray's authority as secure as he imagined.

After the creation of the see of Cape Town, nomination to colonial chaplaincies no longer rested with the government, but with the bishop.

⁵⁹ Cape Journals, p.213.

⁶⁰ T.T. Carter, Memoir of Bishop Armstrong, p.400.

⁶¹ Cape Archives, CO 677, RG to Colonial Secretary, 5 Sep. 1856.

Colonial chaplains were, however, paid by the colonial treasury, and they could not be removed unless the bishop provided the civil government with adequate grounds for dismissal.⁶² What these might be was not defined. Copeman had arrived at the Cape before Bishop Gray and did not consider himself bound by episcopal authority, nor did he share Gray's view of the obedience due by parochial clergy to their diocesan bishop. Copeman took his stand, as others were to do,⁶³ on the royal supremacy:

The Bishop of Cape Town requires me to deny that Parliament has any power to interfere in Church or as he calls them in Spiritual matters, which I believe is contrary to my oath regarding the Queen's supremacy. ⁶⁴

Robert Gray's own attitude was that

The decision...of all questions of a purely spiritual character is, it appears to me, expressly recognized by the Queen's Letters Patent, no less than by the laws and Constitution of the English Church, as belonging exclusively to the Bishops of the Church, under certain defined conditions, and guarded and limited by the right of appeal. ⁶⁵

The bishop, considering Copeman unfit to exercise a cure of souls, requested the colonial government to remove him from office. The request was refused, although the colonial secretary acknowledged the need to provide machinery for dealing with disputes involving bishops and colonial chaplains.⁶⁶ This acknowledgement did not cause Gray to modify his claims, nor did it resolve the ecclesiastical dispute at Uitenhage, where Copeman continued to prove his nuisance value. As far as Gray was concerned, Copeman was suspended from office, and the bishop sent William Llewellyn to take his place.⁶⁷ Copeman inter-

⁶² Cape Archives, CO 5105, Colonial Secretary to P.W. Copeman, 26 Feb. 1855; CO 677, P.W. Copeman to Colonial Secretary, 21 Oct. 1856; CO 694, HC to Sir George Gray, 12 Sep. 1857.

⁶³ Both Bishop Colenso and Dean Williams claimed to be champions of the established Church of England.

⁶⁴ Cape Archives, CO 677, P.W. Copeman to Colonial Secretary, 8 Aug. 1856.

⁶⁵ Cape Archives, CO 694, RG to Colonial Secretary, 14 Feb. 1857.

⁶⁶ Cape Archives, CO 677, RG to Colonial Secretary, 5 Sep. 1856.

⁶⁷ Cape Archives, CO 694, RG to Colonial Secretary, 14 Feb. 1857.

rupted services held by Llewellyn in the building which Merriman had purchased, and he changed the lock on the door, but this time he had overstepped the mark. The attorney-general made it clear to him that he had no legal right to exercise his ministry in a building which was not government property.⁶⁸

Gray could not ignore the wider issues raised by the Copeman case, the extent of the jurisdiction of the bishop and the colonial government, and the relationship between the spiritual and temporal authorities, but the resolution of the immediate problem of what to do with Philip Copeman, he left to the new bishop, whose arrival was imminent.⁶⁹ Cotterill's solution was quite simple. He restored Copeman's licence and, with government permission, transferred him to Sidbury, a position he held until his retirement.⁷⁰ Merriman was shocked: "Mr Copeman is allowed his own way..."⁷¹

Cotterill, however, had not capitulated to the extent that Merriman feared. Observing that Copeman's case had received far more attention than the colonial chaplain merited, Cotterill got Copeman out of the way before dealing with the issues at stake. Although less stridently expressed, the authority Cotterill claimed to exercise over the clergy of his diocese closely resembled the claims of Robert Gray. Cotterill explained to the governor that it was

⁶⁸ Cape Archives, CO 677, RG to Colonial Secretary, 20 Sep. 1856; Colonial Secretary to P.W. Copeman, 23 Sep. 1856; P.W. Copeman to Colonial Secretary, 24 Sep. 1856; RG to Colonial Secretary, 27 Sep. 1856; P.W. Copeman to Sir George Grey, 30 Sep. 1856.

⁶⁹ Cape Archives, CO 694, RG to Colonial Secretary, 14 Feb. 1857.

⁷⁰ Cape Archives, CO 694, HC to Sir George Grey, 25 May, 26 Aug. 1857. Copeman retired in 1889 after forty years as colonial chaplain, and he died in 1898 at the age of eighty-five. As incumbent of Sidbury, he did not mend his ways. He lived on his farm near Alexandria, where he occasionally, and at his own convenience, conducted services. Although Copeman received the stipend, services at Sidbury were conducted by clergy from Grahamstown. GDA 331, Obituary of P.W. Copeman; Cape Archives, CO 870, NJM to churchwardens at Alexandria, 20 Aug. 1867; MP 8-76, NJM to JXM, 1 Apr. 1876.

⁷¹ SPG mic., vol. D7, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to EH, 25 May 1857.

...absolutely necessary for the efficiency of the Church that chaplains appointed by the Government should understand that one who is neglectful of his duty, after due warning from the Bishop, is liable to be suspended or deprived, after fair examination and trial, and that the government will recognise such a sentence. ⁷²

Cotterill won some degree of acquiescence from the governor, who stated his willingness

upon being furnished with evidence upon which it is proposed to suspend, or deprive, a chaplain, and after such clergyman has had an opportunity of putting in his defence, to recognize and support, as far as possible, the decision of the competent ecclesiastical authority. ⁷³

It took more than this, however, to reassure Merriman. The archdeacon's visit to England in 1857 did not eradicate the sense of failure which followed his abandonment of mission work. ⁷⁴ The arrival of the new bishop followed hard on the heels of his own return to Grahamstown. Cotterill took over leadership and responsibilities which, but for Armstrong's brief episcopate, had been the archdeacon's, but performed them in a way contrary to Merriman's own principles and those of Robert Gray. Frustrated energies and a feeling of uselessness mingled with feelings of resentment against Cotterill, and what Merriman himself was aware of a "a burden of consternation and perplexity," emerges as a lack of detachment and a tendency to over-react. He confided to Douglas, Dean of Cape Town,

Finding myself without any Archidiaconal and almost without any ministerial functions, I hardly expected to be put in any position beyond that of having to chew the cud of my own bitterness -...and I was prepared (I always have been prepared) to endure a considerable amount of low Churchism and to persuade myself that low and high Churchmen might by forbearance work side by side without the necessity of a rupture. But here is an amount of fanatical internecine Anti-Churchism that I was not prepared for, an aggressive never letting alone policy that must in some shape or

⁷² Cape Archives, CO 694, HC to Sir George Grey, 12 Sep. 1857.

⁷³ Cape Archives, CO 5106, Colonial Secretary to HC, 19 Sep. 1857.

⁷⁴ See above, ch. 2, pp.115-116.

another call forth an active resistance. ⁷⁵

There were several causes of dispute between Merriman and Cotterill, and as Merriman's letter implies, on each occasion he felt impelled to state his objection plainly to the bishop.

Soon after his arrival in his diocese, Cotterill constituted a Diocesan Committee of clergy and laity to supervise the missions of the diocese. Merriman had two objections to this scheme. Firstly, the committee had been convened without consulting John Hardie, superintendent of missions, who was in England, and secondly, it emerged that the bishop would consult the committee before engaging men to work as missionaries. The selection of clergy, in Merriman's view, was solely the prerogative of the bishop. He declined to serve on the committee. ⁷⁶

On another occasion, the bishop took exception to a sermon preached by one of his clergy on the subject of the observance of saints' days in the Church of England, and insisted on publicly censuring the offending priest. Merriman objected to this condemnation, especially as Cotterill had condoned Copeman's conduct, recognised the separatist congregation in Port Elizabeth, and even allowed pew rents to be collected in churches of the diocese, breaches of discipline which Merriman considered as serious as the offending sermon. ⁷⁷

In both these incidents, Cotterill held firmly to his own opinions, while allowing Merriman free expression of his views. The tone of the bishop's letters to the archdeacon was patient, encouraging and understanding. He refused to allow himself to be provoked. ⁷⁸

There were also doctrinal differences between Merriman and Cotterill. In July 1858, the bishop's chaplain gave a tract on con-

⁷⁵SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to H. Douglas, 28 Nov. 1856.

⁷⁶SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to H. Douglas, 28 Nov. 1857; NJM to HC, 12 Oct. 1857.

⁷⁷SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to HC, 11 Dec. 1857; H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol. II, p.79.

⁷⁸SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to HC, 13 Dec. 1857; HC to NJM, 15 Oct. 1857.

firmation to one of the candidates the archdeacon was preparing for the rite, to the contents of which Merriman took exception. Not only were the candidate's "Spiritual feelings...regarded throughout as the main test of faith," but the bishop was described as "simply a praying minister and not an authorized conveyor of Spiritual blessings."⁷⁹ Merriman made his objections known, the bishop responded with a kind but non-committal note, and the issue was closed.⁸⁰

The ordination issue was more serious. Towards the end of 1857, Cotterill refused to accept Arthur Urquhart, the deacon at Cradock, for priests' orders. Merriman regarded Urquhart as "a man of moderate views and a gentle and humble disposition," and considered his doctrinal position "very temperate and quite unexceptionable." Cotterill thought otherwise, and his comments on Urquhart's doctrine were serious, not only because Merriman thought them "cruel and insulting" to Urquhart, but because they were an attack on the archdeacon's own position. Cotterill had pointed out to Urquhart:

...you appear to consider the Church i.e. a visible body on earth governed by Bishops Priests and Deacons, as a living body in which the promises and the grace of GOD's covenant are vested so that the Church is in fact interposed between Christ and the believer... I must candidly tell you that I consider this view which I have stated is one of the most serious that can be held - and that where it is held it destroys a man's usefulness as a minister of the gospel, overlays the truth of Christ as preached by the Apostles with another religion which is no part of the Gospel but contrary to it. ⁸¹

Merriman was deeply disturbed. Urquhart preached what the archdeacon regarded as the "received Doctrine" of the Anglican church, while Cotterill appeared to question the existence of the church as a visible institution governed by bishops, priests and deacons, and its role as mediator between Christ and the believer, the very points which Merriman thought ought to be upheld. The archdeacon felt strongly enough to write and reassure Urquhart, and had Cotterill persisted in

⁷⁹ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to HC, 20 Jul. 1857.

⁸⁰ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to HC, 21 Jul. 1857.

⁸¹ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to H. Douglas, 28 Nov. 1857.

his condemnation of the deacon, it would have caused a personal crisis for Merriman:

And yet I do not see my course very clear as to the manner of withstanding it with the least amount of injury to peace and order. For though such destructive tenets proclaimed by a Bishop seem to be incompatible with a claim on his part to Canonical obedience, yet I should be loth on my own part to violate such obedience or throw the Church into confusion. ⁸²

Urquhart managed to still Cotterill's doubts, and he was ordained priest on 20 December 1857. ⁸³

As senior priest of the diocese, and in the absence of any formal provision for theological education, Merriman presented candidates to the bishop for ordination. In 1857, because of the dispute over Urquhart, Merriman withdrew from this office, and James Barrow, colonial chaplain at Bathurst, acted as examining chaplain, while Heavyside presented. ⁸⁴ To prevent repetition of this last-minute change of arrangements in subsequent years, Merriman wrote to Cotterill to discuss and attempt to resolve another theological difference that he knew existed between them. ⁸⁵ The Gorham controversy must have been clearly in Merriman's mind when he told Cotterill:

To use the doctrine of Baptisms in our ministry mainly to warn people against trusting to an empty rite seems to me to be substituting a bugbear for a deeply important and sanctifying Truth of the Gospel ...I should not feel satisfied unless I thought a man could teach every baptized child that it was a child of God - and this by virtue of its baptism having therein and thereby become a subject of Divine Grace, the grace of regeneration as I should call it. ⁸⁶

Cotterill replied:

Although I should not express myself exactly as you have done on Baptism...I am persuaded that it is

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to A.J. Urquhart, 3 Dec. 1857; H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol. II, p. 84. ⁸⁴ H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol. II, pp. 83-4.

⁸⁵ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to HC, 11 Nov. 1858.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

a truth clearly connected with the Gospel of Christ that our Baptism is to us a seal and pledge on God's part of our union with Christ - which we are bound to believe and make our own for ourselves and our children by believing the promises of God made to us in that sacrament...⁸⁷

Merriman felt that the difference between himself and the bishop was so great that it precluded his acting as examining chaplain again.⁸⁸ Cotterill was grieved, especially as Merriman's decision would be "a signal to a large party among the Clergy who feel with you and would follow your guidance." Cotterill nevertheless respected Merriman's views, but did not feel able to moderate his own stand:

I know that my saying so subjects me to the reproach of a party spirit...I cannot help it. God knows I do not wish to have any respect of persons and that I desire to treat the opinions of others who differ from me with tenderness and consideration and if at any time I have failed to do so, I would thankfully ask for forgiveness of anyone I have so offended. But the truth I hold I cannot give up : nor the conclusions which it compels me to draw as to the source of the efficiency of the Christian ministry...⁸⁹

The quarrel between bishop and archdeacon threatened to display all the intolerance and acrimony which can prevail between men of different churchmanship but the same religion, but Cotterill and Merriman were saved from fanaticism by the fact that both were secure in their own position and therefore not driven to denunciation of others to hide their own doubts. The inauspicious start to their relationship did not persist. Merriman's idealism brought on bouts of depression, but he was a man of fundamental justice and practical good sense, and aided by Cotterill's sincerity, patience and tact, he was able to overcome his initial antipathy. Moreover, Cotterill's attitude to synodical government was not at all what Gray and Merriman had feared it would be, and the common ground the three found on this issue was the basis of much constructive work for the diocese and the province.

⁸⁷ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, HC to NJM, 12 Nov. 1858.

⁸⁸ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, Memorandum, 23 Nov. 1858.

⁸⁹ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, HC to NJM, 29 Dec. 1858.

As an evangelical, Cotterill could be expected to give weight to lay opinion, but Gray was anxious about the form this would take. Cotterill's correspondence with Bishop Colenso made Gray fear that the new Bishop of Grahamstown would adopt the same pattern of lay representation that Colenso, despite opposition from Gray, had introduced in Natal. Colenso had created a Church Council, in which clergy and laity sat together, and which had purely advisory functions.⁹⁰ Cotterill defended Colenso's right to define the structure of church government in his own diocese, but the Bishop of Grahamstown's position was more in accord with Gray's own:

Though I consider the influence of the Christian λαός should be co-extensive with the Church, I prefer myself voting by orders.⁹¹

There are several possible explanations for Cotterill's preference. Colenso's system in Natal left all power in the hands of the bishop, anathema to an evangelical. Also, Cotterill saw as clearly as Gray that the financial contributions of the laity were necessary for the running of the church, and that unless they were given a voice in church government, the laity would not be willing to contribute. In addition, a majority of the clergy in the diocese were high churchmen who would favour voting by orders, and Cotterill had no wish to quarrel with them, if compromise was possible. Moreover, representation of clergy and laity in separate houses was the pattern of the Church of England.

In April 1858, Cotterill summoned his clergy to a visitation in the cathedral city of the diocese. In his primary charge to the twenty-two assembled clergy, he dealt with mission, finance, synodical action and lay co-operation.⁹² The bishop then invited interested laity to join the clergy in a conference held on 15 April 1858, in St George's Grammar School. The Journal records that there was "a tolerably good attendance of the laity, but only from the City," and foremost among the questions discussed was "the best method of representing the laity in the Diocese...and obtaining their concurrence in Church questions."

⁹⁰PBH/BD, p.71.

⁹¹G.W. Cox, op.cit., vol.I, p.340.

⁹²H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.III, p.42.

It was Archdeacon Merriman who proposed that "the Bishop be requested to convene a Synod as early as might appear to him convenient." Ten clergy and twenty laymen supported the measure, and eleven clergy, most of whom were newly-ordained deacons, and four laymen opposed it.⁹³ On the strength of the response from this first informal meeting, Cotterill appointed a provisional committee chaired by Merriman, "for the aiding and assisting His Lordship in taking measures for calling a Diocesan Assembly." The committee recommended the holding of a synod between Easter and Whitsun in 1859 or 1860, to be attended by all diocesan clergy and by lay representatives of all congregations within the diocese. Lay representatives were to be communicants and at least twenty-one years of age, and their electors were required to be communicants or to have signed a declaration of church membership.⁹⁴

Cotterill went to England in March 1859 and returned at the end of January 1860.⁹⁵ Before his departure, the bishop appointed three committees to draw up reports on finance, on parochial government and on church courts, as guides to the bishop in preparation for the prospective synod.⁹⁶ The subjects selected reflect problems already evident in the diocese, together with an awareness that the issues were not restricted to Government, but were part of the constitutional development of the Church of England in the colonies. Merriman was chairman of all three committees. This was a wise choice. He had leadership experience, knew the clergy of the diocese, had first hand knowledge of the only south African precedent available in the form of the synod of the diocese of Cape Town, and the cause of synodical government was dear to him. Each committee presented different problems, but Merriman in each case was tactful and accommodating, as well as organised and decisive. He was determined to prevent discussion of trivial detail and to provide broad guidelines for the bishop, and possibly for the synod.

⁹³ GTJ 17 Apr. 1858.

⁹⁴ LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, loose enclosure.

⁹⁵ H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.II, p.135; Cape Archives, CO 741, HC to Colonial Secretary, 5 Mar. 1859.

⁹⁶ LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, p.11; GDA 218, NJM to H. Kitton, 2 Sep. 1859; GDA 220, NJM to H. Kitton, 17 Sep. 1859.

Cotterill had facilitated meetings of the committee on diocesan finance by choosing the seven lay members from Grahamstown congregations. Merriman, Heavyside and Barrow formed the minority clerical contingent. Merriman used the opportunity of a visit from Barrow to Grahamstown to summon a meeting of the committee, which agreed that more money was needed to pay clergy and extend the work of the church. It was agreed that the best means of achieving this was not a fixed church rate, but encouragement of the practice of voluntary giving. The committee also recommended the assessment of parishes for a contribution towards diocesan funds.⁹⁷

The committee to discuss parochial government had members in Port Elizabeth, Graaff-Reinet, King William's Town, Bathurst and Grahamstown.⁹⁸ Co-ordination was therefore a difficult task, and the fact that one of the lay members was Edward Booth⁹⁹ required extra patience from Merriman. The fact that laymen formed a majority on the finance committee reflected the dependence of the church on their support, but in parochial administration, responsibility was more evenly shared, and this second committee consisted of five laymen and six clergy. Their report followed Robert Gray's 1850 Instructions, and recommended that detail be settled in synod. Booth wrote a separate report.¹⁰⁰

On 8 March 1860, Bishop Cotterill gave formal notice of the first synod of the diocese of Grahamstown. The subjects on the agenda were eminently practical, and arose out of the difficulties which Cotterill had experienced in the diocese. They also echoed the issues dealt with at the 1857 synod of the diocese of Cape Town. Firstly, the synod, and especially the laity, would be asked to draw up a scheme for the maintenance of the clergy and the extension of the church,

⁹⁷ LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, p.11; P.B. Hinchliff, "Laymen in synod : an aspect of the beginnings of synodical government in South Africa," in G.J. Cuming and D. Baker (eds.), Studies in Church History, vol.VII : Councils and Assemblies, pp.321-327.

⁹⁸ GDA 220, NJM to H. Kitton, 17 Sep. 1859; GDA 224, 1 Dec. 1859.

⁹⁹ On Edward Booth, see above, ch. 1, p.56.

¹⁰⁰ LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, p.7; GDA 224, NJM to H. Kitton, 1 Dec. 1859.

and to define and regulate the conditions under which church property was held. The synod would also be required to define the boundaries of parishes and the duties of churchwardens, to define the status of clergy and draw up the constitution of a court for the exercise of the bishop's jurisdiction.¹⁰¹

On 20 June 1860, after the Litany and Holy Communion in St George's cathedral, the bishop, clergy and laity of the diocese met in St George's Grammar School, where the registrar read the notice convening the synod, and called the roll of clergy and lay delegates. Among the lay representatives, elected according to the recommendations of the committee appointed in 1859, Grahamstown churchmen predominated:¹⁰² it was more convenient to elect as lay delegates men who were on the spot, rather than others who would have to travel to Grahamstown. Cotterill's charge to the synod took two hours. He began with a preamble in which he emphasised the continuity between the colonial church and the Church of England, to reassure especially the lay delegates who were suspicious of clerical tyranny or fearful of separation from the Church of England. He made it clear, at the same time, that conditions in the colony necessitated adaptation:

In England, the bishop governs his diocese, according to such authority as he has by God's word, and is committed to him by the ordinance of the realm. Here although the source of his authority is the same, he requires in order to apply it the consent of those who unite under his government...the bishop himself, and his clergy and laity, have their line of duty clearly marked out : that is, not to make rules for themselves, which would be to separate from the church of which we are a branch, but to agree amongst ourselves to accept such laws of our mother church as are here applicable...¹⁰³

The rest of the charge concentrated on practical issues : where clergy and especially laity, were ignorant of ecclesiastical law and the needs of the diocese, it was necessary for the bishop to provide guidance. The synod provided a forum for discussion, but to a very large extent,

¹⁰¹ LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, p.5.

¹⁰² Ibid., p.13; AA 21 Jun. 1860; H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.III, p.44.

¹⁰³ LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, p.17.

discussions and decisions followed Cotterill's guidelines,¹⁰⁴ and it was the bishop's ratification which gave force to the acts and resolutions of the synod.

In 1857, giving judgment in the Eton College case in England, Lord Campbell found that the established Church of England could have no legal existence in the colonies. This seemed to clear the way for synodical government in the colonial churches. At the same time, Robert Gray was advised that the judgment meant that church courts in the colonies were not part of English system of ecclesiastical courts, and there could be no automatic appeal from the former to the latter.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, one of the important issues to be settled by south African synods was the provision of a system of courts to hear ecclesiastical disputes. The 1857 synod of the diocese of Cape Town had already drawn up regulations for the constitution of an ecclesiastical tribunal,¹⁰⁶ and controversies which had arisen in south Africa revealed the need for church courts.

Cotterill realised that discord over Copeman would have been smoothed over had there been an ecclesiastical court in the diocese of Grahamstown to judge cases according to synod-ratified standards of judgment.¹⁰⁷ In September 1857, the Bishop of Grahamstown set out his views in a memorandum which he sent to the Governor of the Cape, the Bishop of London, and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Cotterill emphasised that the colonial church should be governed on principles similar to those in the mother Church of England, and affirmed that the temporal affairs of the church, but not the spiritual superintendence of the clergy, should be administered in concurrence with the clergy and laity

¹⁰⁴For Bishop Cotterill's charge, see LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, pp.13-39. For reports on the synod, see GTJ 26 Jun., 30 Jun., 3 Jul. 1860.

¹⁰⁵PBH, pp.88-89.

¹⁰⁶CNG, vol.I, p.420.

¹⁰⁷SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to HC, 13 Dec. 1857.

of the diocese, and that

...wherever a Clergyman shall be duly presented to a fixed and separate charge, the License of the Bishop to enable him to perform the spiritual functions of his office in that charge shall not be withheld except for reasons which shall be examined before a competent tribunal to be hereafter constituted...The license to such a charge shall not be withdrawn except for offences of which the law of England takes cognizance, or for moral misconduct, wilful neglect of duty, or proved unfitness for the office, and after trial...and sentence by such a tribunal... 108

One of the three committees appointed by Cotterill in 1859 was commissioned to discuss the question of an ecclesiastical court. It was a question of practical necessity but legal uncertainty and involved considerable thought and care, as copious correspondence between Merriman, as chairman, and other committee members, especially Archdeacon Kitton, indicates.¹⁰⁹ Merriman told Kitton:

If the Bishop's Patent did - which it does not - authorise him under its specific direction to create a Court, I presume the Bishop would still have felt that a Court unless constituted under the advice of his Synod would not be of much assistance to him in administering the discipline of the Diocese. 110

Merriman and Kitton were aware of colonial precedents for the creation of diocesan courts : the examples of India, Toronto and Tasmania were rejected,¹¹¹ but the diocesan court of Cape Town presented another problem. Merriman agreed that its machinery was cumbersome and its operation untried, but if the south African dioceses were to be united in one province, he told Kitton that it seemed

...prudent from the beginning to bring the workings of our several Diocesan Courts into mutual harmony. 112

The final report summarised the functions of the court:

¹⁰⁸ Cape Archives, CO 694, HC to Sir George Grey, 12 Sep. 1857.

¹⁰⁹ GDA 218 - GDA 225, NJM to H. Kitton, Sep. - Dec. 1859.

¹¹⁰ GDA 223, NJM to H. Kitton, 5 Oct. 1859.

¹¹¹ Ibid.; GDA 224, NJM to H. Kitton, 1 Dec. 1859.

¹¹² GDA 223, NJM to H. Kitton, 5 Oct. 1859.

...we understand such court to be more immediately designed to aid the Bishop in deciding in the case of those clergy who lie under the implication of being what the law terms "criminous clerks," or of such other church officers, catechists, or others, as may be more immediately under episcopal rule. Its decisions will in no case assume to affect the civil rights of any lay man...except as regards the salaries of any office-bearer in the church. Nor do we contemplate its jurisdiction being in any case called for in the case of laymen, except in circumstances arising out of a claim being put forward to participate in the sacraments of the church, when this claim may be in the teeth of such disqualifications as the Rubric plainly specifies. 113

The legal position of the proposed court was uncertain, but there was no question of unilateral declaration of independence from the Church of England, as the final paragraph of the report indicates:

...any regulations made respecting such court in the Diocesan Synod, are presumed by us to be subject to the approval and ratification of the Provisional Synod...and if it may be, that such court should receive the permissive sanction of the Crown. 114

While Cotterill was in England, he investigated the status and formation of colonial church courts,¹¹⁵ and on the basis of his findings and the report of the 1859 committee, regulations governing the constitution and procedure of the ecclesiastical court of the diocese of Grahamstown were drawn up by the 1860 synod.¹¹⁶

It was the ecclesiastical court of the diocese of Cape Town which was first called into use. Robert Gray had faced considerable opposition among both clergy and laity to his convocation of the first synod of the diocese of Cape Town.¹¹⁷ Among three clergymen who attended the opening session of synod merely to protest against its meeting was the Rev. William Long.

¹¹³ LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, p.9.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.III, p.44.

¹¹⁶ Acts and Resolutions of the First Synod of the Diocese of Grahamstown, 1860.

¹¹⁷ PBH/BD, pp.39-42.

In 1845, Long had been appointed minister of the episcopal church at Graaff-Reinet by the Governor of the Cape in his capacity as ordinary. In 1848, Gray had ordained Long to the priesthood, Long taking the oaths prescribed by English usage and law, including the oath of canonical obedience to the bishop. Gray had granted Long a licence to officiate at Graaff-Reinet, but reserved the right to revoke it. In 1854, Long had been nominated rector of Trinity Church, Cape Town, by the patron. Long's position as incumbent was complex and contradictory. Long had renewed his oath of canonical obedience to Gray and received a licence to officiate in the parish of Mowbray, the bishop once again reserving the right to revoke this licence. At the same time, the agreement between Gray and the patron of Trinity Church required that the patron's nominee should hold the benefice on the same terms as a regularly instituted clergyman of the Church of England. Because of a supposed legal obstacle at the time however, Long was not instituted to the living, although Gray recognised him as the incumbent.¹¹⁸

Despite what Merriman described as "a fractious clamorous opposition,"¹¹⁹ the 1857 Cape Town synod determined that in future all clergy, before receiving the bishop's licence, would be required to subscribe to the constitution and rules of the synod of the diocese, and that all offenders against these regulations would be arraigned in the court of the diocese.¹²⁰

In October 1860, Gray called for the election of lay delegates to a second synod. Long insisted that synodical government was illegal, and refused to obey. As a result, on 27 November 1860, he was cited to appear in the court of the diocese, and on 8 February, Bishop Gray, presiding with five assessors, suspended Long from his cure of souls for three months, without loss of income. As the existence of this court depended on resolutions of the 1857 synod which Long did not

¹¹⁸ On the Long case, see CNG, vol.I, pp.470-536; PBH/BD, pp.79-84; Historical Records, pp.147-157; M. Nuttall, unpubl. ts.

¹¹⁹ SPG mic., vol. D7, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to EH, 7 Jan. 1857; PBH/BD, pp.39-41.

¹²⁰ PBH/BD, p.42.

recognise, he regarded the sentence as null and void and continued to officiate. Cited to appear before the bishop and to answer for his defiance of the court's sentence, Long failed to respond. Gray withdrew his licence, deprived Long of both cure and income and appointed a replacement. Long and the Trinity churchwardens immediately applied to the Supreme Court of the Cape Colony for an interdict restraining Gray from interfering with Long in his lawful ministrations.

In the case which he placed before the court, Long claimed that he was entitled to officiate at Trinity Church without an episcopal licence. He had been presented to the parish, and Gray had publicly approved of the presentation. This Long claimed was equivalent to the act of institution. Long also asserted that no bishop in England could come between a lawfully instituted incumbent and his rights as Gray had done. Long also insisted that he recognised no other authority but the Church of England.

Gray on the other hand claimed that he exercised authority over Long by virtue of his letters patent, that the diocesan synod was held by virtue of the same authority, that in accepting his licence Long had accepted Gray's authority, and that the sentence of the ecclesiastical court was in accordance with that authority.

On 15 February 1862, the Supreme Court gave judgment in favour of the Bishop of Cape Town. It is significant that the court found that Gray's authority rested on the fact that Long had voluntarily submitted to his jurisdiction, and was not derived from his letters patent, as these had no validity in a colony with its own constitution. Gray's original letters patent, issued in September 1847, granted the bishop episcopal jurisdiction including the right to institute to benefices, to grant or withdraw licences to clergy, and to inquire into their behaviour. On 23 November 1853, Gray had resigned as Bishop of Cape Town to make way for the division of his diocese, and his new letters patent, granting him authority over a smaller area and appointing him Metropolitan, had only been issued on 8 December 1853. By this time, the crown had granted a constitution to the colony of the Cape of Good Hope, and this invalidated Gray's letters patent.

Long appealed to the crown against the decision of the Cape Supreme Court, and the Judicial Committee gave judgment in the Long

case on 24 June 1863. The verdict went against Gray, chiefly on the grounds that his letters patent were invalid. The members of the Judicial Committee also agreed that by taking the oath of canonical obedience and by accepting Gray's licence, Long had submitted to Gray's authority, and the bishop would have been justified in depriving him of his benefice "for such cause as would authorize the deprivation of a clergyman by his Bishop in England." By accepting Gray's licence however, Long was not compelled to submit to the resolutions of synod, and therefore his suspension and deprivation were not justified. The Judicial Committee also found that Gray's court had not been conducted in accordance with its own rules and even if there had been no other objection, the decision of the diocesan court would have been reversed for this reason.¹²¹

The Privy Council judgment was not, however, unsympathetic to Gray, and it had a significance beyond the Long case. The court acknowledged that Gray could not be blamed for acting on the strength of his letters patent, and realising that the case had arisen because of the confused legal status of the colonial church, they welcomed the opportunity the case provided of clarifying the position in law of the branches of the Church of England in the colonies. Like any other voluntary organisation,

The Church of England, in places where there is no church established by law, is in the same situation with any other religious body, in no better but no worse position, and the members may adopt, as the members of any other communion may adopt, rules for enforcing discipline in their body which will be binding on those who expressly or by implication have assented to them.¹²²

Robert Gray had anticipated obstacles to the development of synodical government in southern Africa from two directions, from Henry Cotterill, and from the opposition of a party which included the Rev. William Long in the Cape Town diocese. Instead, in Cotterill, Gray found a man who was not only an able administrator, but who was a staunch supporter of synodical government. Nor was the Long case as

¹²¹The text of the Privy Council judgment in the Long case is reproduced in CNG, vol.II, pp.577-591.

¹²²CNG, vol.II, p.58.

painful as Gray had feared. The Privy Council judgment entitled Long to reinstatement of his temporal rights, although not to the cure of souls, but on the advice of Samuel Wilberforce, Gray also restored Long to his spiritual charge. What Hinchliff describes as an amiable schism¹²³ continued, Long acknowledging Gray as bishop but refusing to recognise the authority of synod. More significantly, the Long judgment had clarified the position of the church in south Africa. Where Gray had regarded his letters patent as the basis of his leadership, he now had to accept the apostolic succession as the source of his episcopal authority. It is important to notice that the voluntary status of the south African church was not unilaterally assumed by the south African bishops. The judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the Eton College case and the Long case left Gray and his suffragans with no other alternative. As the south African dioceses embarked on the next stage of their constitutional development, the bishops continued to emphasise the necessity of unity with the Church of England, but the English courts had made it clear that the bonds they strove to maintain were not legal but spiritual ties.

When the diocese of Cape Town was divided in 1853, the Bishops of Grahamstown and Natal took the oath of canonical obedience to Robert Gray, as Metropolitan of what was then called the Province of Cape Town.¹²⁴ The fact that Armstrong's and Colenso's letters patent were issued on 23 November 1853, and Gray's second letters patent appointing him metropolitan were only issued on 8 December 1853,¹²⁵ made the oath invalid, but did not invalidate the intention to form a province. The first Provincial Synod of the Church of the Province of South Africa was held in 1870, but the province existed before that date, for as Hinchliff makes clear, in spite of the incorporation of clergy and laity in church government, resolutions of synod have no validity without episcopal ratification, and the unity of the province

¹²³ PBH, p.92.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p.97.

¹²⁵ CNG, vol.II, pp.578-579.

follows the Cyprianic pattern and depends on the bishops.¹²⁶

In December 1860, the Bishops of Cape Town, Natal, St Helena and Grahamstown met and discussed matters of common interest. A major concern at this meeting was the maintenance of union with the mother Church of England, and the bishops asked Convocation to lay down the principles which should guide synodical government in the colonies.¹²⁷

Cotterill informed the 1863 synod of the diocese of Grahamstown of the bishops' request to Convocation. He added that he did not expect a provincial synod to be held for some time. Nevertheless, Merriman proposed that provision be made for the election of delegates from the diocese to provincial synod, and the resolution was carried.¹²⁸

Cotterill was correct in his assumption that a Provincial Synod would not be held in the immediate future. There were several reasons for this slow progress. The south African bishops were anxious not to act without guidance from England, and they were also anxious to learn from the example of other colonial churches. There were fears among south African laymen that the creation of a province meant separation from the Church of England, and alarm lest recognition of Robert Gray as metropolitan meant the elevation of a pope in Cape Town. Furthermore, as early as 1857, Bishop Colenso had refused to recognise Gray as metropolitan, and this continued conflict over the extent of Gray's jurisdiction, combined with the trial of the Bishop of Natal for heresy, created uncertainty which delayed the summoning of a provincial synod. Painful though it was at the time, the Colenso case contributed positively to the constitutional development of the Church of the Province of South Africa. Firstly, the Colenso case led the south African church, which was not established, to reject the decisions of secular courts which the establishment thrust on the Church of England. Secondly, the case compelled the leaders of both the south African province and the Church of England to examine the nature of

¹²⁶ PBH/BD, p.235.

¹²⁷ UWL, AB532, Diocese of Grahamstown, Scrapbooks 1861-1885, vol.I, Synodical Memoranda 1863, p.1.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p.2.

their relationship, a process which led to and flowed from the 1867 Lambeth Conference.

Almost from the first, Colenso's episcopate was controversial.¹²⁹ His missionary policy met with criticism, and the broad church Colenso also found himself at loggerheads with the clergy of his diocese, particularly the high churchman, James Green. Gray attempted to smooth over or ignore these disputes, but when the Bishop of Natal published a commentary, St Paul's Epistle to the Romans : newly translated and explained from a missionary point of view, in which he argued that the atonement is an entirely objective event and that men are redeemed before they hear of Christ, Gray tried to persuade Colenso to withdraw the book. Colenso refused, and when James Green deputed his bishop for heresy in October 1861, Gray hoped that the English bishops would condemn the book in Convocation or that the Archbishop of Canterbury would try Colenso, as he knew that Colenso did not recognise his jurisdiction. By 1863, when thirty-three bishops of the English, Irish and colonial churches met to consider the commentary on Romans, Colenso had published another controversial volume, Pentateuch and Joshua. This was a work of biblical criticism, and with the case of Essays and Reviews fresh in their minds, the thirty-three bishops confused the two issues and twenty-nine voted to inhibit Colenso from office, on the grounds of biblical criticism rather than an inadequate doctrine of redemption. Forty-one bishops called for Colenso's resignation, and in 1863, the Convocation of Canterbury condemned Pentateuch but refused to bring to trial the bishop of a distant jurisdiction. Gray therefore felt compelled to take action.

James Green had initiated the charges against Colenso. He was also an able canon lawyer, and he now advised Gray on the constitution of the court to try the Bishop of Natal. Gray, who had sought condemnation of Colenso in England by the English bishops, proposed to act as judge in this court. It is therefore not surprising that Colenso was reluctant to appear before such a tribunal. On 13 May 1863, Colenso was formally deputed for heresy by Henry Douglas, Dean of

¹²⁹ On the Colenso case, and its implications for the Church of the Province of South Africa, see G.W. Cox, op.cit.; CNG, vol.II; P.B. Hinchliff, John William Colenso; PBH/BD, pp.62-105; Historical Records, pp.159-174.

Cape Town, Hopkins Badnall, Archdeacon of the Cape, and Nathaniel James Merriman, Archdeacon of Grahamstown, and was summoned to appear in the metropolitan's court on 17 November 1863. By this time, the Long judgment of June 1863, which declared Gray's letters patent to have no force, strengthened Colenso's resolve to resist the authority Gray claimed to exercise over him.

Gray presided over the trial in the metropolitan court of Cape Town, with Twells of the Orange Free State and Cotterill of Grahamstown as his assessors. Gray and Cotterill, whose experience of the south African church was more profound than that of Twells, who had only recently arrived, were able to work "harmoniously and with thorough mutual confidence at this case for hours daily."¹³⁰ Dean Douglas's speech, Gray reported to John Keble, was "a very remarkable production,"¹³¹ as was Badnall's. Merriman's speech, delivered from the afternoon of 18 November and throughout the morning of the next day, was able, but not particularly distinguished.¹³² There are two possible reasons for this. Firstly, flooded rivers en route had delayed his arrival in Cape Town, and it was not until he arrived in Cape Town that he realised what format the speech was to take.¹³³ This left him little time for preparation. Secondly, although Merriman was an able public speaker, the element of rhetoric required in argument to a court did not come easily to him.

Colenso, represented by Dr Bleek,¹³⁴ rejected the court's jurisdiction, but this defence was rejected, and the Bishop of Natal was found guilty on all nine charges and deposed. The sentence was suspended until 18 April 1864.

¹³⁰ CNG, vol.II, p.70.

¹³¹ Ibid., p.111.

¹³² Merriman's speech is quoted in Trial of the Bishop of Natal for Erroneous Teaching, pp.141-156.

¹³³ CNG, vol.II, p.74.

¹³⁴ W.H.I. Bleek (1827-1875), philologist, Africanist, and librarian, went to Natal with Colenso in 1853 to compile a Zulu grammar. Bleek was a Lutheran, son of an early German biblical scholar. His major work was A Comparative Grammar of South African Languages (D.S.A.B., vol.I, pp.82-85).

Although the Eton College case established that there was no automatic right of appeal from Gray's court to the courts in England, Gray offered to allow Colenso to appeal to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Colenso however, rejected Gray's jurisdiction, and claiming to be a bishop of the Church of England with a right to be tried by English law, he petitioned the crown to prevent his removal from office. Colenso felt that his theological position was vindicated by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council judgment on Essays and Reviews, and his appeal was purely a question of jurisdiction.

The Privy Council judgment in the Colenso case, delivered on 20 March 1865, echoed the Long judgment. Letters patent created ecclesiastical persons, that is, persons recognised in law as bishops, but such letters patent bishops could not exercise coercive jurisdiction in a colony with its own legislature. Gray could therefore only exercise jurisdiction over Colenso by consent. The court held that this consent had never been given, because although Colenso had twice taken the oath of canonical obedience to Gray, he would not have done so at all, had he known that Gray's letters patent were invalid. The Cape Town trial was therefore declared null and void.

The Colenso judgment, even if the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was only dealing with a question of jurisdiction, robbed the church of the right to exclude unorthodox teaching, by restoring Colenso to his see. On these grounds, Robert Gray refused to regard the judgment as binding on the church, and in execution of the sentence of the metropolitanical court, he excommunicated Colenso on 5 January 1866.

Gray's decision was neither arbitrary nor sudden. After the Gorham judgment in 1850, the south African clergy had stated their objection to the creation, by Act of Parliament and without the consent of the church, of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as the final court of appeal in England in matters affecting the faith. The south African clergy had also affirmed that

...while we are ready and anxious to listen dutifully to the acknowledged voice of the Church, we cannot accept from such a Court any interpretations or decisions in a Controversy of Faith. 135

A decade later, Gray saw the Privy Council judgment on Essays and Reviews as a similar case of interference with the doctrine of the church by a secular court, and suggested disestablishment as a preferable alternative:

Better, far better, like the Free Kirk, to break away altogether from the State, or to have an open division in the Church, than by abandoning the faith to lose God's presence. 136

As Gray saw it, two alternatives lay before the Church of England : to remain established and be tainted with heresy, or to become a free church. Which of the two alternatives the church chose would depend on whether the royal supremacy was regarded as an essential component of the Church of England or whether apostolic succession was understood as the means of transmitting authority in the church. Many bishops of the Church of England would choose a third ^{way} ~~alternative~~ : to work within the limits of the establishment, which undoubtedly brought advantages, towards church reform. This option had already borne fruit in the Church of England through the revival of Convocation, but the alternative did not apply to the Anglican church in southern Africa, where exercise of the royal supremacy had brought no advantages. The crown had blundered in the issuing of Gray's letters patent, the Eton College and Long cases had made it clear that the south African province was not established and had no automatic right to share in the system of ecclesiastical courts of the Church of England. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council seemed to exist merely to foist what the south African bishops regarded as heresy on their province, and in December 1863, in response to the Privy Council's judgment on Essays and Reviews, and perhaps in anticipation of the Colenso judgment, the bishops had resolved that

...the final Court of Appeal constituted by Act of Parliament for the established Church of England is not a Court of Appeal in Ecclesiastical Causes for the unestablished Church in this colony; and therefore this Synod declares that while the Church in this Province is bound by, and claims as its inheritance, the standards and Formularies of the Church of England, it is not bound by any interpretations put

136 A.M.G. Stephenson, op.cit., p.118.

upon those Standards by existing Ecclesiastical Courts in England, or by the decisions of such Courts in matters of faith. ¹³⁷

This was the background to Gray's excommunication of Bishop Colenso, an action which enjoyed some support from the English bishops. Although Convocation would not explicitly recognise the excommunication of Colenso, it stated that it was in communion with Robert Gray, and that it would not regard the consecration of another bishop for Natal as severing the connection. ¹³⁸ As far as Gray was concerned, with the excommunication of Colenso, the see of Natal was vacant, and as early as 1864, Gray had been looking for a new bishop for the diocese. Among those he approached was Nathaniel James Merriman, but the arch-deacon's response was, as usual, to decline. Merriman pointed out that he was nearly fifty-five, "at which time of life one may well begin to doubt one's fitness for embarking on fresh work." He also recognised the special difficulties of work in Natal:

I do not see any very plain duty urging me one way or the other and though I have not all the taste for encountering difficulties quite knocked out of me, I certainly have no taste for seeking them voluntarily. I believe the next Bishop of Natal whoever he may be, will be a providentially appointed agent in a very ticklish track. On the whole I should think a new man out from England would be most according to the wishes of that unhappy Diocese, and most for their welfare too...Any how I can hardly think an old fellow with "incumbrances" is the man for their disturbed and muddled estate... ¹³⁹

On 25 October 1866, the Anglican clergy and laity in Natal who accepted Gray's sentence of excommunication on Colenso, elected W.J. Butler, vicar of Wantage, as their bishop, but on the advice of the Archbishop of Canterbury and of Samuel Wilberforce, Butler withdrew. On 4 January 1867, William Kenneth Macrorie accepted the offer of the see, but was only consecrated two years later. ¹⁴⁰ By that time,

¹³⁷ Minutes of Proceedings of the Synod of Bishops of the Province of Capetown, Held at Capetown on the 15th December 1863, p.4.

¹³⁸ PBH, p.99.

¹³⁹ UWL, AB867:Ba12, NJM to RG, 22 Jul. 1864.

¹⁴⁰ CNG, vol.II, pp.295-297, 367-369; PBH, pp.88-89.

preparations for the holding of the first Provincial Synod of the Church of the Province of South Africa were well under way.

In March 1865, the month in which the Privy Council judgment on Colenso's appeal was delivered, Henry Cotterill went to England,¹⁴¹ and in May 1865, Gray announced that when the Bishop of Grahamstown returned to southern Africa, he would convene the first Provincial Synod. In July 1865, still anticipating Cotterill's speedy return, the metropolitan suggested that Archdeacon Merriman supervise the election of clergy and lay delegates from the diocese of Grahamstown, to attend a conference in Cape Town, which would resolve itself into the provincial synod. Cotterill, however, did not return until October 1866.¹⁴² The Archbishop of Canterbury had requested him to stay in England while the Colonial Bishops Bill was discussed by Parliament. This bill, an attempt to recognise by legislation the principle of voluntary association which formed the foundation of the colonial church, did not pass into law.¹⁴³ In 1867, Archibald Campbell Tait sponsored a bill which appeared to favour the maintenance of the royal supremacy over the colonial church. Gray made it clear that he refused to countenance legislation by the British Parliament for the province of which he was metropolitan.¹⁴⁴ On his return to his diocese in October 1866, Cotterill held a number of meetings of clergy and laity to discuss this proposed action by the British legislature to regulate the position of the colonial church. Both Cotterill and Merriman were careful at these meetings to point out how closely the south African dioceses had followed the pattern of the mother church, and how no steps had been taken without the recommendation of Convocation. These Grahamstown

¹⁴¹ GTJ, 15 Oct. 1866.

¹⁴² CNG, vol.I, pp. 200, 206. The 1866 conference was held, but Gray's hopes that it would resolve itself into a Provincial Synod petered out. Bishops were the core of the proposed province, and there could be no action without them, but in 1866 Natal was vacant, Twells was cut off in Bloemfontein by a Sotho war, Welby made the long and arduous journey from St Helena, and Cotterill arrived from England only just in time. PBH/BD, p.109.

¹⁴³ GTJ 9 Jul. 1866.

¹⁴⁴ R.T. Davidson, The Life of Archibald Campbell Tait, vol.I, pp.370-373.

meetings culminated in a petition being sent to England, requesting that no legislation be passed which prevented the colonial church from adapting the laws of the Church of England to meet her own needs, or which forced her to accept the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as a final court of appeal in ecclesiastical cases.¹⁴⁵ Tait's proposed legislation did not materialise, but the idea of legislating for the colonial church was not yet over. After the 1867 Lambeth Conference, Cotterill remained in England to draft a bill which would make provision for the succession to sees and the tenure of church property in the colonies, but it was decided that such a measure should not be introduced into the House of Commons. Instead, Cotterill expected a bill to be introduced in April 1868 which contained no reference to the circumstances of the colonial church, "which the British Parliament will not touch," but governed the status of colonially-ordained clergy returning to England. Cotterill thought it clear that the British Parliament would not interfere with the colonial church, and he approved of this principle.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, on the assumption that no legislation directly affecting the colonial church would be passed, the Lambeth Conference passed resolutions to ease the difficulties of the Anglican church in the colonies.

A council of bishops was the pattern of government evolved in the early church to regulate doctrine and discipline. The situation in the Church of England in the mid-nineteenth century seemed to warrant the summoning of such an assembly, not only to deal with doctrinal controversy, but to express the unity of the daughter churches of England with the mother church and with each other, in spite of diverging

¹⁴⁵GTJ 22 Oct., 7 Nov., 14 Nov. 1866, 15 Jan., 16 Jan., 15 Mar. 1867. AA 10 Nov. 1866.

¹⁴⁶GTJ 1 Apr. 1868. The Colonial Clergy Act of 1874 placed on the same footing, with regard to English employment, all valid episcopal ordinations. It laid down that no colonially ordained priest or deacon could officiate in a church in England without written permission from the archbishop of the province, nor could he act as a curate without the written consent of the diocesan bishop. The twelfth clause of the act enabled an English archbishop, in consecrating a colonial bishop, to dispense with the oath of obedience to himself which the rubric required, as obedience of a suffragan was in some colonies due to the local metropolitan. GDA 120, Text of Colonial Clergy Act; H. Lowther Clarke, *op.cit.*, pp.72-74.

patterns of government. A conference of bishops had an immense advantage over an Act of Parliament, as it would include American and Scottish episcopalians as well as the Church of England and the colonial churches.

The first proposal for an Anglican council came from American bishops in the 1850s, a decade in which the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the S.P.G. emphasised the worldwide nature of the church.¹⁴⁷ Robert Gray was the first colonial bishop to request a higher synod for the Anglican church, and his plea antedated the controversy with Colenso.¹⁴⁸ In 1865, the provincial synod of the Canadian church asked the Archbishop of Canterbury and Convocation to call a general council of the Anglican church,¹⁴⁹ and in 1866, Convocation considered the request and recommended that ^{Archbishop} Longley invite all bishops in communion with the Church of England to assemble "for the purpose of Christian sympathy and mutual counsel on matters affecting the welfare of the Church at home and abroad."¹⁵⁰ Longley decided, and it was an important decision, that resolutions passed by the conference would not be binding on participating bishops and dioceses. On 22 February 1867, one hundred and forty-four invitations to the first Lambeth Conference were sent out, of which seventy-six were accepted, eighteen by English bishops, six by Scottish and nineteen by American episcopalians, and twenty-four by colonial bishops.¹⁵¹

As Cotterill was in England in 1866, the diocesan synod due in that year was held in 1867, when Cotterill used the assembly to prepare for the Lambeth Conference and the Provincial Synod which he hoped would follow. The bishop and Merriman worked closely together in preparation for the synod, drawing up resolutions which would guide Cotterill's stand at Lambeth, emphasise unity with the Church of

¹⁴⁷ A.M.G. Stephenson, op.cit., p.35.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 80, 86.

¹⁴⁹ R.T. Davidson (comp.), The Five Lambeth Conferences, p.4.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp.4-7.

England, and lay the foundations for Provincial Synod. Merriman proposed the first resolution at the synod on 21 June 1867, emphasising that by accepting the motion, synod would not create a new position for itself, but accept one which already existed:

This Synod in behalf of the English Church of this Diocese of Grahamstown accepts the position in which it has hitherto stood as one of the dioceses of the Province of South Africa, of which Cape Town is and remains the Metropolitan See, until otherwise determined by competent authority; this Province of South Africa being itself a component part of the whole English Church. ¹⁵²

Although the resolution was adopted, the debate reveals anxiety among the laity that the new developments meant separation from the Church of England, which both Cotterill and Merriman went out of their way to dispel. There was applause when Merriman remarked that whatever their attitude to the royal supremacy,

There is no more loyal body in Her Majesty's dominions than the Church of England in South Africa. ¹⁵³

Related to this fear, was anxiety about the position of the metropolitan.¹⁵⁴ Cotterill assured the synod that he regarded the oath of canonical obedience to Gray which he had taken in 1853, as binding, but fears of a pope in Cape Town persisted, and it was decided to ask the Lambeth Conference and if necessary the Provincial Synod to define the status of the metropolitan. The Lambeth Conference was also asked to consider the constitution of a court of appeal to replace the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The summoning of the Lambeth Conference by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England, did much to assuage anxieties in the diocese of Grahamstown about the relationship of their branch of the church with the Church of England, and smoothed the way for Provincial Synod in 1870. Henry Cotterill, Bishop of Grahamstown, played a significant role in all three assemblies.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² AA 6 Jul. 1867; GTJ 24 Jun. 1867.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ On the role of a metropolitan, see ODCC, p.911.

¹⁵⁵ Cotterill drew up a draft constitution for the Church of the Province of South Africa before the Lambeth Conference. See AA 27 Apr. 1867

Robert Gray left for the Lambeth Conference in June 1867, and Cotterill followed him in July. Gray was determined to secure from the assembled bishops not only condemnation of J.W. Colenso, but recognition of his deposition and the appointment of another in his place,¹⁵⁶ and he campaigned for this to be put on the Lambeth agenda from the time of his arrival in England.¹⁵⁷ He was aware that to some he appeared "obstinate and self-willed," but he was convinced that failure by the conference to condemn Colenso would be betrayal of the cause of Christ. While Gray had support from the American and Canadian bishops,¹⁵⁸ he met with resistance from the English bishops led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was determined that only general issues would be discussed. The Lambeth Conference opened on 24 September 1867. Gray refused to be content with a resolution which relegated the plight of the church in Natal to a committee "to report on the best mode by which the Church may be delivered from the continuance of this scandal, and the true faith maintained..."¹⁵⁹ Nor was Gray satisfied with a declaration drawn up by Samuel Wilberforce, which acknowledged the spiritual force of his sentence and which was circulated privately and signed by fifty-five of the seventy-six bishops present. On the fourth and final day of the conference, 27 September 1867, Robert Gray asked the bishops to adopt the resolution of Convocation, which provided for the election of a new bishop for Natal. Feelings in the debate ran high, but Gray secured the support of forty-three bishops for his resolution. One of his major opponents in the debate was Tait, Bishop of London, who would not recognise Gray's sentence against Colenso on the grounds that it had been declared null and void "by the highest Court of the realm." Tait was not wholly unsympathetic to Gray's position, admitting that it was "very difficult to know what any one would have done with such a

¹⁵⁶ R.T. Davidson, The Life of Archibald Campbell Tait, vol. I, p.375.

¹⁵⁷ A.M.G. Stephenson, op.cit., pp.222-223.

¹⁵⁸ CNG, vol.II, pp.331-343; R.T. Davidson (comp.), The Five Lambeth Conferences, p.74.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 8, 55.

Suffragan as Colenso."¹⁶⁰ Tait thought that Gray should confer privately with the English and colonial bishops, instead of attempting to impose his will on the conference. In this, his view coincided with that of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and their wisdom was far-sighted.

Longley made it clear that Lambeth was not a general synod with power to make binding canons, nor would he allow Colenso to become the sole raison d'être of the assembly.¹⁶¹ Although this attitude was based on Article XXXI, which forbade the holding of a general council, Longley's insistence that the conference focus on general issues of wide interest provided the foundation for future conferences. What Gray wanted was a council to speak decisively on the doctrinal and legal tangles of the day. What he got was neither an Anglican equivalent of Vatican I, nor a synod claiming infallibility for itself, but a group of churches advising one another collectively, which continues to give expression to and provide leadership for the Anglican communion. The fact that the conference did not insist on narrow conformity was one of its strengths. Local autonomy with each province responsible for its own discipline, was accepted at the first Lambeth Conference, and has become a hallmark of the Anglican communion, a commonwealth of churches,¹⁶² originating from the mother Church of England, which has in turn been willing to learn from her daughters. The conference is not without influence, but its authority is of a very different nature from that originally envisaged by Gray.

Gray's role at Lambeth in 1867 was prominent and controversial. His suffragan of Grahamstown played a less flamboyant but perhaps more significant part in the conference as secretary of committees. The Times criticised the reports of the Lambeth Conference as bearing the mark of only one mind - Cotterill's. Cotterill explained however, that

¹⁶⁰ R.T. Davidson, The Life of Archibald Campbell Tait, vol. I, pp.377-379; CNG, vol.II, p.350.

¹⁶¹ R.T. Davidson (comp.), The Five Lambeth Conferences, p.8; A.M.G. Stephenson, op.cit., p.278.

¹⁶² On a political level, compare the later Imperial and Commonwealth Conferences. F. Underhill, The British Commonwealth, an experiment in co-operation among nations.

he drew up the reports but that they used precedents from the whole colonial church as a guideline, and reflected the opinion of those present.¹⁶³ The assembled bishops recognised that what united the churches was not subordination to the royal supremacy or to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, but common acceptance of the standards of faith and doctrine in use in the Church of England, with provision for the fact that peculiar local circumstances made adaptation necessary. The bishops also recognised synodical government in the colonies and recommended the grouping of dioceses into provinces. This meant that bishops of the Church of England had sanctioned synods, and Cotterill pointed out that "English Churchmen cannot now say that we [are] separating ourselves from their communion by adopting them [i.e. synods]." The bishops at Lambeth consolidated these resolutions by formulating guidelines for the election of bishops for colonial sees, thereby accepting that the crown would no longer issue letters patent,¹⁶⁴ and the conference also considered the creation of a court to hear appeals from the metropolitan courts of the Anglican communion.

In January 1869, Robert Gray and the bishops of Grahamstown, the Orange Free State, St Helena and Maritzburg, met in episcopal synod, and agreed to hold a provincial synod in January 1870, which would organise the south African church "as recommended in the reports of the Lambeth Conference." The episcopal synod provisionally adopted the reports of the Lambeth Conference, which had echoed and confirmed the course the south African bishops had chosen for the south African province, and they also defined the function of the metropolitan. He would summon and preside over provincial synods; confirm an episcopal election, together with the other bishops of the province, and hear appeals from the formal judicial decisions of other bishops of the province.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ GFJ 1 Apr. 1868.

¹⁶⁴ A.M.G. Stephenson, op.cit., p.82.

¹⁶⁵ Minutes of Proceedings of the Synod of Bishops of the Province of Capetown, Held at Capetown on the 27th January 1869.

The 1869 synod of the diocese of Grahamstown provided Cotterill with an opportunity to report back to the clergy and laity of the diocese on the outcome of the Lambeth Conference. There were a few anxious enquiries about the possibility of a royal appointment to a vacant south African see, but Cotterill was able to assure them that by organising itself in diocesan and provincial synods, the Church of the Province of South Africa was in no way separating herself from the mother Church of England.¹⁶⁶

The first Provincial Synod met in St George's cathedral, Cape Town, in January 1870. Robert Gray presided as metropolitan, with the other bishops of the province seated to his right and his left. Chief architect of the constitution of this incipient province was Henry Cotterill, and the canons, modified by discussion in synod, were the work of Robert Gray.¹⁶⁷

The preliminary resolutions passed by Provincial Synod laid down that the five dioceses which had originally been part of the diocese of Cape Town constituted a province of the Anglican communion, by decision of the authorities of the Church of England when the diocese was divided, by act of the crown, by the oaths of canonical obedience taken to Robert Gray by the bishops of Grahamstown, St Helena, the Orange Free State and Maritzburg, and by recognition from the Lambeth Conference. The bishops of each diocese, unable to receive jurisdiction by letters patent, were recognised as the bishops of their sees. The preliminary resolutions also specifically recognised the importance of lay representation at Provincial Synod, while providing for voting by orders, and acknowledging that faith and doctrine were the special care of the bishops.¹⁶⁸ Hinchliff comments:

These preliminary resolutions secured the voluntary association by compact, surrendering any rights that

¹⁶⁶ GTJ 28 Apr. 1869; LV 105, Synodical Memoranda 1869, pp.28-33; Acts, Rules and Resolutions of the Synod of the Diocese of Grahamstown, 1869, pp.4-5.

¹⁶⁷ PBH/BD, pp.114-117; CNG, vol.II, pp.486-490; UWL, AB 1163, Minute Books of Provincial Synod, 1870.

¹⁶⁸ The Constitution and Canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa, and other acts of the Provincial Synod, held at Cape Town in the month of February, A.D. 1870. See below, Appendix C.

the old letters patent might have given, and bridging the gap between the court's view of the Church as a contractual body and its own view of itself as a spiritual body with inherent spiritual authority and jurisdiction. ¹⁶⁹

Then followed a declaration of fundamental principles. The Church of the Province of South Africa received the faith as taught in Scripture, held by the Primitive Church, summed up in the Creeds and affirmed by the General Councils, and the province maintained doctrine, sacraments and discipline according to the Church of England, disclaiming the right to change them unless the change was agreed to by a synod, council or congress of the Church of England. ¹⁷⁰

This provision was repeated in the first article of the constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa, which had three provisos. In Cotterill's original draft, the third of these specifically excluded the judgments of the Privy Council, but at Gray's suggestion, the wording was changed, although the intention remained the same:

Provided, also, that in the interpretation of the aforesaid Standards and Formularies the Church of this Province be not held to be bound by decisions, in questions of Faith and Doctrine or in questions of Discipline relating to Faith or Doctrine, other than those of its own Ecclesiastical Tribunals, or of such other Tribunal as may be accepted by the Provincial Synod as a Tribunal of Appeal. ¹⁷¹

Despite flaws and loopholes in the constitution, ¹⁷² Robert Gray had led the southern African dioceses through the uncertainties caused by the bungling of the crown in granting the 1853 letters patent and through the conflicts caused by exercise of the royal supremacy, to a state where legislative power was vested in diocesan synods, subordinate to a provincial synod. Both clergy and laity were represented in synods, but synodical regulations received force from

¹⁶⁹ PBH/BD, p.115.

¹⁷⁰ The Constitution and Canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa, and other acts of the Provincial Synod, held at Cape Town in the month of February, A.D. 1870.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² PBH/BD, p.117.

episcopal ratification. Diocesan regulations made provision for an ecclesiastical tribunal in each diocese, with the right of appeal to the court of the metropolitan. Legislative, executive and judicial authority in the Church of the Province of South Africa was no longer vested in the crown, but throughout the process of constitutional development, Gray and Cotterill had accepted delay rather than act without the consent of the Church of England. Mother and daughter churches were not bound together by church ordinances, or royal letters patent or the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, but by the spiritual^u bonds of a common church order and a common faith. In the development of the Church of the Province of South Africa, Merriman's role was supportive rather than initiatory, but he had worked closely with Gray and Cotterill at every stage and would not easily surrender the principles for which they had fought when he himself, as Bishop of Grahamstown, was both heir and guardian of the constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa.

CHAPTER FOUR

FROM ARCHDEACON TO BISHOP

"...the congenial gloom of a Colonial Bishopric."

W.S. Gilbert, The Sorcerer.

While diocesan and provincial synods awoke a corporate awareness of the church, and built up a legislative framework for a church which was disestablished, in south Africa an even more basic ecclesiastical administrative unit, the parish, was lacking. From 1857 to 1869, Merriman combined with his archidiaconal duties the work of rector of the parish of St Bartholomew, Grahamstown. During these years, not only was he Cotterill's right hand man in the larger constitutional issues dealt with by diocesan synod,¹ but with his inside experience both as archdeacon and parish priest, he played a considerable role in the development of the parochial structure of the diocese of Grahams-town. As Merriman had found in his early years as archdeacon, attempts to introduce change and, where possible, conformity with English ecclesiastical practice, involved him in seemingly inevitable controversy. In 1845, Samuel Wilberforce had written, somewhat fulsomely,

Our national character, and therefore all our most valued institutions are, under God's blessing, eminently due to the pervading influence of our parochial system... It has done more, perhaps, than anything else, through its indirect influence, to mould and fashion the English mind.²

After his first diocesan synod in 1857, Robert Gray noted with relief:

...our conclusions cannot fail to have a very important bearing on the future condition of the South African Church. We have transplanted the system and organisation of the Church of England to this land - our whole parochial system,...our Ecclesiastical Courts, laws,...³

¹See above, ch. 3.

²D. Newsome, The Parting of Friends, p.273.

³CNG, vol.I, p.420.

The reality suggests that Robert Gray allowed his enthusiasm to run away with him. While continuity with the Church of England was important, adaptation to meet local needs was necessary, and this fact was nowhere more apparent than in the development of a parochial structure for the Anglican dioceses in southern Africa.⁴ The disputes over the recognition of St Bartholomew's as a separate parish, and over the endowment of Christ Church illustrate the complexity of the task.

The nineteenth century English parish constituted a defined geographical area under the spiritual charge of a clergyman of the established church, to whose ministry all inhabitants of the parish were entitled, and in which the incumbent had the exclusive cure of souls. Endowment for the parish was provided by a lay patron, who had the right to nominate the incumbent.⁵ In terms of an agreement made at the Third Lateran Council in 1179, the diocesan bishop had the right to institute a clergyman, but here his control ended. Once instituted, the incumbent, deriving income from his benefice, enjoyed security of tenure and could only be removed in exceptional circumstances. In England, as a result of the Industrial Revolution, there was major population growth and shift. An act of 1710 provided for the building of fifty new churches in London, and the Ecclesiastical Commission in the nineteenth century paved the way for redistribution of church funds, but, because property rights were involved, progress was slow. It was not possible to divide a parish in England until the mid-nineteenth century without an Act of Parliament, an expensive process. Until 1868, when the church rate was abolished, the parish was an important unit of civil administration in England.⁶

⁴The differences between the English and south African parochial systems are discussed in PBH/BD, pp.191-196.

⁵It is now argued that the roots of the English parochial system, including patronage, are Germanic, and have their origins in the relationship between landlord and pagan priest in pre-Christian times. The landowner was expected to provide facilities for worship for his dependents, and the pagan priest was his agent. ODCC, p.1033; J. Godfrey, The English Parish 600 - 1300, ch.1.

⁶ODCC, pp.1032-1033. Queen Anne's Bounty was a fund formed by Queen Anne in 1704, to receive the first fruits and tenths which had been confiscated by Henry VIII and which she now restored to the church. The fund was used to make capital grants to augment the livings of poorer Anglican clergy, and it was later used to build and

The congregationalism which prevailed at the Cape in 1848 was a far cry from the English parochial pattern. In southern Africa there was initially no endowment, no benefice, no parson's freehold, no parochial delineation and no episcopal institution.⁷ The parochial system of the Church of England was the product of long evolution,⁸ and not all the essential elements could be reproduced in the south African dioceses. While English parochial institutions moulded the thinking of Anglican leaders at the Cape, and the English model was seen as the goal towards which the south African church should aspire, vastly different local circumstances meant adaptation of the English pattern to meet local needs and necessities.

Cotterill's policy of parochial division in the diocese of Grahams-town was influenced by an opinion given in October 1857 by William Porter, Attorney-General of the Cape. Porter made it clear that the law of the established church provided no rule for the branch of that church in the colony. By long usage, the Dutch Reformed Church could define parishes,⁹ but the term parish, applied to the Church of England at the Cape, had no legal meaning. Porter knew of no force in effect, spiritual or civil, which could be given to a proclamation by the governor defining Anglican parochial limits. The attorney-general also made it clear that church ordinances did not apply to a defined geographical area, but to churchmen meeting as a congregation, with no mention of parochial boundaries. Porter's definition of the position of the Anglican church at the Cape was echoed by the Long judgment more than five years later:

The Church of England in this colony is nothing in my opinion but a voluntary association agreeing to be regulated, as far as applicable, by the principles,

repair parsonages. The fund received £1 000 000 from Parliament between 1809 and 1820, and also benefitted from large private benefactions. In 1948 Queen Anne's Bounty and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners united to form the Church Commissioners for England. ODCC, p.1150.

⁷ PBH/BD, p.191.

⁸ J. Godfrey, op.cit., passim.

⁹ H. Cotterill, [Statement on the institution of N.J. Merriman as rector of St Bartholomew's church, annotated "Not Published"], p.22. (This is an unprinted pamphlet: title in square brackets has been supplied)

which by law and not agreement, regulate the church at home.¹⁰

The logical conclusion of this was that, while in England only Parliament could create parishes, at the Cape the bishop had the right to define parochial limits without interference from the civil courts.¹¹

The south African bishops were committed to involving clergy and laity in the government of the church; parochial division, which closely concerned both laity and clergy, was thus one of the subjects to be discussed by diocesan synod.

Porter's opinion clearly influenced Cotterill's charge to the first diocesan synod. The theme of the charge, as of the history of the church in the colony, was unity with the Church of England, but freedom from the trammels of the establishment. The bishop recommended adoption of the English parochial system, firstly because it was the pattern of the Church of England, and secondly because it was an advantageous system for a settled population. Cotterill pointed out, however, that modification would be necessary to suit local circumstances. In England, a parish was usually coterminous with town limits. Cotterill suggested that a more flexible system be followed in the Grahamstown diocese. He proposed that clergy in each town, in consultation with the bishop divide the town into areas, which would be "useful, for guidance in their ministrations, without any formal or authoritative act."¹²

The 1860 synod took several steps towards introducing the English parochial system. Firstly, provision was made for the institution of clergy to a benefice, but unlike their English counterparts, each clergyman was required to assent to the rules and regulations of the diocesan synod before he was licensed or installed. Once installed, a clergyman could not be removed at the instance of his parishioners or of the bishop, but only in execution of the judgments of the eccles-

¹⁰ Ibid., p.23.

¹¹ Ibid., p.22.

¹² LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, p.29.

istical court set up by the synod.¹³ The 1860 synod appointed a committee to report to the next synod on the question of patronage, and in the interim established the principle that while presentation to cures normally lay with the bishop, where a church was built and endowed by a patron, he or she could present a clergyman to the living, subject to the bishop's approval. It was also decided that no congregation could have a clergyman imposed on it against its will. As Cotterill had suggested, the synod left the question of parochial division to be decided where necessary by the bishop and by the clergy immediately concerned.¹⁴

Act 30 of 1860, "to enable the Bishops of Cape Town and Graham's Town, respectively, to alienate, under certain conditions and restrictions, Property vested in their respective sees," described a parish as

...a defined district of town or country, placed by the Bishop of the diocese acting in accordance with the laws and usages of the Church of England, as received and accepted in this colony, under the pastoral charge of a particular minister...¹⁵

This confirmed Porter's 1857 opinion, and did not interfere with the regulations on parochial division laid down by the 1860 synod.

The informal machinery for allocating parochial districts adopted by this first synod had already been applied in the diocese. As early as 1849, Merriman planned to use the gift of £2 228 made to him when he left Street, to build another church in Grahamstown.¹⁶ In 1852 an erf on the Market Square was granted to the bishop of the diocese as a site for an episcopal church.¹⁷ In 1855, when it became clear

¹³ Acts and Resolutions of the First Synod of the Diocese of Grahamstown, 1860, pp.6-7.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Act 30 of 1860, To enable the Bishops of Cape Town and Graham's Town, respectively, to alienate under certain conditions and restrictions, Property vested in their respective Sees.

¹⁶ Cape Journals, p.59.

¹⁷ Cape Archives, CO 612, Correspondence relating to the grant of land near the Market Square, Grahamstown, for church purposes, Mar. - Aug. 1852.

that Merriman's missionary career was over, Bishop Armstrong suggested that the archdeacon return to Grahamstown and build the proposed church,¹⁸ taking as his parish "that half of the town which lies on the other side of the Cowie."¹⁹ The scheme had the support of John Heavyside, colonial chaplain of Grahamstown, who with the St George's congregation took an active part in raising funds and supervising the construction of the church.²⁰ Bishop Cotterill laid the foundation stone of the building on 24 August 1857,²¹ and the congregation met in a wooden building which was subsequently sold to the Cape Corps mess as a billiards room,²² until the first services could be held in the nave on 19 June 1859.²³ The church of St Bartholomew was consecrated on 24 June 1860.²⁴

Personal glimpses of Merriman during the 1860s are rare. Cotterill was the leader in all major ecclesiastical developments and Merriman his able lieutenant. The archdeacon's life had settled into a familiar pattern. Extant letters from him deal with minor archidiaconal issues: a catechist has exceeded his mandate,²⁵ or a church needs a burial ground.²⁶ He continued his visitations, sometimes on

¹⁸ Cape Journals, p.214.

¹⁹ H. Cotterill, [Statement...], p.3.

²⁰ AA 15 Jan. 1857, 1 Apr. 1857, 9 Apr. 1857; GTJ 25 Aug. 1857; H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.II, pp. 32, 40, 50, 62, 78.

²¹ H. Cotterill, [Statement...], p.4.

²² AA 11 Nov. 1858; GTJ 9 Apr. 1859.

²³ Cory Library, PR 3514, Papers relating to St Bartholomew's Church, Grahamstown.

²⁴ H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.II, p.68.

²⁵ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to James Hemsley, 24 Nov.1865.

²⁶ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to HC, 7 May 1863, NJM to J.P. Somerset, 18 Nov. 1865.

horseback, often on foot.²⁷ The former was the occasion of at least one nasty accident, when Merriman's horse fell under him,²⁸ but the perambulating archdeacon also provided some amusing copy for the rural colonial press. In 1871, the Queenstown Free Press reported tongue-in-cheek, that the archdeacon's hat which he had stuffed into a broken chancel window in Whittlesea to prevent a draught, had been stolen. The hat, obviously a Merriman hallmark, in true archidiaconal style, had a double black band around it, and a rosette in front, and had been fitted with a green shade for the archdeacon's eyes. The theft, which compelled Merriman, the "manly, faithful and undaunted Apostle of Christianity" to go on unprotected, was described as

...the meanest and most audacious act ever committed in Whittlesea, even when it was an advanced post filled with, and surrounded by levies, Kafirs, Hottentots and rebels. It is worthy of a returned convict, a Fenian or a communist.²⁹

The "fire eaters of Whittlesea" had sworn to wipe out "so great a scandal." The report was clearly the product of the colonial silly season, for a month later, it was reported in similar style that the Roman Catholic Bishop Ricards's coat had been abstracted in Graaff-Reinet.³⁰

On his visits to farflung parishes, Merriman found congregations as reluctant to change as he had when he first came to the Cape. In 1869 he spoke sharply to the choir and congregation of St Peter's, Cradock, who still did not kneel during the prayers.³¹ His visits were nevertheless welcome.³² Matthew Morton, priest at Cradock recorded:

Our Church really does not produce numerous specimens of first class pulpit eloquence. This diocese has not half a dozen good preachers. Archdeacon Merriman is without question the best.³³

²⁷ GTJ 4 Sept. 1865.

²⁸ GTJ 25 Jun. 1866.

²⁹ Quoted in GTJ 11 Aug. 1871.

³⁰ GTJ 1 Sept. 1871.

³¹ H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.IV, p.82.

³² GTJ 23 Apr. 1869.

³³ H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.IV, p.53.

Nor did Merriman have a stock sermon which he repeated in each town he visited. Norton reported that the archdeacon, visiting Cradock to lay the chancel cornerstone,

...spent a good portion of Saturday in revising his sermon which he entirely rewrote. On the Sunday he preached two excellent sermons. He struck hard blows at those who are luxurious at home but niggardly in Christ's Church...The Archdeacon has a vigorous, cultivated mind, classical rather than mathematical: better read in ecclesiastical lore than in Science. He does not fret over unavoidable evils. He remembers that goodness and ability are not confined to any section of the community. He does not take his notions second hand or look with other people's eyes. ³⁴

Though Merriman could be stern in rebuke, the theme of his preaching was "lift up your hearts." On 12 January 1866 which was set aside as a day of humiliation, Merriman lamented the poor attendance at public prayer, hoped that private prayer was not equally stunted, urged repentance, but ended his sermon by quoting Habakkuk as an expression of faith suited to the times:

Although the figtree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls : yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my Salvation. The Lord is my strength, and he will make my feet like hind's feet, and he will make me to walk upon high places. ³⁵

Merriman retained his interest in mission, chiefly expressed in the 1860s by his active involvement in St Philip's mission congregation, Grahamstown. ³⁶

He was a public spirited citizen, a member of the hospital and library committees, ³⁷ and his abilities as a public speaker were not restricted to pious subjects. Shakespeare and history were particular interests, and in Cradock in 1869 he delivered a lecture on the times

³⁴ Ibid., p.80.

³⁵ GTJ 15 Jan. 1866. The quotation is from Habakkuk 3.19.

³⁶ GTJ 29 Oct. 1866, 12 Nov. 1866, 17 Jun. 1867, 6 May 1868.

³⁷ GTJ 3 Aug. 1870.

of Henry VIII, illustrated from Shakespeare. Norton thought that

His rendering of the Poet was really good. His reflections, inferences etc. somewhat ordinary. ³⁸

Play readings were also held at the Merriman home in Grahamstown,³⁹ and the archdeacon offered a prize at St Andrew's College for Shakespeare recitation. The prize he donated was a work on the indigenous inhabitants of south Africa,⁴⁰ a choice reflecting one of his deepest concerns. Other topics on which the archdeacon gave public lectures were Milton,⁴¹ and on one occasion, "Philip van Artevelde - Brewer of Ghent," which one of his auditors, Robert John Mullins, described as "Capital."⁴²

Robert Mullins's diary⁴³ is an important source for a picture of Merriman family life in the house on the Market Square.⁴⁴ Mullins came to south Africa with Bishop Armstrong in 1854, a solemn and conscientious young man of sixteen. In April 1855 he went to work at St Luke's mission and by July of the following year was working on his own at St John the Baptist's, Bolotwa, an outstation of St Mark's mission. Mullins went to St Augustine's Canterbury in 1861 to prepare for ordination, and in 1862 returned to Bolotwa with Harriet Jane, or Jennie, his wife. It is clear that there was a close friendship between Mullins and Merriman. The young couple's first child was baptised in St Bartholomew's by the archdeacon,⁴⁵ and Merriman was instrumental in having Mullins transferred to Grahamstown in 1863.⁴⁶ It was

³⁸ H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.IV, pp.79-80; GTJ 6 Jul. 1861, 6 Jul. 1870; Cory Library, MS 7117, Mullins Diary, 28 Aug. 1865, p.127.

³⁹ Cory Library, MS 7117, Mullins Diary, 17 Sept. 1867, p.273.

⁴⁰ GTJ 25 Jun. 1869.

⁴¹ GTJ 14 May 1861.

⁴² Cory Library, MS 7117, Mullins Diary, 4 Jun. 1866, p.182.

⁴³ Diaries covering the years 1854 to 1867 are housed in Cory Library, MS 7111 - 7117.

⁴⁴ The house is now owned by Professor M. van Wyk Smith.

⁴⁵ Cory Library, MS 7113, Mullins Diary, 30 Aug. 1863.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 15 Sept. 1864, p.78.

originally intended that Mullins would work at the Kafir Institute and act as diocesan secretary, while Joseph Cotterill, the bishop's brother, became curate at St Bartholomew's.⁴⁷ A confused sequence of events occurred to prevent this arrangement. In January 1865, Mullins recorded:

There has been a great row. St Bart's people will not have Joe. Both Churchwardens sent their resignations to the Archdn who was in a dreadful way. Wanted to resign himself but the Bishop begged him not.⁴⁸

It was eventually decided that Mullins would teach at the Kafir Institute and assist Merriman at St Bartholomew's, while Cotterill became diocesan secretary.⁴⁹ This arrangement lasted until 1869. By then the congregation had overcome their antipathy to Joseph Cotterill, for the Journal recorded that his appointment as rector would "...fully accord with the feelings of the congregation."⁵⁰ Their parish work and their mutual interest in mission drew Merriman and Mullins closer during the five years they served St Bartholomew's congregation. It is possible that the archdeacon found in Mullins, only three years older than John X., a substitute for the clergyman son he never had. On the walks the two men enjoyed in the veld around Grahamstown, Merriman was a lively and amusing companion,⁵¹ but during the 1860s the archdeacon was subject to bouts of ill health.⁵² He suffered from lumbago, and often his travels left him "done up" but he was up and about again as soon as possible.⁵³ Mullins's diary shows Mrs Merriman as a woman of great practical kindness,⁵⁴ but one incident recorded by Mullins suggests the outspoken and formidable side of her character. Informed that

⁴⁷ Ibid., 23 Dec. 1864, p.87.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 18 Jan. 1865, p.93.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ GTJ 2 Jun. 1869, 14 Jun. 1869.

⁵¹ Cory Library, MS 7117, Mullins Diary, 5 Apr. 1866, p.172.

⁵² GTJ 18 Feb. 1860, 19 Aug. 1864.

⁵³ Cory Library, MS 7117, Mullins Diary, 8-17 Jun. 1866, pp.182-183.

⁵⁴ Cory Library, MS 7116, Mullins Diary, 27 Aug. 1862, p.16.

...Mrs Merriman was dreadfully angry about a letter she had written to the Choral [Society] some time ago, and which has never been answered, and that she had abused me the night before,...⁵⁵

Mullins went at once to the Merriman's,

...to have it all out, found them out, came home, but could not do anything, so went off again. Met them crossing the Market Square so had a good talk...The Archdeacon was present the whole time, evidently in a fidget.⁵⁶

As in Street, women's work parties met in the Merriman home.⁵⁷ The Mullins and Merriman children played together,⁵⁸ the archdeacon occasionally joining in their games.⁵⁹ The adult members of the families enjoyed evenings spent reading aloud or singing glees.⁶⁰ Mullins himself was very musical, but Merriman would have been the first to admit that, like Lamb, he had no ear.⁶¹

By 1860, the Merriman family was complete, although there were still young children in the home : Sarah Agnes was only ten, James Arthur six, Katherine Grace four and Esther Louisa only two. During the decade 1860 to 1870, John X. began to carve out a political career for himself,⁶² but there was no question of an overseas education for the other Merriman sons. A colonial education was all that their father could afford and a colonial career lay ahead of them. The archdeacon's elder daughters emerged into womanhood, intelligent, lively and affectionate. They were much in demand as bridesmaids,⁶³ and were soon themselves brides. In St Bartholomew's, the archdeacon married Julia

⁵⁵Cory Library, MS 7117, Mullins Diary, 10 Mar. 1866, p.165.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Cory Library, MS 7117, Mullins Diary, 15 Jan. 1866, 9 Apr. 1866, pp.152, 173.

⁵⁸Ibid., 29 Dec. 1865, 21 Mar. 1866, pp.148, 168.

⁵⁹Ibid., 17 Feb. 1866, p.160.

⁶⁰Ibid., 17 Sept. 1867, p.275.

⁶¹C. Lamb, The Essays of Elia, "A Chapter on Ears."

⁶²P. Lewsen, John X. Merriman, ch.2.

⁶³GTJ, 24 Aug. 1866.

Letitia to John Woodgate Ashburnham⁶⁴ on 17 January 1864, and Charlotte to Jacob Dirk Barry on 17 December 1867.⁶⁵ By 1870, Nathaniel and Julia had three grandchildren, John Anchitel and Mabel Julia Ashburnham, and Grace Pauline Barry.

John Heavyside, for twenty-eight years colonial chaplain of Grahamstown, died in 1861. Cotterill gave considerable thought to the choice of a successor, for it was his intention to install the next holder of the colonial chaplaincy of Grahamstown as dean of the cathedral and to appoint a cathedral chapter as Robert Gray had done in Cape Town.⁶⁶ St George's was already the cathedral church of the diocese, and the appointment of the incumbent as dean was a logical step. Furthermore, if the dean was also colonial chaplain in receipt of a government grant, it would obviate the need to raise funds within the diocese for the dean's stipend. Cotterill chose John Mee, a graduate of Christ's College, Cambridge, and a fellow evangelical as dean - in south Africa a purely ecclesiastical title created and bestowed by the bishop - and nominated him for the office of colonial chaplain.⁶⁷ He met with some resistance from the governor who thought that clergy already at the Cape should have the avenue of preferment to the colonial chaplaincy at Grahamstown worth £400 a year,

⁶⁴ John Woodgate Ashburnham worked in a bank in Port Elizabeth. In 1884 the family moved to Cape Town. Ashburnham was later chief clerk to the government of Bechuanaland, and died on 28 Oct. 1888. G.F.M. Merriman, Pedigree of the Family of Merriman, pp.116-117.

⁶⁵ GTJ 18 Dec. 1867. Jacob Dirk Barry was born in Swellendam in 1832, and educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was called to the bar in London in 1858, practised as a barrister in Cape Town until 1865, and in Grahamstown from 1865 to 1871. In 1871, Barry became Recorder of Griqualand West. He was knighted in 1878, and appointed Judge in the Eastern Cape division of the Supreme Court, of which he became Judge President in 1880. In 1881, he was appointed chairman of the Commission on Native Laws and Customs. He retired as Judge President in 1900 and died in 1905.

⁶⁶ CNG, vol.I, p.241.

⁶⁷ Cape Archives, CO 5106, HC to Colonial Secretary, 15 Mar. 1861.

left open to them.⁶⁸ It was also pointed out to Cotterill that a clergyman was expected to have been at the Cape for six months before being appointed to a colonial chaplaincy.⁶⁹ Cotterill seems to have overcome these objections and by November 1861, the Secretary of State had approved the appointment of John Mee as colonial chaplain of Grahamstown.⁷⁰ The dean-elect had sailed from England in October 1861,⁷¹ and he arrived in Port Elizabeth in January 1862.⁷² At the end of February 1862, Mee was instituted as rector of the parish and parish church of St George's, Grahamstown, after taking an oath of canonical obedience to the Bishop of Grahamstown, and after signing a declaration of submission to the acts and resolutions of the Grahamstown diocesan synod "in all such matters as are not already determined for the Church of this Colony by the United Church of England and Ireland."⁷³ At the same time, Mee was installed as dean of the cathedral.⁷⁴ Early in 1862, Cotterill constituted a cathedral chapter, consisting of the dean, the chancellor of the diocese and the two archdeacons.⁷⁵

Mee had committed himself to the acts and resolutions of the Grahamstown synod, but his subsequent activities suggest that he did not comprehend the constitutional position of the church in south Africa. In the period of less than two years which he spent in Grahamstown, Mee was involved in two disagreements with the bishop. This suggests that he was a controversial character - an impression which may be wide of the mark. The only available material on the quarrels reflects Cotterill's view of events, but other sources depict Mee as an able,

⁶⁸ Cape Archives, CO 5106, R. Southey to HC, 18 Apr. 1861.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 7 Jun. 1861.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 19 Nov. 1861.

⁷¹ GTJ 21 Dec. 1861.

⁷² GTJ 16 Jan. 1862.

⁷³ H. Cotterill, [Statement...], p.2; GTJ 1 Mar. 1862.

⁷⁴ H. Cotterill, [Statement...], p.7.

⁷⁵ H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.III, pp.46-47. The chancellor of the diocese was the Rev. James Barrow, colonial chaplain at Bathurst 1833-1874.

active and popular parish priest and preacher.⁷⁶ The disputes in which he was involved arose because he understood the terms, parish, rector, dean, and chapter, in the sense in which they were understood in the established Church of England - a meaning which local circumstances did not justify.

In the Church of England a rector is a clergyman who is instituted to the spiritual care and inducted to the temporalities of his benefice, and is entitled to all the tithes collected in his parish.⁷⁷ In Grahamstown, only the ceremony of institution was applicable. In England, the dean of a cathedral controls its services, and with the cathedral chapter supervises the care of the fabric and property. In the diocese, he ranks after the bishop, of whom in the Church of England he is independent.⁷⁸ It was unfortunate that Cotterill made no attempt to define the status of the dean. He clearly wished to confer senior status on Mee, and might have thought that Mee's position was made plain by his assent to the acts and resolutions of diocesan synod and by his oath of canonical obedience to the bishop. In the absence of any precise clarification from Cotterill, Mee seems to have considered that he had acquired the status of a dean in the Church of England, which subsequent events showed that Cotterill did not intend.

A cathedral chapter in the Church of England is a body responsible for the spiritual and temporal concerns of a cathedral.⁷⁹ In forming his chapter, Cotterill issued no formal letters of appointment and drew up no statutes⁸⁰ - an unfortunate and unusual omission by the methodical Cotterill. He saw the chapter, made up of the senior clergy of the diocese, as an advisory council for the bishop.⁸¹

⁷⁶ H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.III, pp.46-47.

⁷⁷ ODCC, p.1163.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.383.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.267.

⁸⁰ H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.III, pp.46-47.

⁸¹ GDA 1366, Cotterill Correspondence, HC to H. Kitton, 10 Feb. 1863. Cotterill's view of the function of the chapter coincided with Robert Gray's. CNG, vol.I, p.241.

By 1863, Cotterill had begun to regret the formation of the chapter, nor does that body seem to have served its intended purpose, for it met only seven times between 1863 and 1878.⁸² Cotterill, usually generous and judicious in his dealings with men, found it very difficult to work with Mee, who made what Cotterill regarded as exaggerated and unwarranted claims about his rights and status as dean.⁸³ Mee responded to Cotterill's criticism by refusing to allow the bishop to preach in St George's.⁸⁴ Cotterill's reaction was first to apply the power of reason. He acknowledged that in some English cathedrals the bishop was required to ask the dean's permission to preach, but this was because of ancient local statutes. The general law of the Church of England, which provided the standard to guide the south African church, contained no such provision. Furthermore, Cotterill pointed out that in England, Mee would not be recognised either as dean or incumbent as he had not been inducted, nor had he read himself in nor taken the required oaths of allegiance and supremacy. Cotterill also reminded Mee that the bishop's right to preach in the cathedral was secured in the dean's letters of institution. Even if this had not been the case, Cotterill had preached in St George's every Sunday before Mee's arrival and regularly since, and his right to preach in the cathedral could thus be defended on grounds of usage.⁸⁵

These arguments may have satisfied Cotterill, but Mee evidently was not silenced, for Cotterill wrote of him:

The fact is, he is not only very ignorant in regard to all church law and ecclesiastical questions but he has the most profound ignorance of his own ignorance that I ever witnessed in any man.⁸⁶

These are harsh words from the usually moderate Cotterill. Mee's claims possibly stemmed from confusion about the origin of his appointment as dean. This was a purely ecclesiastical measure, but Mee,

⁸²H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.III, pp.46-47.

⁸³GDA 1366, Cotterill Correspondence, HC to H. Kitton, 10 Feb.1863.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵GDA 1368, Cotterill Correspondence, HC to H. Kitton, [Feb.1863].

⁸⁶Ibid.

unfamiliar with the peculiar constitutional status of the Cape church, and aware that his appointment as colonial chaplain was a civil one which gave him considerable independence from the bishop, may have conflated the two.

Reason having failed, Cotterill's next step was to consult the rest of the chapter. Together with Chancellor Barrow and Archdeacon Merriman, and in communication with Archdeacon Kitton in King William's Town, he drew up a minute on the constitution of a cathedral chapter, defining the duties of the dean and affirming the rights of the bishop in the cathedral, which was sent to Mee with an official letter asking whether he was willing to accept these principles as a basis for his participation in chapter meetings. Merriman expected this to bring Mee to heel. Cotterill and his senior clergy were stunned by Mee's response. He returned the minute and the official letter. "His conduct," wrote Cotterill, "is more extraordinary and like that of a person out of his mind than that of any person of his standing that I ever had to deal with."⁸⁷ The bishop, though greatly perplexed, was determined to avoid an open breach with Mee. He wrote again privately to the dean, asking whether he had read the minute.⁸⁸ Cotterill received no direct reply to his second letter. Instead, in Cotterill's words, Mee resorted to

...trying...raise a party cry in this matter - to represent himself as contending for "the gospel" and "evangelical religion", as if Deans were ex officio defenders of the faith, and bishops were necessarily opposed to the truth.⁸⁹

There was no obvious resolution to the dispute, and the Copeman affair had made it plain that colonial chaplains, once appointed, were not easily dislodged.⁹⁰ Nor had Cotterill any quarrel with Mee's performance of his duties as colonial chaplain. There seemed only one way out of the difficulty, as Cotterill wrote when affairs had reached an impasse:

I heartily forgive him, as far as I am personally concerned...but I feel that for the sake of the church which I have most unwittingly injured by causing such

⁸⁷GDA 1367, Cotterill Correspondence, HC to H.Kitton, 17 Feb.1863.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹GDA 1368, Cotterill Correspondence, HC to H.Kitton, [Feb.1863].

⁹⁰See above, ch.3.

a man to be appointed to such a position, I shall be most thankful if he can in any way be driven into a corner and compelled to go home with his wife.⁹¹

Cotterill's wish was to be fulfilled, in tragic circumstances,⁹² but not before this quarrel about the status of a dean had been overshadowed by a controversy about parochial division in which Mee played a prominent role.

As early as May 1862, Mee, claiming sole rights as rector of Grahamstown,⁹³ objected to the institution of Merriman as rector of St Bartholomew's.⁹⁴ This dispute made plain the need for more precise definition of the status of clergy and how this was affected by institution, and of a parish, and how new parishes were created. The particular problem and general questions raised by Mee's objection were discussed at the 1863 synod of the diocese of Grahamstown.⁹⁵

Mee had the support of St George's vestry in his attempt to prevent the recognition of another parish in Grahamstown,⁹⁶ but the basis of his argument, a claim that Ordinance 2 of 1839 gave him exclusive spiritual charge of Grahamstown,⁹⁷ was not strong. Porter had already made it plain that the church ordinances did not define parochial limits, but referred to congregations meeting for worship. Porter had also made it clear - an opinion confirmed by the Eton College case and the Long judgment - that the Anglican church in south Africa was not established but a voluntary organization, and as such its members were bound by the synod rules to which they had assented.⁹⁸

⁹¹GDA 1368, Cotterill Correspondence, HC to H.Kitton, [Feb.1863].

⁹²See below, p.197.

⁹³SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to St George's churchwardens, 14 Jun. 1862, NJM to HC, 18 Jun. 1862.

⁹⁴H. Cotterill, [Statements...], p.1.

⁹⁵For a record of proceedings, see UWL, AB532, Diocese of Grahams-town, Scrapbooks 1861-1885, vol.I, Synodical Memoranda 1863.

⁹⁶SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to St George's churchwardens, 14 Jun. 1862.

⁹⁷H. Cotterill, [Statement...], pp.7-11.

⁹⁸Rev. W. Long and Rev. P. Copeman had not signed the acts and resolutions of a diocesan synod.

Cotterill pointed out that in south Africa the title of rector conferred none of the rights of an English rector, but was purely an honorific title for an incumbent who had been instituted. The bishop told the 1863 synod that he was satisfied that according to the general principles of English ecclesiastical law, which provided guidance for the colonial church although it had no legal force at the Cape, St Bartholomew's constituted a separate parish.⁹⁹ Not only had John Heavyside accepted the division of Grahamstown into two parochial districts,¹⁰⁰ but as required by English law, St Bartholomew's was endowed to a value of £100 a year, it had been consecrated and its minister received all fees and was able to conduct burial services.¹⁰¹ The synod, by forty-five votes to six, recognized St Bartholomew's as a separate parish,¹⁰² and Merriman was duly instituted as rector.¹⁰³

In accordance with Act 30 of 1860,¹⁰⁴ the 1863 synod resolved that a new parish could only be formed with the permission of the bishop, who would consult the minister and parishioners of any existing parish affected by the division. The bishop would also determine the site of the new church, and the new parish boundary, although the question of parochial limits was also to be referred to the synod of the diocese.¹⁰⁵ In addition, the synod laid down that no clergyman was to exercise his ministry within the limits of an existing parish without the permission of its rector,¹⁰⁶ it named twenty-five areas in the diocese which were recognized parishes and defined the qualifications which entitled

⁹⁹UWL, A532, Diocese of Grahamstown, Scrapbooks 1861-1885, vol.I, Synodical Memoranda 1863, pp.3, 31-33.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p.27.

¹⁰¹H. Cotterill, [Statement...], p.15.

¹⁰²UWL, A532, Diocese of Grahamstown, Scrapbooks 1861-1885, vol.I, Synodical Memoranda 1863, p.33.

¹⁰³H. Cotterill, [Statement...], p.20.

¹⁰⁴UWL, A532, Diocese of Grahamstown, Scrapbooks 1861-1885, vol.I, Synodical Memoranda 1863, p.25.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Minutes of Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of Grahamstown, 1863, p.46.

incumbents to be called rectors.¹⁰⁷

Mee and St George's vestry did not intend to accept the synod's decision as final. On 2 July 1863, the churchwardens and three other vestrymen sent Cotterill a protest against the division of "the parish of Grahamstown,"¹⁰⁸ followed four days later by a similar petition bearing forty-eight signatures.¹⁰⁹ On 9 July, Mee gave notice that he reserved the right to take legal action in the matter.¹¹⁰ A special vestry meeting on 17 July 1863 decided to ignore the synod's recognition of the parish of St Bartholomew, and authorised the churchwardens to seek legal advice.¹¹¹ Before further steps could be taken, Mee's wife, who had left south Africa because of ill-health, and his youngest son, died suddenly and the first Dean of Grahamstown went to England to care for the rest of his family.¹¹² He left amid expressions of regret from St George's congregation,¹¹³ but his departure meant that a case, which had threatened to develop into an unpleasant legal wrangle, lapsed.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp.50-51. The synod defined a benefice, under conditions prevailing in the diocese of Grahamstown, as a parish within which a cure of souls was exercised and which possessed either a parsonage or glebe or other endowment of which the incumbent had undisturbed possession, or which possessed a consecrated church, the use of which was secured to the incumbent. When these conditions were fulfilled, a clergyman could request institution. A condition of institution was assent to the acts and resolutions of the synod of the diocese. Synod also agreed that the title of rector properly belonged only to clergy instituted to a benefice with a consecrated church, and parsonage, glebe or other endowment with an annual value of forty pounds. Although instituted, a rector required the bishop's licence to officiate, and remained subject to the rules of synod. There could thus be no benefices or rectors in the diocese of Grahamstown in the sense in which these words were understood in the Church of England.

¹⁰⁸ CVMB, vol.II, 17 Jul. 1863, p.19.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² GTJ 14 Aug. 1863.

¹¹³ GTJ 14 Aug. 1863, 21 Aug. 1863, 8 Sept. 1863.

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FREDERICK HENRY WILLIAMS
DEAN OF GRAHAMSTOWN



ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL, GRAHAMSTOWN
c. 1865

Cotterill granted Mee twelve months' leave of absence,¹¹⁴ but it gradually became clear that the colonial chaplain and dean would not return to Grahamstown, and in November 1864, news reached the Cape that he had been appointed vicar of St Jude's, Southwark.¹¹⁵ By then the delicate constitutional position of the colonial church made it imperative that Mee's successor be a clergyman who accepted the status of the Cape church as a voluntary organization, and who would give Gray and Cotterill his whole-hearted support in the task of developing synodical government in southern Africa. While in England in 1865, Cotterill offered the post of dean and colonial chaplain to Frederick Henry Williams, incumbent of Ashton-under-Lyne, of whom he had heard favourable reports. Williams accepted and was appointed.¹¹⁶ Eldest son of a lawyer, G.C. Williams, the new dean was born at Skea House, County Fermanagh, on 6 March 1826. He graduated from Trinity College, Dublin in 1849, as the best scholar of his year in Hebrew and biblical literature, and was ordained deacon and priest in the Church of England by the Bishop of Chester. Two curacies, in Birmingham and London, followed and in 1858 he was presented to the living of Ashton-under-Lyne in Lancashire by Lord Palmerston. In 1863, Williams married Jane Susannah Gael, second daughter of Samuel Gael of Lincoln's Inn and Regent's Park, and of Battledowns, near Cheltenham. The couple had one son, George Frederick Charles.¹¹⁷

When Williams arrived in Grahamstown on 21 December 1865,¹¹⁸ Cotterill had not yet returned to his see. The dean stayed at Bishopsbourne with the bishop's brother,¹¹⁹ and the Merrimans organized

¹¹⁴Cape Archives, CO 809, HC to Colonial Secretary, 11 Aug. 1863.

¹¹⁵GTJ 23 Sept. 1864, 18 Nov. 1864. In 1871 Mee became rector of Westbourne, Sussex, where he remained until his death in 1883, aged fifty-nine.

¹¹⁶GTJ 29 Sept. 1865; CVMB, vol.II, HC to St George's vestry, 7 Aug. 1865, p.44; CVMB, vol.II, FHW to St George's vestry, 7 Nov. 1865, pp.49-50.

¹¹⁷UWL, AB 372f., Notes on the Rev. F.H. Williams; D.S.A.B., vol.II, p.847.

¹¹⁸GTJ 22 Dec. 1865.

¹¹⁹For address of welcome from St George's vestry, and Williams's reply, see CVMB, vol.II, pp.44-50.

a reception for him.¹²⁰ His first service, on Christmas eve, was attended by a large (and curious) congregation, and the Journal noted approvingly that Williams, who preached extempore, possessed "a good voice, capable of considerable modulation."¹²¹ Robert Mullins, in his blunt way, noted only that the sermon lasted forty minutes.¹²² Shortly before Williams arrived, the interior of St George's church was painted, and new pews and lighting installed.¹²³ The new dean was determined that St George's should resemble an English cathedral as closely as possible. The organ was moved from the west gallery to the south side of the altar, choir stalls were placed on either side of the chancel, and the choir were robed in surplices. The dean's seat was placed with the choir on the south side, and the precentor's on the north, "in the ordinary Cathedral fashion."¹²⁴ Williams, an able musician, improved the standard of music in cathedral services, and hoped to introduce to Grahamstown the tradition of music festivals common in English cathedrals.¹²⁵ He was not always successful. On one occasion, Mullins noted quite frankly:

...we all went to the Choral Service at the Cathedral which was terrible.¹²⁶

Williams nevertheless persevered, and among the works performed in St George's was a Mozart mass,¹²⁷ and the oratorio Elijah.¹²⁸ In 1870 there were services in the cathedral, with special music, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of the 1820 settlers.¹²⁹

¹²⁰Cory Library, MS 7117, Mullins Diary, 26 Dec. 1865, p.148.

¹²¹GTJ 26 Dec. 1865.

¹²²Cory Library, MS 7117, Mullins Diary, 26 Dec. 1865, 31 Dec. 1865, pp.148-149.

¹²³GTJ 1 Nov. 1865, 4 Dec. 1865; CVMB, vol.II, 22 Aug., 11 Sept., 18 Oct. 1865, pp.41-42.

¹²⁴GTJ 22 May 1868.

¹²⁵GTJ 2 Feb. 1866, 9 Mar. 1866, 30 Apr. 1866, 25 May 1866, 21 Sept. 1866.

¹²⁶Cory Library, MS 7117, Mullins Diary, 29 Jul. 1866, p.190.

¹²⁷GTJ 29 Sept. 1866.

¹²⁸GTJ 13 Nov. 1868.

¹²⁹GTJ 20 May 1870, 25 May 1870.

Belying his Irish origins, Williams was a high churchman.¹³⁰ He attributed the revival of the religious life of the Church of England to the influence of the Tracts for the Times, and to the "zealous and persevering exertions of faithful priests."¹³¹ The views of the first generation of Anglo-Catholics were reflected in their theology : for the second generation, ritual became their vehicle. Williams was opposed to ritual extravagances,¹³² but soon after the Dean of Arches found that the use of flowers and lighted candles on the altar during celebrations of the Holy Communion was legal, the Dean of Grahamstown announced that these "allowed adjuncts" would be used during cathedral services.¹³³

The dean's high churchmanship was reflected in his views on church government. To Robert Gray, Cotterill described Williams as "a man heart and soul with us, a good theologian and an able man,"¹³⁴ and the dean's activities confirmed this statement. As a biblical scholar of a more conventional school, Williams was horrified by Colenso's teaching and applauded the efforts of Gray and Cotterill to free the south African church from the "apparent connivance"¹³⁵ at heresy forced on the established Church of England by the civil courts. In 1867 Williams published two sermons on the "dangers, disabilities and hopes of the English Church, as a call to her children," which he had preached in St George's, Grahamstown, and St Mary's, Port Elizabeth. He attacked the "godless theory"¹³⁶ of Erastianism, which had deprived the Church of England of Convocation and fixed on her instead the decisions of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council:

¹³⁰ GTJ 19 Oct. 1868.

¹³¹ GTJ 7 Dec. 1868.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ GTJ 22 May 1868, 26 May 1868. On nineteenth century ritual prosecutions, see S.C. Carpenter, Church and People 1789-1889, pp.227-250.

¹³⁴ UWL, AB867: Ba12, Successor to Bishop Colenso 1864-1869, HC to RG, 7 Oct. 1867.

¹³⁵ F.H. Williams, Two Sermons on the Dangers, Disabilities and Hopes of the English Church as a Call to her Children, p.13.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

"God in mercy grant that...she may awake and shake herself, and regain her strength from Heaven, and burst those cords."¹³⁷ Williams rejoiced that the real bonds between colonial and mother church were not legal ties, but identity of doctrine and ritual. The dean played an active part in the synods of 1867 and 1869, and in 1870 he was a delegate from the diocese of Grahamstown to the first Provincial Synod.

Cotterill instituted Williams as dean and rector before he left England,¹³⁸ but despite his difficulties with Mee, the bishop did not define the status and duties of a dean, nor did he draw up regulations for the cathedral chapter. Cotterill was away from his diocese a great deal after 1865, and preoccupation with constitutional issues, and Williams's apparent support may have made Cotterill feel that any official statement of the dean's position was unnecessary. Yet Williams was to prove a thorn in the flesh of Cotterill's successor, and Cotterill's failure to define the dean's powers was a contributory cause. Williams was undoubtedly an able administrator, and possessed a vigorous intellect, forceful personality, and persuasive eloquence, all qualities capable of misuse and distortion. The dean also had a talent to controversy, and was a formidable opponent. While it is misleading to read too much into the past, there were warnings during Cotterill's episcopate that if Williams's ambitions were frustrated, a less attractive side of his character would assert itself, and truth would give way to eloquence and expediency.

Despite very different circumstances, the leaders of the south African church were bound to follow the English pattern of parochial government.¹³⁹ The Grahamstown synod laid down quite elaborate provisions for endowment and lay patronage, but with one proviso: ownership of church property was to be vested in the see, and not in private hands. This particular provision was formulated in the first instance

¹³⁷ GTJ 25 Mar. 1868.

¹³⁸ Letter from HC to St George's vestry, 7 Aug. 1865, in CVMB, vol.II, p.44.

¹³⁹ LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, p.17.

by Robert Gray, who had had difficulty with the proprietary chapel in Cape Town,¹⁴⁰ and was applied by Cotterill in the diocese of Grahamstown.

In 1858, prior to the first synod, Cotterill had appointed three committees to provide preliminary guidelines for the bishop on important issues which would be discussed by the synod. Part of the mandate of the committee which discussed finance was to suggest regulations to govern patronage in the diocese.¹⁴¹ This committee, chaired by Merriman, emphasized the need to encourage the generosity of individuals to build and endow churches "after the custom of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers,"¹⁴² by permitting the patron to present to the cure any licensed clergyman allowed by the bishop. At the same time, to prevent presentation becoming "a matter of traffic," the committee recommended that the right to present should not be transmitted either by sale or inheritance.¹⁴³

In his charge, Cotterill requested the 1860 synod to provide detailed regulations based on the principles laid down by the 1858 committee, to govern patronage in the diocese. The bishop also emphasized that it was imperative that church property be vested in the see : he wished to be relieved of personal responsibility and suggested that a trust deed be drawn up and a board of trustees be appointed to involve the laity in the administration of diocesan property.¹⁴⁴ Synod agreed to this proposal, but the actual application of the scheme was left until the next diocesan synod.¹⁴⁵ The debate on patronage at the 1860 synod was more lengthy, and focussed on the question of where presentation to a cure lay.¹⁴⁶ Archdeacon Merriman, who dominated

¹⁴⁰ CNG, vol.I, p.162; PBH/BD, p.192.

¹⁴¹ LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, pp. 11, 21, 63-67.

¹⁴² Ibid., p.11. See above, p. note 5.

¹⁴³ LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, p.11.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., pp.19-21.

¹⁴⁵ Acts and Resolutions...1860, p.4.

¹⁴⁶ LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, pp.61-67; Acts and Resolutions...1860, pp.6-7.

the discussion, provided a historical survey of ecclesiastical patronage, criticised the "scandal rife" in the example of lay patronage provided by the mother Church of England, and emphasised the responsibility of patronage, rather than the rights of a patron, "for it concerned the way in which they were to provide for ministering to the souls of men."¹⁴⁷ Merriman argued that, free of the establishment, patronage was not a property right, that the right of nomination to a cure belonged to the bishop, and that in the existing state of the church in Grahamstown, it should remain there.¹⁴⁸ Eventually, a committee of five clergymen and six laymen, with Merriman as chairman, was appointed to report to the next synod on the question of patronage,¹⁴⁹ and synod passed a resolution which confirmed the general principles on patronage drawn up by the 1858 committee, principles which did not exclude lay patronage, but subjected it to episcopal confirmation.¹⁵⁰

Merriman's leading role in the debate on patronage is not surprising, for it was a subject in which he had a particular interest. He had built and endowed the church of St Bartholomew, and in 1862 requested that nomination to the cure be vested in three successive patrons, according to the principles laid down by diocesan synod and following the pattern set out by Cotterill for Trinity Church, Port Elizabeth.¹⁵¹ The three patrons nominated by Merriman were himself, his son Thomas Reginald Merriman, and the see.¹⁵²

Subsequent synods of the diocese of Grahamstown in 1863, 1867 and 1869 confirmed the regulations on patronage put forward in 1858 and adopted in 1860.¹⁵³ These sessions of synod also perpetuated

¹⁴⁷ LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, p.63.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.65.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p.67.

¹⁵⁰ Acts and Resolutions...1860, p.6.

¹⁵¹ GDA 981, Document relating to Holy Trinity, Port Elizabeth, HC to St Mary's vestry, 3 Aug. 1857.

¹⁵² SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to HC, 2 Jun. 1862, 18 Jun. 1862.

¹⁵³ Acts, Rules and Regulations of the Synod of the Diocese of Grahamstown 1869, pp.21-24.

the resolution passed in 1860, providing that parochial property such as glebe, churchyard and school property be held in trust by the rector of the parish subject to rules drawn up by synod. Such property, under the general management of minister and churchwardens, could not be exchanged or sold without the permission of parishioners, the clergy of the archdeaconry and the bishop.¹⁵⁴ The 1860 synod agreed that other property given for ecclesiastical purposes, except where the donor stipulated otherwise, should be vested in the see.¹⁵⁵ In accordance with Cotterill's wishes, a committee was appointed to investigate the formation of a trust to administer diocesan property

...for the uses designed in the original grant of the same - and subjecting such property to the laws and regulations of the Church of England as accepted and interpreted by the general voice of the Synod of this Diocese. ¹⁵⁶

Eventually, Cotterill's wish was fulfilled. On 17 June 1871, Henry Cotterill passed transfer of the land vested in himself and his successors in office in the registry of deeds, to the Diocesan Trusts Board of the diocese of Grahamstown. The board consisted of the Bishop of Grahamstown for the time being, the Archdeacon of Grahamstown for the time being, and of two laymen, one the registrar of the diocese and the other the treasurer of the Board for the Endowment Fund of the diocese of Grahamstown.¹⁵⁷

Patronage and parochial division remained complicated technical issues despite synod resolutions which provided regulations for the whole diocese. A fundamental reason was that the English parochial pattern and variety of forms of patronage continued to influence the thinking of clergy and laity in south Africa, a fact which could be exploited in any dispute involving parochial division and patronage. The complexity of the issues and the potential they provided for controversy was amply illustrated by the early history of Christ Church, Grahamstown.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., pp.19-21.

¹⁵⁵ Acts and Resolutions...1860, p.4.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ GDA 1466, Papers relating to law suit, St George's Vestry vs the Diocesan Trustees 1880-1885, Plaintiff's Declaration, 20 Nov. 1880, pp.2-3.

In 1864 reports were circulating in Grahamstown that Mrs Rosa Wright wished to build and endow a church in the city, but Robert Mullins described her ideas as "crotchety".¹⁵⁸ A native of northern Ireland, Rosa Stratford had married William Wright, and the couple with their two children had come to the Cape with Turvey's party in 1820. William Wright, who had been an active member of the Commemoration Methodist Church, died in 1857, and his widow spent the next four years in England and Ireland before returning to Grahamstown.¹⁵⁹ Her daughters had married prominent Grahamstown citizens, F.C. Bate, John Edwin Wood and James Greathead.¹⁶⁰ The Greatheads lived at Fairlawns, and with them Mrs Wright attended services at St Andrew's College chapel.¹⁶¹ In 1865, this prospective patroness approached Archdeacon Merriman to discuss the prospective endowment of a church at Oatlands. Merriman's first action was to advise Mrs Wright

...to sanctify and dedicate to God her intentions before commencing a serious work which much needs His blessing.¹⁶²

Until this was done, Merriman would advise her no further, but he did write to Sir Walter Currie, owner of the Oatlands estate, to ask his views on the subject and to warn him of a possible approach from Mrs Wright, whom Merriman described as a "Lady who is restless and of doubtful mind."¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Cory Library, MS 7117, Mullins Diary, 24 Dec. 1864, p.87.

¹⁵⁹ GDA 1628, Note on Mrs Rosa Wright; H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.IV, pp.146-156; Cory Library, MS 16 289, R. Greathead to L.H. Artus, 3 Sept. 1918.

¹⁶⁰ H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.IV, p.147. J.C. Bate and J.E. Wood acted as testamentary executors, and were members of the first board of trustees for Chirst Church. John Edwin Wood was a member of a prominent Grahamstown Methodist family.

¹⁶¹ H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.IV, p.147.

¹⁶² SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to Sir Walter Currie, 8 Sept. 1865.

¹⁶³ On Sir Walter Currie (1819-1872), see D.S.A.B., vol.I, p.193.

Rosa Wright died on 16 February 1867.¹⁶⁴ In terms of her will, £7 000 including the value of land near the Oatlands estate, was set aside to build a church. Mrs Wright had not set up a trust before her death, but her executors were empowered to do so. In terms of her will, the trustees were bound to appoint a clergyman of low church or evangelical persuasions. If this was not possible, a Wesleyan or Independent clergyman was to be appointed. The will also stipulated that symbols of worship "used or supported by" the high church party in the Church of England were to be excluded, as were choral services.¹⁶⁵

These provisions were somewhat eccentric, and before building could commence and the trust deed be drawn up, considerable controversy ensued.

Merriman described the will as a whole as "foolish."¹⁶⁶ The section which provided for the appointment of a Wesleyan or Independent minister for Christ Church should the evangelical or low church line fail, he called "the ugly part of the affair."¹⁶⁷ The wisdom of accepting a gift under these conditions was questioned at the time, and Merriman was one of the "strong doubters." He explained his views in a letter to Robert Gray, who replied that "the gifts of the laity were not thus to be foregone," and Merriman felt snubbed.¹⁶⁸ On this occasion, Merriman found himself in some sympathy with Dean Williams, who opposed acceptance of the bequest "with much vehemence."¹⁶⁹ Mrs Wright had had a "horror of Ritual", and the terms of her will had been particularly levelled against Williams and the ceremonial

¹⁶⁴ H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.IV, p.148. Rosa Wright died at the age of seventy-four. She is buried with her husband in the Wesleyan section of the Grahamstown Old Cemetery.

¹⁶⁵ The order of service was to follow that used in the St Andrew's College chapel when Mrs Wright was a regular worshipper there. See Appendix D.

¹⁶⁶ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to WWJ, 19 Aug. 1875.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

changes he had introduced into the cathedral.¹⁷⁰ Another possible reason for Williams's objection is the suggestion that Cotterill at one stage hoped that Christ Church would replace St George's as the cathedral church of the diocese.¹⁷¹

Because of this objection from the rector of the parish in which the new church was to be built, Cotterill referred the question to the 1869 diocesan synod, and Dean Williams used the opportunity to protest at length against acceptance of Mrs Wright's bequest, but obeyed the bishop's request that the debate be conducted in a friendly fashion.¹⁷² He argued that the terms of the will required doctrinal teaching and a method of worship which were unknown to the Church of England, and suggested an analogy:

"Suppose I were in Natal, and were in a position to make a donation to the Church there, of say £10 000. Suppose I were to provide that the special Doctrines of the Essayists and Reviewers were to be promulgated therein for ever. Suppose I were to guard the Trust by nominating three trustees - say the Editors of the Times, of the Edinburgh Review, and of Fraser's Magazine." (Laughter). "Suppose I were to bind on them to obtain a Clergyman of the Church, if possible, in order to give more weight to the promulgating of the special view; but in case they were thwarted in this, were to provide, that they might carry out my views of truth by employing an Unitarian Minister; or some recognized exponent of advanced Scepticism. Would you advise the Church in Natal to receive the gift? Not for an instant."
(Hear, hear).¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ GDA 1403, Papers relating to Christ Church Grahamstown, Cotterill's proposal to Mrs Wright during her lifetime as to the new church; H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.IV, p.151.

¹⁷² GDA 1410, Papers relating to Christ Church Grahamstown, Circular from F.H. Williams setting out his objections to the Christ Church trust deed, 22 Jun. 1869.

¹⁷³ LV 105, Synodical Memoranda 1869, p.39. For the entire debate, see ibid., pp.34-41. The Times was founded in 1785, and took its present name in 1788. In the nineteenth century it took the lead in devising new methods of collecting news. It has always claimed to be an independent rather than a party newspaper. The Edinburgh Review was a quarterly review founded in 1802. It exercised its influence in favour of Whig policies. One of the founders was Sydney Smith, and among contributors were Scott, Hazlitt, Carlyle,

Williams concluded by saying that to accept the bequest would

...commit the Church authoritatively and expressly,
to sanctioning a divergence from the Catholic faith
of the Prayer Book... 174

The Journal congratulated Williams on his speech, in which he had succeeded in putting his case without abusing the other side:

As a rhetorical performance, the speech was of marked excellence. In sound reasoning it was certainly not deficient; and its temper was simply admirable. 175

Archdeacon Merriman, though doubting the wisdom of the scheme, was not prepared to support the dean's argument, and thought that the difficulties created by the will could be overcome.

Cotterill's argument, unlike Williams's, was without flamboyance, and rested on a plain statement of his authority. The issue to be decided by the synod was not whether Mrs Wright's will was open to objection, but whether the clergyman at Christ Church should receive the bishop's licence, which would place him under the bishop's jurisdiction and draw him into the synodical government of the diocese. There were two factors to be considered in granting an episcopal licence. Firstly, the bishop alone was responsible for judging the fitness of a clergyman to exercise a cure of souls, and secondly, where questions of ecclesiastical organisation were concerned, the bishop was bound to consult synod. Cotterill pointed out that Williams's argument had been directed at the first consideration; the dean had questioned Cotterill's right to judge the spiritual fitness of a candidate to exercise his ministry. Cotterill agreed that the terms of the will made consecration of the church impossible, but he saw nothing to prevent a clergyman fulfilling his duties in Christ

Macaulay and Gladstone. Fraser's Magazine was published from 1830 to 1882. Originally Tory in viewpoint, by mid-century it had taken up a Liberal stance. J.A. Froude edited the paper from 1861 to 1874. (C. Gillie, Longman Companion to English Literature, pp. 493, 745, 821.)

¹⁷⁴ LV 105, Synodical Memoranda 1869, p.40.

¹⁷⁵ GTJ 7 July 1869.

Church as a faithful minister of the Anglican Church.¹⁷⁶ Despite the obvious enjoyment with which his audience had heard Williams's speech, it was Cotterill's clear and simple argument that won the day. The synod resolved almost unanimously to leave the matter to the discretion of the bishop.

Cotterill decided to accept the gift, and in due course to licence the clergyman for Christ Church but, as Merriman put it, "to eliminate all the mischief" from the will, "which no one was better able to do than himself."¹⁷⁷

Although the trust deed for Christ Church is dated 4 October 1873, two years after Cotterill had left the diocese, it was according to Merriman drawn up with Cotterill's advice.¹⁷⁸ The declaration to be signed by the minister of Christ Church required him to

...conform to all the conditions of the said Will in regard to the said Church and especially as to the Symbols of Worship and Choral Services to be used or practised therein, as is more particularly set forth in the aforesaid Will; ¹⁷⁹

The wording of the declaration deliberately avoided specific reference to the requirement that the minister of Christ Church be an evangelical or low churchman.

The foundation stone of Christ Church was laid by Cotterill on 30 November 1870, by which time Merriman was Dean of Cape Town. There were several clergy present at the ceremony, but the Dean of Grahamstown declined to attend although he thanked the trustees for the "Kind Courtesy" of their invitation. He would, he said, have attended a ceremony to lay the foundation stone of a Wesleyan or Independent chapel or of a Roman Catholic church, but his "overpowering sense of duty" to the Church of England kept him away on this occasion. He made

¹⁷⁶ LV 105, Synodical Memoranda 1869, pp. 34, 39-40.

¹⁷⁷ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to WWJ, 19 Aug. 1875.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.; H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, p.151.

¹⁷⁹ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to WWJ, 19 Aug. 1875; GDA 1629, Trust Deed for Christ Church, Grahamstown, 4 Oct. 1873; UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A13, p.102, WWJ to NJM, 3 Sept. 1875.

plain his objection by referring to Christ Church as "the peculiar Religious mission intended to be founded by this proposed Building."¹⁸⁰

Williams also addressed a public protest to Cotterill on the subject,¹⁸¹ and explained his objections to Robert Gray, who discussed the issue with Merriman in Cape Town. Gray, with Merriman's support, told the Dean of Grahamstown that he found the terms of the will objectionable, and that he would have refused to license a clergyman under the conditions of the trust, but Gray made it clear that this opinion, based on one-sided information, was not his official view as metropolitan. Gray's greatest fear was that the terms of the bequest were likely to "provoke litigation" and to involve the diocese in "trouble and loss."¹⁸²

Gray's doubts about Christ Church proved to be exaggerated. Nevertheless, in the midst of his fine constructive work for the diocese and province, it was one of the loose ends left by Cotterill for his successor to resolve. In the long run, the Christ Church trust deed was far less troublesome than Cotterill's failure to draw up a constitution for the chapter and to define the position of the dean.

The building of Christ Church took longer than was originally intended, but by January 1875 was advanced enough for the trustees to approach Merriman as bishop of the diocese and to request him to agree to the appointment of a minister.¹⁸³ In the interim, the building was used for services by Dr Ross, headmaster of St Andrew's, as the college chapel was not large enough,¹⁸⁴ an eventuality

¹⁸⁰ Cory Library, MS 16 284, FHW to J.C. Bate, 15 Nov. 1870; H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.IV, p.152.

¹⁸¹ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, pp.338-339, RG to FHW, 21 Jan. 1871; H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.IV, p.152.

¹⁸² UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, pp.338-339, RG to FHW, 21 Jan. 1871.

¹⁸³ Cory Library, MS 16 284, Correspondence between NJM and Trustees of Christ Church, Jan.-Feb. 1875.

¹⁸⁴ H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.IV, p.154.

envisaged by Cotterill in 1869.¹⁸⁵

In August 1875, Merriman wrote to ask William West Jones, Bishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan, about the "wisdom, propriety or lawfulness"¹⁸⁶ of consecrating Christ Church. He explained that he was attempting to follow Cotterill's leadership in the matter, and not his own inclinations. He asked whether the consecration of churches in Europe, which were in the hands of trustees, by the Bishop of London, did not form a precedent.¹⁸⁷ The metropolitan's advice was clear. The trustees of churches abroad consecrated by the Bishop of London were bound to allow the churches to be used in perpetuity only for services of the Church of England. The trust deed of Christ Church precluded any similar agreement between the trustees and the Bishop of Grahamstown. West Jones advised Merriman against consecrating the building, advice which Merriman followed.¹⁸⁸

In January 1877, Merriman agreed to the appointment of the Rev. Matthew Norton as minister of Christ Church,¹⁸⁹ a step which was followed by a protest from Dean Williams, who objected to his

...ministering in the cathedral parish...without any consultation with or authorisation from the Dean of the Cathedral.¹⁹⁰

The cathedral congregation also opposed the constitution of a separate parish for Christ Church.¹⁹¹ In 1878 Williams issued a pamphlet in which he argued that

¹⁸⁵ LV 105, Synodical Memoranda 1869, p.34.

¹⁸⁶ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to WWJ, 19 Aug. 1875.

¹⁸⁷ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A13, pp.102-103, WWJ to NJM, 3 Sept. 1875.

¹⁸⁸ H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.IV, p.155. Christ Church was eventually consecrated by the Rt.Rev. B.B. Burnett on 16 Oct. 1971.

¹⁸⁹ Cory Library, MS 16 284, NJM to Christ Church Trustees, 6 Jan. 1877.

¹⁹⁰ GDA 1612, Papers relating to Christ Church Grahamstown, FHW to Rev. M. Norton, 3 Feb. 1877; H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.IV, p.155.

¹⁹¹ GDA 1417, Papers relating to Christ Church Grahamstown, Attempts to create a separate parish 1877-1878.

...no Bishop of Grahamstown having regard for English Church law could consecrate the building any more than he could consecrate Wood's Hotel in Bathurst Street... 192

Two metropolitans had vindicated Williams's opposition to Christ Church, Robert Gray perhaps more comprehensively than West Jones. Although Williams's objection was justified, his attitude was ominous, for his criticism of Christ Church led him into interference with episcopal authority and disobedience to synodical decisions from as early as 1869. Like Colenso, he was beginning to see himself as a champion of the Church of England.

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As the decade of the 1860s ended, Merriman found the even tenor of his way disrupted by claims on his abilities which drew him away from Grahamstown. It had always been clear to Robert Gray that Nathaniel Merriman had qualities which fitted him for a position of leadership beyond his responsibilities as Archdeacon of Grahamstown. On this issue, Merriman had never been of the same mind, but when in 1869 a situation more distressing to Gray than Colenso's heresy arose in the Orange Free State,¹⁹³ the Archdeacon of Grahamstown was the man whose character and experience fitted him to deal with the disaster which threatened the church.

Rumours began to reach Cape Town and Grahamstown in July 1869, that Edward Twells, Bishop of the Free State, was to be charged with homosexual activities involving choirboys.¹⁹⁴ Twells, born in 1828,

¹⁹² F.H. Williams, Some Considerations for the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Grahamstown, p.10. Wood's Hotel, once owned by James Wood, is now the Goodwood Hotel.

¹⁹³ Verbal information from M. Nuttall.

¹⁹⁴ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.267, RG to E. Twells, 21 Jul. 1869. For an historical survey of the subject, see P. Coleman, Christian Attitudes to Homosexuality. He records that the death penalty for sodomy was only repealed in Great Britain in 1861. (*ibid.*, p.140.) In 1869, the Church News thanked the English press for the "delicacy, good feeling and good taste" with which it had handled the Twells episode. (GTJ 6 Sept. 1869.) The biography of Robert Gray by his son, C.N. Gray, avoids the subject

was educated at King Edward's School, Birmingham, and Peterhouse, Cambridge. Ordained priest in 1854, he was recommended for the Free State bishopric in 1862 by the Archbishop of Canterbury, C.T. Longley, who as Bishop of Ripon had ordained Twells.¹⁹⁵ The new bishop was consecrated on 2 February 1863 in Westminster Abbey under the Jerusalem Bishopric Act,¹⁹⁶ and left England in July 1863. He paid a brief initial visit to his diocese before returning to Cape Town where he sat as an assessor in the Colenso trial.¹⁹⁷ Anglo-Catholic and ascetic, Twells was a devoted and self-denying missionary bishop, enduring great hardship as he visited remote and barren parts of his diocese. In 1867, to meet the particular needs of the Free State, he founded at Modderpoort the Society of St Augustine, a men's religious

of Twells's homosexuality altogether. As late as 1894, the metropolitan objected to an account of the episode by A.T. Wirgman in The English Church in South Africa, but Wirgman replied: "There was no doubt whatsoever as to repeated acts of sodomy, and when a man flees from the country to escape hanging...the least that could be said of his resignation was that it was 'enforced'...the circumstances of Bishop Twells's resignation are plainly alluded to in Bishop Colenso's life, and so any minimising on my part would be failing in my duty as a historian." (UWL, AB867: Bc15, A.T. Wirgman to WWJ, 13 Nov. 1894.) This circumspection has continued even in a more tolerant age. Notes on Twells at the Library, University of the Witwatersrand, used in this account, were in a sealed envelope, marked "not to be opened except for genuine research." Despite the scandal at the time, the scar left on the Church of the Province of Southern Africa by the Twells affair is not as deep as that left by Colenso.

¹⁹⁵ UWL, AB867: Aa6.1, Diocese of Bloemfontein 1860-1945, Notes by R.R. Langham-Carter.

¹⁹⁶ PBH, p.77; PBH/BD, p.60. In 1841, by the joint efforts of England and Prussia, a bishopric was set up in Jerusalem to serve their nationals in Syria, Chaldaea, Egypt and Abyssinia. The act provided for the consecration of an Anglican bishop to serve beyond British territory. At the time, high church Anglicans objected to the act as it meant virtual union with a Protestant body without any guarantees for the preservation of church order and doctrine. ODCC, pp.733-734.

¹⁹⁷ UWL, AB867: Aa6.1, Diocese of Bloemfontein 1860-1945, Notes by R.R. Langham Carter; GTJ 15 Sept. 1863, 2 Oct. 1863; W. Crisp, Some Account of the Diocese of Bloemfontein, p.9.

community with Canon Beckett at its head.¹⁹⁸ In the same year, Twells attended the Lambeth Conference, returning to his diocese in March 1868. Early in 1869, a magistrate investigated the bishop's alleged misconduct, several boys laid charges, depositions were recorded and a criminal warrant was issued. On 15 July 1869, the Friend published the allegations against Twells.¹⁹⁹ According to Robert Gray, Twells faced the death penalty if convicted.²⁰⁰ The clergy of his diocese advised Twells to leave the Free State, and he travelled to Natal in disguise. The synod of the Maritzburg diocese, meeting at that time in Pietermaritzburg, urged Twells to return and face the charges against him, but he refused and sailed to England up the east coast of Africa, under the name of Ephraim Brown.²⁰¹

Gray's initial response to reports of the charges against Twells was disbelief. Nevertheless, he could not ignore the situation and his two immediate concerns were for Twells himself and for the welfare of the church. Describing the charges as "diabolical"²⁰² and a "master stroke of the evil one,"²⁰³ Gray assumed that they were yet another attempt to discredit the church and was convinced that Twells and the church had nothing to fear from open investigation:

You will I am sure see that for the vindication of your character, as well as for the Church's sake, there must be the fullest challenge and the most searching scrutiny. ²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁸The revival of religious orders in the Anglican Communion was one of the results of the Oxford Movement. Communities for women were founded in the 1840s but the first Anglican order for men was the Society of St John the Evangelist in 1865 by R.M.Benson. Charles Gore founded the Community of the Resurrection in 1892. ODCC, p.1171.

¹⁹⁹UWL, AB867: Aa6.1, Diocese of Bloemfontein 1860-1945, Notes by R.R. Langham-Carter.

²⁰⁰UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, pp.270-271, RG to NJM, 26 Jul. 1869.

²⁰¹UWL, AB867: Aa6.1, Diocese of Bloemfontein 1860-1945, Notes by R.R. Langham-Carter.

²⁰²UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.267, RG to E. Twells, 21 Jul. 1869.

²⁰³Ibid., RG to HC, 21 Jul. 1869.

²⁰⁴Ibid., RG to E. Twells, 21 Jul. 1869.

Cotterill telegraphed from Grahamstown, offering to send Merriman at once to the Free State. Gray stalled briefly, arguing that the arrival of a senior clergyman of the province might suggest that the church leadership attached substance to the charges against Twells, but reminded by Sophy that Twells needed advice and support, Gray sent Merriman to the Free State as his commissary.²⁰⁵

The archdeacon left Grahamstown on 22 July 1869.²⁰⁶ Outside the Orange Free State itself no clergyman in south Africa had more experience of conditions in that diocese than Merriman : as the Orange River Sovereignty it had been part of his archdeaconry. Moreover, he was a wise choice in the circumstances, for as well as possessing Gray's fullest confidence, he was trusted and admired by the Freestaters. In November 1850, Merriman had laid the foundation stone of St Andrew's church, Bloemfontein,²⁰⁷ and in October 1852 he again visited the Sovereignty.²⁰⁸ He continued his association with the Free State after Twells became bishop.²⁰⁹ In November 1866, he preached at the consecration of the church, now dedicated to St Andrew and St Michael, the foundation stone of which he had laid.²¹⁰ When Twells returned to England for the Lambeth Conference in 1867, Merriman acted as his commissary.²¹¹ He visited the diocese in November 1867, swimming through flooded rivers to reach Bloemfontein.²¹² Reports in the Friend indicate his popularity in the boer republic:

²⁰⁵ Ibid., RG to HC, 21 Jul. 1869, RG to E. Twells, 21 Jul. 1869.

²⁰⁶ GTJ 26 Jul. 1869.

²⁰⁷ Cape Journals, pp.135-138.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p.198. In 1847, Robert Gray's letters patent included the Orange River Sovereignty in the area under his jurisdiction, but the 1853 letters patent made no mention of the Orange Free State which became independent in 1854. Nevertheless, the church did not abandon the area. M.R. Every, a deacon, was stationed at Bloemfontein from 1855 to 1858. In 1854 the British government reserved a number of erven in Bloemfontein for its own use. Some of this land was given to Bishop Twells in 1863.

²⁰⁹ GTJ 3 Nov. 1865, quoting the Friend.

²¹⁰ GTJ 21 Nov. 1866, 11 Jan. 1867, 14 Jan. 1867; W. Crisp, op.cit., p.14.

²¹¹ AA, 14 Dec. 1867.

²¹² GTJ 25 Oct. 1867, 29 Nov. 1867.

The reverend gentleman, we rejoice to say, is looking exceedingly well; his voice is as powerful as ever... The Archdeacon is much admired by all who know him, for his manly bearing, and honest outspoken character. 213

By the time Merriman arrived in Bloemfontein on 4 August 1869, Twells had left the diocese,²¹⁴ and Gray had appointed Merriman vicar-general.²¹⁵ Merriman chose as the theme of his first sermon in the troubled diocese, Christ stilling the storm at sea. The Friend was pleased to notice that he retained his "powerful voice and wonted vigour," and that his "manly and straightforward" manner had restored much confidence in the church.²¹⁶

In Cape Town, Gray clung to his theory of a conspiracy against Twells.²¹⁷ His energies already taxed by his own diocese, the metropolitan was in anxious communication with the Governor of the Cape and with President Brand of the Free State,²¹⁸ and Merriman was instructed to gather what evidence he could.²¹⁹ It was only gradually that Gray relinquished his belief in his brother bishop's innocence. He received a pathetic letter from Twells, written in Durban on 28 July 1869, in which the shattered man spoke of his disgrace, of his feeling that his mind was disturbed, and tendered his resignation.²²⁰ By mid-September, after a long struggle, in which, as Gray told Twells, he had vindicated him while it was possible, he had been "step by step, forced

²¹³ GTJ 6 Dec. 1867, quoting the Friend.

²¹⁴ W. Crisp, op.cit.; GTJ 4 Aug. 1869, 18 Aug. 1869, quoting the Friend.

²¹⁵ UWL, AB867: Aa6.1, Diocese of Bloemfontein 1860-1945, Document signed by RG, 23 July. 1869; UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.268, RG to D. Croghan, 23 Jul. 1869.

²¹⁶ GTJ 18 Aug. 1869, quoting the Friend.

²¹⁷ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, pp.270-271, RG to NJM, 26 Jul. 1869.

²¹⁸ Ibid., pp.270-272, RG to NJM, 26 Jul. 1869, 11 Aug. 1869.

²¹⁹ UWL, AB867: Aa6.1, Diocese of Bloemfontein 1860-1945, Document signed by RG, 23 Jul. 1869.

²²⁰ UWL, AB867: Aa6.1, Diocese of Bloemfontein 1860-1945, E. Twells to RG, 28 Jul. 1869.

to admit what the spirit and soul shrank from allowing."²²¹ Although concerned for Twells's spiritual condition,²²² Gray was even more concerned about the welfare of the church. He considered that acceptance of Twells's resignation would be "...an admission...almost of his innocence."²²³ He therefore sent Twells a citation to appear before the bishops of the province, but Twells's condition was such that his family would not allow the summons to be served. The case was heard on 31 January 1870, in St George's cathedral, Cape Town.²²⁴ Robert Gray presided with the bishops of Grahamstown, St Helena and Maritzburg. The registrar read the citation which was to have been served on Twells.²²⁵ Medical certificates attesting to Twells's enfeebled mental and physical condition were read, as was Twells's resignation of his see, and his family's protest against the trial. Gray pointed out the reasons why he had felt a trial to be necessary and why it had become inappropriate, and announced that

...the Bishops of this Province deem it to be their duty, being compelled thereto by the pressing needs of the Free State Diocese, simply to give effect to the resignation already read, and thereupon to declare the see of the Orange Free State vacant, which I accordingly now do. ²²⁶

Robert Gray had hoped that the consecration of the next Bishop of the Orange Free State would coincide with the 1870 Provincial Synod,

²²¹ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.290, RG to E. Twells, 17 Sept. 1869.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, RG to H. Twells, 18 Sept. 1869.

²²⁴ UWL, AB867: Aa6.1, Diocese of Bloemfontein 1860-1945, The Case of Bishop Twells; GTJ 7 Feb. 1870.

²²⁵ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, pp. 308, 318, RG to H. Twells, 3 Jan. 1870, 20 Feb. 1870.

²²⁶ GTJ 7 Feb. 1870; UWL, AB867: Aa6.1, Diocese of Bloemfontein 1860-1945, The Case of Bishop Twells. After the Provincial Synod, Gray wrote to Edward Twells's brother: "May all now be forgotten and forgiven; and may GOD renew to your poor brother for whom I feel the most tender sorrow, spiritual, mental, physical strength." UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.318, RG to H. Twells, 20 Feb. 1870.

when all the bishops of the province were gathered together. He had also hoped that the man they consecrated would be Nathaniel James Merriman.²²⁷ As early as 11 August 1869, Gray had told the archdeacon that even if the charges against Twells were false, Twells could not return to the Free State and that

...there was no one in the world to whom we could look for building up the ruined Church but yourself. You command the confidence of men more than anyone else in Africa.²²⁸

This hope was not a private whim on the part of the metropolitan : as Gray told Merriman,

...already everyone knows that you are marked out and chosen with one voice for the office.²²⁹

Twells's successor faced an immense task. The number of communicants in Bloemfontein had dropped from forty-five to three,²³⁰ and the work done by the celibate community had come under suspicion.²³¹ Finance for work in the diocese had come from a fund donated to Bishop

²²⁷UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.288, RG to WTB, 18 Sept. 1869.

²²⁸Ibid., p.272, RG to NJM, 11 Aug. 1869.

²²⁹Ibid., p.283, RG to NJM, 3 Sept. 1869. See also GTJ 4 Aug. 1869.

²³⁰UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, pp.315-317, RG to H. Twells, 13 Jan. 1870.

²³¹Robert Gray had had reservations about Twells's wisdom in founding the Society of St Augustine in the first place, (UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.276, RG to NJM, 19 Aug.1869), and he thought it likely that the community had contributed to dislike of Twells's ritualism in the Free State, (Ibid., pp.270-271, RG to NJM, 26 Jul. 1869), but when Twells's guilt was clear and it was equally obvious that the community was not implicated, Gray stood by the brotherhood. When the Governor of the Cape suggested disbanding them, Gray replied: "we could hardly do this without stigmatizing them, and I am not prepared to sacrifice good men to a clamour or a prejudice." (Ibid., p.272, RG to NJM, 11 Aug. 1869.) Nevertheless, Gray confided to Merriman, "My impression is that the Brotherhood will not hold its ground." (Ibid., p.276, RG to NJM, 19 Aug. 1869.) In this, Gray was wrong. Twells's successor in the see was Allan Becher Webb, a strong advocate of religious communities, and founder of two orders for women. For the subsequent history of the Community of St Augustine, see PBH, pp.140-142, Historical Records, pp.410-411, 424-429.

Twells personally, and with his departure, this source failed.²³² What local support there had been ran dry and the S.P.G. grant, which Merriman administered, had to meet all needs.²³³ Gray feared confiscation of Twells's property and instructed Merriman to claim all that belonged to the church.²³⁴ Merriman too was under no illusions about the difficulties of the diocese:

A dishonoured mitre - a starving church and a hideous incompatible country and a...disorganized community is all one gets...²³⁵

Obedience to duty and rejection of his own comfort had always been the standards by which Merriman steered. Nevertheless, he was acutely conscious of his age and of the fact that ill-health had necessitated his resignation as rector of St Bartholomew's earlier in 1869.²³⁶ He had always shrunk from the loneliness of leadership required by episcopacy,²³⁷ and the offer of the Free State bishopric seems to have come at a time when this reluctance was accompanied by a serious state of depression, which manifested itself in a lack of confidence and an inability to act decisively. The result of this was that Merriman was unwilling to commit himself fully to go to the Orange Free State as bishop. Instead, he put forward a series of half-measures, suggesting that he remain Archdeacon of Grahamstown, as well as becoming Bishop of the Orange Free State,²³⁸ or that he continue

²³²UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.302, RG to NJM, 24 Dec. 1869.

²³³Ibid., p.272, RG to NJM, 11 Aug. 1869.

²³⁴Ibid.

²³⁵UWL, AB867: Aa6.1, Diocese of Bloemfontein 1860-1945, NJM to RG, 12 Sept. 1869.

²³⁶GTJ 2 Jun. 1869, 14 Jun. 1869; Cape Archives, CO 924, NJM to Colonial Secretary, 8 Jan. 1869, HC to Colonial Secretary, 9 Jan. 1869.

²³⁷See above, pp.69-70. Merriman's name was considered for the bishopric of Grahamstown, twice in the 1850s, of the Free State twice, and of Natal once in the 1860s, and of the metropolitan see of Cape Town in 1872, but on each occasion he reiterated his unwillingness to accept the office.

²³⁸UWL, AB867: Aa6.1, Diocese of Bloemfontein 1860-1945, NJM to RG, 12 Sept. 1869.

as vicar-general of the diocese, or become bishop for a limited period of four or five years.²³⁹ The ever-practical Mrs Merriman made her husband's task no easier by reminding him of the financial difficulties of the diocese, and their own limited means. She pointed out that he still had children to educate and that the prospect of the Free State was "simply detestable"²⁴⁰ to his daughters. She wrote to Robert Gray to point out these facts, and received in reply a reproof from the metropolitan whose own wife had always shared his own single-minded sense of duty to the church:

Will you allow a very old friend to say that he thinks it a pity that you mingle personal reflections with a question which ought to be viewed solely with reference to GOD's will...I should rejoice to see him in the Free State because...I believe that would best help forward GOD's work and cause. 241

At about the same time, Gray received a letter from Merriman, in which the archdeacon requested the metropolitan to decide the question for him. Gray replied,

...this my dear friend, as it seems to me, is a question which no one can settle but yourself...You feel that there are weighty hindrances in the way of your accepting it. Whether these constitute a sufficient reason for declining to accept, regarding the election as an error in man, and not the call of GOD I certainly do not feel that I am in a position to decide, and I do not think that any can fully judge...It is the decision which is wanted. Until that is made you will not be at ease, or peace, or well. 242

Gray had the wisdom to see that Merriman had to reach his own decision, but at the same time he was convinced that the archdeacon would decline:

The dear Archdⁿ would himself be ready, I believe to go anywhere; but his wife and family are strongly adverse to the step, and he, nearly broken down by anxiety, yields. 243

²³⁹Ibid., NJM to RG, 1 Oct. 1869.

²⁴⁰Ibid.

²⁴¹UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.299, RG to JM, 5 Dec. 1869.

²⁴²Ibid., p.296, RG to NJM, 22 Nov. 1869.

²⁴³Ibid., p.300, RG to D. Croghan, 6 Dec. 1869.

On 27 December 186^a, Gray received Merriman's formal notice that he could not accept the Free State.²⁴⁴

Merriman's refusal meant that responsibility for the Free State fell on Robert Gray.²⁴⁵ Nor did the archdeacon make the task of finding a bishop for the Free State easier by putting forward the name of James Green to the members of the church in the Free State. Gray did not trust Green, whom he described as a ritualist "in advance of Twells,"²⁴⁶ and would not recommend Colenso's erstwhile dean and arch-opponent for the vacant see. The only man in southern Africa besides Merriman whom Gray considered fit for the work was Hopkins Badnall, who had already indicated his unwillingness to accept.²⁴⁷ This meant further delay, while a clergyman in England was sought.²⁴⁸ In November 1870, in Inverness, Allan Becher Webb, only just the canonical age of thirty, was consecrated Bishop of Bloemfontein by Robert Gray and three bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church.²⁴⁹

As Robert Gray had predicted, once Merriman reached a decision about the Free State, his depression lifted.²⁵⁰ Some churchmen in Port Elizabeth hoped that he would make that the centre from which he carried out his archidiaconal duties,²⁵¹ but although free of responsibility for St Bartholomew's, he preferred to remain in Grahamstown. In January 1870, he went to Provincial Synod in renewed vigour, and an address to the Anglicans of Humansdorp in June gave evidence of the restoration

²⁴⁴ GTJ 28 Jan. 1870.

²⁴⁵ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.302, RG to D. Croghan, 26 Dec. 1869.

²⁴⁶ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.296, RG to NJM, 22 Nov. 1869. On Dean Green, see A.T. Wirgman, Life of James Green, in two volumes.

²⁴⁷ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.311, RG to WTB, 31 Dec. 1869.

²⁴⁸ GTJ 28 Jan. 1870.

²⁴⁹ Historical Records, ~~pp. 407~~ 408.

²⁵⁰ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.296, RG to NJM, 22 Nov. 1869.

²⁵¹ GTJ 22 Dec. 1869, 29 Dec. 1869.

of his usual spirits. He

...fervently inveighed against the untruthfulness between man and man which so much obtains in this colony...the deadness of many of its religious communities; its gross laxity of morals...and the want of men with moral courage enough to raise unflinchingly the standard of pure religion... 252

Although freed from anxiety about Merriman, Bishop Gray was oppressed by many other concerns. Provincial Synod involved an immense amount of preparation, and Merriman's refusal of the Orange Free State had left Gray with the tasks of overseeing the diocese and of finding a new bishop. Each parliamentary session was a cause of anxiety. Robert Gray dreaded the passage of the Voluntary Bill, which would end government grants to religion.²⁵³ This fear was exacerbated in 1870 by the necessity of finding a replacement for the Dean of Cape Town, who had resigned. It was decided that Merriman, well enough to contemplate a change of scene, would take up the post.²⁵⁴ Gray was eager to have Merriman's appointment, and that of his successor as Archdeacon of Grahamstown, confirmed, before Parliament could meet and pass the Voluntary Bill, as both the Dean of Cape Town and the Archdeacon of Grahamstown received £400 a year from the colonial treasury.²⁵⁵ Merriman did not share this sense of urgency. He proposed to stay in Grahamstown until August 1870, and then to go to Cape Town for a trial period of six months, with the option of returning to Grahamstown.²⁵⁶ In his response to this proposal, Gray

²⁵² GTJ 6 Jun. 1870.

²⁵³ See below, ch.5, pp.243-250.

²⁵⁴ UWL, AB867: Bb3, Appointments of Bishops Welby and Merriman, 1849-1871, Appointment of Merriman as Dean of Cape Town, 1870.

²⁵⁵ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.323, RG to NJM, 1 Apr. 1870. The rapid turnover of Deans of Cape Town at this time added to Gray's anxieties about the Free State, Provincial Synod and his wife's health. The first six deans of Cape Town, with dates of appointment, were: W.A. Newman (1855); H.A. Douglas (1856); H.R. Alder (1869); N.J. Merriman (1870); C.W. Barnett-Clarke (1871); C.H. Rolt (1917). I am grateful to N.D. Southey for this information.

²⁵⁶ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.323, RG to NJM, 1 Apr. 1870.

did not mince his words:

However anxious to meet your views, I think that neither Bishop would be justified in assenting to this. We are not bound to sacrifice the Church, or risk its well being, out of love to you. ²⁵⁷

Sophy Gray was ailing, and her condition necessitated a visit to consult doctors in England. Robert Gray himself was not well. He told Merriman bluntly:

I could not go through what I have been constrained to go through for Capetown since I came from England without I think certain loss of health - perhaps of life. The anxiety about that place; with the troubles about the Free State, have been the two chief causes which have broken me down. ²⁵⁸

Merriman got his own way over the date of his arrival in Cape Town, but not over the six month trial period. Henry Master White was appointed Archdeacon of Grahamstown in his stead. ²⁵⁹ Merriman left Grahamstown on 5 August 1870, ²⁶⁰ after a round of farewells. ²⁶¹

The Journal commented:

We have no intention to embitter his few remaining days in this city by inflicting upon him a newspaper eulogium. Those who know him best seem instinctively to feel that anything like public praise is distasteful to the Archdeacon. This conviction has fixed itself so strongly upon them that they...have to be grateful by stealth. ²⁶²

The paper paid tribute to Merriman's work for the library and hospital, and his contribution to the erection of two churches, three parsonages, three schoolrooms and two almshouses, but most of all,

...the greatest gift the Archdeacon has given to the city is his character - the character of a

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ SPG mic., vol. D37, Grahamstown diocese, HC to WTB, 28 Apr. 1870; GTJ 2 May 1870, 10 Aug. 1870.

²⁶⁰ GTJ 5 Aug. 1870.

²⁶¹ GTJ 29 Jul. 1870, 3 Aug. 1870.

²⁶² GTJ 29 Jul. 1870.

manly, truthful, upright, Christian gentleman...²⁶³

Robert Gray was in England when Merriman arrived in Cape Town. Although he was as popular in Cape Town as he had been in Grahamstown,²⁶⁴ by the end of 1870 Merriman had once again broken down²⁶⁵ and was contemplating retiring to Grahamstown on £100 a year as soon as the Bishop of Cape Town returned.²⁶⁶ Gray landed in Cape Town in January 1871. Mrs Merriman lost no time in calling on him and pointing out the necessity of her husband's immediate departure, intimating that if Gray refused to allow this, it would be tantamount to sacrificing Merriman's life. Gray wrote to Dean Merriman about this interview, which had given him "some pain."²⁶⁷ He was by now used to Mrs Merriman's tactics and did not think the situation as urgent as she had suggested:

One, that you have not yet thought it necessary to call in a medical man; the other that...you still contemplate accepting the far more onerous office of Bp. of Grahamstown if offered.²⁶⁸

This was a perceptive remark. As early as July 1870, before Merriman left Grahamstown, Cotterill had been offered the see of Edinburgh,²⁶⁹ and awareness that the see of Grahamstown could soon be vacant may have prevented Merriman committing himself completely to his work in Cape Town.

Cotterill wished to leave for Edinburgh in February 1871.²⁷⁰ This would add to the burden on Robert Gray's shoulders, as he

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ GTJ 29 Aug. 1870, 3 Jul. 1871, quoting the Argus.

²⁶⁵ SPG mic., vol. D42, Grahamstown diocese, HC to WTB, 10 Dec. 1870.

²⁶⁶ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.382, RG to NJM, 16 Jan. 1871; Ibid., p.391, RG to NJM, 26 Jan. 1871.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.382, RG to NJM, 16 Jan. 1871.

²⁶⁹ SPG mic., vol. D37, Grahamstown diocese, HC to WTB, 22 Jul. 1870; GTJ 5 Aug. 1870, 8 Aug. 1870, 29 Aug. 1870.

²⁷⁰ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.394. RG to HC, 6 Feb. 1871.

would be responsible for the diocese of Grahamstown. If Merriman left Cape Town, parish work there would also fall on Robert Gray, and at this time it was clear that Sophy Gray was dying,²⁷¹ so that, as he reminded Merriman,

...I have on my shoulders not only the work I have hitherto done but much of what my wife has done for me, and that amid anxious days and broken nights. ²⁷²

True father in God that he was, and despite the fact that Merriman had contributed to his trials, Robert Gray showed continued concern for Merriman, expressed by a desire that he should not shirk responsibility or act precipitately:

But I pray you, for your own sake, to weigh the matter well. My own belief is that the present cloud will pass away, as it did last year, and that...you will soon be yourself again. But if you feel otherwise, you will of course act upon your own convictions. ²⁷³

Eventually both Cotterill and Merriman delayed their departure until mid-1871. Cotterill left Grahamstown soon after Merriman's return to the city, and after he had tendered his resignation to the metropolitan,²⁷⁴ Gray appointed Merriman vicar-general of the diocese.²⁷⁵

Merriman took up his responsibilities as vicar-general in a diocese where the personality of Dean Williams had already made a decisive mark. A contributory cause was that the dean's public utterances were not altogether free from controversy.

²⁷¹T. Gutsche, Bishop's Lady, pp.212-213.

²⁷²UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.382, RG to NJM, 16 Jan. 1871.

²⁷³Ibid.

²⁷⁴GTJ 12 Jun. 1871, 30 Jun. 1871, 12 Jul. 1871.

²⁷⁵GTJ 28 Jul. 1871.

The subject of Williams's sermons ranged from "Happiness and Pleasure - the difference,"²⁷⁶ through a discussion of the services of the Book of Common Prayer²⁷⁷ to the controversial subjects of his day, biblical criticism and ritual. If his teaching on the former was orthodox, as the title, "The veracity and authenticity of Holy Scripture under the Old Testament - plain considerations addressed to the modern sceptic,"²⁷⁸ suggests it was, his high church views were reflected in sermons such as "The teaching of the Prayer Book as to the modes of worship, with special reference to the use of music in prayer."²⁷⁹ There had been criticism of intoning at the 1860 synod,²⁸⁰ but this sermon seems to have met with less criticism than the dean's decision to change the hymn book in use at St George's without ensuring adequate supplies of the replacement.²⁸¹ But Williams's sermons did not all pass without criticism, though the reasons varied. Soon after his arrival he deplored the attendance of young men at clubs which he described as "nothing better than a genteel canteen." The secretary of a Grahamstown club understood the sermon to be directed specifically at his institution, took exception to the dean's sweeping denunciation and demanded a public denial. Williams made it plain that his objection was not to any club in particular, but a warning against "the one gigantic danger, namely, that of intemperance in...pleasures."²⁸² This public explanation was accepted. On another occasion, in November 1868, Williams preached in St Andrew's College chapel. The headmaster of the college subsequently complained that his sermon had done little to "check that irreverence which seems to be the special bane of this colony," including as it did, "that most profane anecdote with regard to the dying words of our Lord," which "did greatly shock us

²⁷⁶ GTJ 7 Sept. 1866.

²⁷⁷ GTJ 6 Apr. 1866, 30 Apr. 1866, 25 May 1866, 29 Jun. 1866, 18 Jan. 1867.

²⁷⁸ GTJ 6 Jul. 1866.

²⁷⁹ GTJ 8 Jun. 1866. See also GTJ 18 May 1866, 2 Nov. 1866.

²⁸⁰ LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, p.69.

²⁸¹ GTJ 14 May 1866, 16 May 1866.

²⁸² Ibid.

as it must every Christian who reads or hears it."²⁸³

The disputatious reputation the dean was acquiring was not restricted to his sermons. By 1867, Robert Mullins was beginning to find Williams's eloquence very tiresome. Mullins, who was responsible for diocesan finance, found that the congregation at St George's was dragging its feet in meeting its diocesan assessment. Although Williams exhorted the congregation to do better,²⁸⁴ in synod he objected to the rate of assessment, albeit in an amusing speech, likening the honour of being the cathedral church to that of receiving a white elephant.²⁸⁵ Mullins's irritation was exacerbated by the fact that Williams was a member of the Diocesan Board of Finance. In September, 1867, Mullins recorded:

Had a Finance Board meeting in the afternoon - at 3.30 - but the Dean was so tiresome in objecting to everything that it was not over until 7.30. ²⁸⁶

A month later, Mullins noted with relief that the meeting lasted only two hours, "so the Dean was not as bad as usual."²⁸⁷ Bishop Macrorie commented on Williams's oratory at the 1870 Provincial Synod:

The Dean of Grahamstown is a fluent Irishman, who will speak by the hour about anything or nothing very cleverly indeed, often contradicting at the end of his speech that with which he started, and sometimes voting against himself, but doing some useful work in picking holes in other men's work. ²⁸⁸

When Williams left Ashton-under-Lyne, he was described in warm terms as

...a clergyman and a Churchman,...a politician, and a distributor of relief...these points made up the public life of the man. And to shut out

²⁸³ GDA 1426, L.S. Browne to FHW, 5 Dec. 1868.

²⁸⁴ GTJ 7 Mar. 1866.

²⁸⁵ LV 105, Synodical Memoranda 1869, pp.56-58.

²⁸⁶ Cory Library, MS 7117, Mullins Diary, 27 Sept. 1867, p.277.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 2 Oct. 1867, p.279.

²⁸⁸ Quoted in PBH, p.117.

any one of them, was only to take in one or two sides of his character instead of three. ²⁸⁹

At the Cape, Williams's interest in politics was sustained. On 7 November 1869, he preached in St George's on "our duty as Christian citizens in the present aspect of politics in the Cape Colony," in which he stated his opposition to responsible government for the colony, and exhorted his congregation to stir themselves and prevent it:

...my brethren, I think there are times when to take an active part in public affairs becomes a part of practical Christianity. I never can believe that my duty to my neighbour begins and ends with striving to do good to individuals... it is your duty now to choose your best men, and send them to the metropolis bound to a prompt and firm discharge of business...that you may be saved future trouble and future confusion;... I believe those who would go, would thus be doing a better service and a really more Christian duty to their neighbours, than those who give the largest subscription to a mere passing charity, however admirable. ²⁹⁰

Williams was not merely setting forth his political creed; the sermon had other implications. Firstly, Williams clearly felt strongly attracted by a political career, and secondly, if he opposed responsible parliamentary government, sooner or later he would begin to have doubts about its ecclesiastical counterpart, synodical government. The Dean of Grahamstown was married and had a son, but no picture emerges of his home and family life. This is partly because of the loss or absence of Williams's private correspondence, but perhaps chiefly because he felt far more at home in public life. A hard and efficient worker, and a vigorous, persuasive and entertaining orator, it was clearly a sphere for which he was fitted. An English law prevented clergy of the established church from standing for election to parliament.²⁹¹ Williams's interest and abilities suggest that he may have been tempted to test the application of this law at the Cape. The fascination that politics held for Williams, and his

²⁸⁹ GTJ, 22 Dec. 1865.

²⁹⁰ GTJ 12 Nov. 1869.

²⁹¹ See above, p.9, note 29.

qualifications for political life, are an important factor in understanding his career as Dean of Grahamstown. These characteristics led him into controversies which Merriman²⁹² and other clergy frowned upon as unseemly in a clergyman.

While Merriman was still Dean of Cape Town, Williams was involved in a dispute which, though petty in itself, brought together three factors which figured largely in more significant debates in which Williams was involved - the church, the press and the law.

Early in 1871, the Anglo-African, owned and edited by C.T. Campbell, changed hands and merged into the Eastern Star, Grahamstown Advertiser and Anglo-African. The Journal took leave of Campbell, "with great regret, mingled with respect,"²⁹³ and assured his successors that the Journal

...should it have occasion to differ, will be found a fair and generous opponent. At the same time it will ever be prepared to unite heartily in the repression of all that is wrong, and in the promotion of everything calculated to advance the common welfare.²⁹⁴

Despite these polite words, the Eastern Star and the Journal were engaged in numerous sparring matches throughout the 1870s. These were provoked not only by differences in editorial policy but by fierce circulation rivalry. The Journal had found the policy of printing carefully selected quotations from the columns of rival newspapers accompanied by judicious editorial comment an effective means of dealing with its competitors.²⁹⁵ This policy was applied in the Journal's dealings with the Eastern Star.

²⁹² See below, ch. 5.

²⁹³ GTJ 9 Jan. 1871. Colin Turing Campbell lived in Grahamstown from 1848 to 1871. He died in Kimberley in 1897. He was a notary public, and in 1850 was appointed Justice of the Peace for Albany. He served on St George's vestry in 1850, and from 1855 to 1859.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ M. Gibbens, Two Decades in the Life of a City : Grahamstown 1862-1882, p.315.

Whereas the Anglo-African had only been a weekly paper, the Star appeared thrice-weekly. From the first, Williams's name was linked with the paper, although the official editor was Thomas Sheffield.²⁹⁶ The dean almost certainly provided some of the capital to set up the paper, and until his death it was rumoured that he wrote leaders for the Star. When Williams died, the Star regretted:

The hand which for nearly fifteen years has edited the leading columns of the Star, and the brain which has piloted it from the first hour of its conception until last week, are among the things of the past. The "brilliant" and pungent articles which have made the Star what it is, will appear no more. Their writer is dead!²⁹⁷

During Williams's own lifetime, this association was consistently and strenuously denied. This was partly no doubt a publicity stunt, but there was a more serious reason. Clergymen of the established Church of England were not allowed to engage in trade. As Williams's advocacy of the cause^a that institution at the Cape became more strident, so too the necessity of concealing the fact that he was contravening its statutes became more urgent.

The first dispute between the Journal and the Eastern Star was not edifying, any more than the event which occasioned it. Richard Goode Hutt, curate of St George's after Mee's departure, established a Church of England Mutual Improvement Society, the object of which was the edification of its members.²⁹⁸ Williams, as dean, was ex officio president of the society. Soon after his arrival he assured the members of his co-operation,²⁹⁹ and in 1866 he gave two lectures on the history of the church in Africa to members of the society.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁶ On the Eastern Star, see L.E. Neame, Today's News Today, pp.34-51. Thomas Sheffield had come to the Cape from Kidderminster in 1860, with his brother George. Sheffield took the press to Johannesburg in 1887, and the Eastern Star eventually became the Star. Thomas Sheffield served on St George's vestry 1878-1887.

²⁹⁷ ES 24 Aug. 1885. F.H. Williams died on 22 August 1885.

²⁹⁸ GTJ 29 Nov. 1865.

²⁹⁹ GTJ 29 Dec. 1865.

³⁰⁰ GTJ 3 Apr. 1866.

Under his leadership, this society became the Catholic Guild of St George.³⁰¹ Its aims broadened to encompass religious discussion, scientific instruction, an anniversary procession, aid to the sick and needy and "mortuary benefit."³⁰² In practice, these worthy objectives were gradually forgotten, and replaced by amusements, as a February 1870 programme illustrates : the evening's entertainment included a pianoforte solo and several jolly songs and ended with a farce called I've written to Browne.³⁰³ Many former members blamed Dean Williams for this shift in emphasis.³⁰⁴ In February 1871, members decided to dissolve the guild, as membership had dropped from one hundred and twenty-six to twelve, and debts were large. Williams refused to countenance the dissolution of the society, and when several members of the guild attempted to remove the property prior to selling it, the dean barred the way. A near-brawl ensued, and attracted the attention of an officer of the law. When he found the Dean of Grahamstown determined to lay a charge of theft, and the property-removers accusing the reverend gentleman of a breach of the peace, the policeman "wisely walked on."³⁰⁵

When the Eastern Star described the Journal's account of this incident as being made up of "false or unreliable statements,"³⁰⁶ the Journal countered by surmising that the Star's article was the work of Dean Williams.³⁰⁷ The dean, without actually denying that he had written the article, demanded that the Journal retract the attribution of the article to himself.³⁰⁸ This the Journal refused

³⁰¹GTJ 5 Mar. 1866, 3 Apr. 1866.

³⁰²Ibid. For a general discussion of friendly societies, and a history of the United Albany Brethren Benefit Society in Grahamstown, see article by J.M. Berning, Cory Library, PR 3531.

³⁰³GTJ 11 Feb. 1870.

³⁰⁴GTJ 28 Apr. 1868.

³⁰⁵GTJ 27 Feb. 1871.

³⁰⁶GTJ 2 Mar. 1871.

³⁰⁷Ibid.

³⁰⁸GTJ 3 Mar. 1871.

to do, concluding ingenuously:

The matter is altogether perplexing, and we dismiss it without attempting to unravel the entangled skein.³⁰⁹

While this exchange appeared in the Grahamstown press, the case was brought before the courts of law. On 2 March 1871, in the Eastern Districts Court, J.D. Barry, Merriman's son-in-law, appearing for Dean Williams and Mr E.C. Perry as trustees of the guild, applied for an interdict restraining guild members from selling the property they had removed. Barry also requested that they be compelled to restore the property. The solicitor-general,³¹⁰ appearing for the respondents, had no objection to the interdict, but resisted the order for the restoration of property. The presiding judge, Mr Justice Dwyer, "thought it lamentable that gentlemen, all of one religion, should be taking these extreme measures."³¹¹ He warned that legal expenses would absorb the value of the disputed property and suggested arbitration. Although both parties agreed to the principle of arbitration, they were unable to find a mutually acceptable arbiter, the Williams party rejecting Bishop Cotterill as a candidate. Eventually the judge granted an interdict restraining the respondents from selling guild property.³¹²

A general meeting of guild members lasting more than three hours was held on 22 April 1871 to discuss the future of the guild.³¹³ The dean spoke for nearly an hour but, according to the Journal, indulged in "no language of irritating character." One group at the meeting insisted that Williams be excluded from any share in the future management of the guild, but no resolution to that effect was put forward. Williams himself moved that the guild be continued, and the motion was

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ The solicitor-general for the eastern province was Simeon Jacobs (1830-1883), who had been appointed in 1866. He was appointed Attorney-General of the Cape in 1874. D.S.A.B., vol. II, pp. 334-335.

³¹¹ GTJ 3 Mar. 1871.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ GTJ 24 Apr. 1871.

seconded by R.W. Nelson. Another motion stated that the guild, having been found unworkable, should cease to exist. A first division was inconclusive, but on the second, the dean's motion was carried by twenty-eight votes to twenty-one, a result which was greeted with cheers by Williams's supporters.

On 10 May 1871, an application was made before Mr Justice Dwyer, to dissolve the injunction granted to prevent the sale of guild furniture. With the consent of all parties, the injunction was dissolved.³¹⁴

After this blaze of publicity, the Guild of St George faded into obscurity as its moving spirit found other interests. A memory remained of a singularly unedifying episode in which the Dean of Grahamstown, showing no sense of propriety or proportion, had played a leading role.

Some months afterwards, Williams was called upon to perform a more solemn official duty. The mandate for the election of the third Bishop of Grahamstown, the first episcopal election to take place in terms of the canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa drawn up in 1870,³¹⁵ was addressed to Frederick Henry Williams.³¹⁶ Williams summoned the clergy of the diocese and representatives of the laity to meet in St George's cathedral on St Luke's day, 18 October 1871, and to elect as their bishop

...a man of pure and holy life, sound in faith, apt to teach, fit to govern, and having a good report, as well of those who are without as of the Church itself.³¹⁷

³¹⁴ GTJ 12 May 1871.

³¹⁵ Forms relating to the Election of a Bishop, Institution of a Clergyman etc., authorized for use in the Province of South Africa. published in 1870.

³¹⁶ GDA 1464, Mandate for the election of a Bishop of Grahamstown, RG to Dean of Grahamstown, 21 Jul. 1871.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

The man they chose was Nathaniel James Merriman. In a note which accompanied the formal declaration of the result,³¹⁸ Williams congratulated Gray on the result "which I know will give as much pleasure to your Lordship as it has given to us."³¹⁹

There are indications that Williams was not altogether sincere in his expression of pleasure. He was an ambitious man who had already aspired to the Free State bishopric, although Gray had written quite bluntly that he "would not do."³²⁰ Thwarted himself, it is perhaps not surprising that he was jealous of others, and before the election he had insinuated that Merriman's health was not equal to the demands of episcopal office.³²¹ Whatever Williams's motive in suggesting this, there were signs that Merriman no longer enjoyed at all times the robust health he had once personified.³²² A more ominous fact was the sharply contrasting personalities of Williams and Merriman, the one aspiring to high office and revelling in publicity, the other shrinking from them, the former given to clever speeches and the latter noted for his directness and outspokenness.

Whatever shadows hung over the diocese, Robert Gray received news of Merriman's election with joy, and came to Grahamstown to consecrate his old friend at the end of November 1871. The consecration of Nathaniel James Merriman as third Bishop of Grahamstown took place in St George's cathedral on St Andrew's day. The cathedral was crowded with people from the city and from the rural areas, and "several natives" were among the communicants. Dean Williams sang Tallis's setting of the office of Morning Prayer, and Archdeacon White preached

³¹⁸UWL, AB867: Bb3, Appointments of Bishops Welby and Merriman 1849-1871, Declaration of the election of N.J. Merriman as Bishop of Grahamstown, 18 Oct. 1871; GTJ 18 Oct. 1871, 20 Oct. 1871, 23 Oct. 1871.

³¹⁹UWL, AB867: Bb3, Appointments of Bishops Welby and Merriman 1849-1871, FHW to RG, 20 Oct. 1871.

³²⁰UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A10, p.311, RG to WTB, 31 Dec. 1869.

³²¹MP 27-70, JM to JXM, 19 Sept. 1871.

³²²CNG, vol.II, p.543.

on the text "And how shall they hear without a preacher?"³²³
 C.H. Huntley, acting as registrar, administered the oath of canonical obedience to the metropolitan, but Merriman did not take the oath of royal supremacy. The bishop-elect knelt while the Veni Creator Spiritus was sung, and the consecration was performed by Robert Gray with William Kenneth Macrorie, Bishop of Maritzburg, and Allan Becher Webb, Bishop of Bloemfontein.³²⁴

This consecration was one of Robert Gray's last official acts as metropolitan. He could look back on his work with satisfaction and forward with hope. Not only was Merriman at last Bishop of Grahamstown as Gray had long hoped, but he had been elected unanimously by the clergy and laity of his diocese, and the election according to the pattern laid down in the canons had gone smoothly. Within a year, the first Metropolitan of the Church of the Province of South Africa was dead, but Merriman took Gray's work as the pattern for his own. The theme of his episcopate was loyalty to the constitution and canons drawn up in 1870, but he faced two difficulties. Firstly, Merriman's authority was not based on letters patent granted by the crown. Secondly, there were in the diocese of Grahamstown churches governed by church ordinances and colonial chaplains paid by the government. Despite the personal authority Merriman possessed and the authority vested in him by the constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa, there were thus institutions in the diocese which could appeal to the secular power against him. This would not have mattered, but in Dean Williams there was in Grahamstown a man with intelligence and ambition and a motive for such action.

³²³GTJ 1 Dec. 1871. The text is taken from Romans 10.14.

³²⁴GTJ 1 Dec. 1871; CNG, vol.II, pp.542-543.

PART TWO : 1871-1882

BISHOP

CHAPTER FIVE

BISHOP 1871 - 1879

"Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

John I, v. 47.

Nathaniel James Merriman spent his episcopate in defence of the pattern of church government which as archdeacon he had helped to build up. The Church of the Province of South Africa claimed the freedom to govern herself and to safeguard her doctrine without interference from civil government and civil courts¹ but Merriman found the circumstances under which he was called upon to defend this great principle a distressing and contaminating tangle of personal squabbles and petty disputes, of private ambition and political rivalry. The situation called for diplomacy rather than his own vigour and frankness, but his integrity and clear-sightedness meant that the real issue at stake, the freedom of the church from state control, was never obscured.

To Merriman, Grahamstown was the most delightful place in the Cape colony,² and yet perhaps no other town in southern Africa would have provided the climate which sustained the ecclesiastical quarrel in which he was one of the chief protagonists. Throughout the 1850s Grahamstown was a thriving economic centre, and during the 1850s and 1860s Grahamstown wielded political influence throughout the eastern Cape, wealthy men of the town being elected to parliament as members for other eastern constituencies. Politically, Grahamstown's citizens were staunch supporters of the policy of separation, as well as loyal to the Queen and enthusiastic for the imperial idea. The depression of the 1860s, the population shift caused by the diamond rush in the 1870s, Grahamstown's exclusion from the main lines of

¹ See above, chapter three.

² MP 7-74, NJM to JXM, 15 Jan. 1874.

railway development and the rapid growth of Port Elizabeth and East London contributed to her economic decline after 1870, while the advent of responsible government in 1872, and the passage of the Seven Circles Act of 1874 contributed to the waning of the political influence the city had previously wielded. Nevertheless, the Grahamstown press, and especially the Grahamstown Journal, continued to form and reflect eastern opinion to a significant extent, and to its inhabitants in 1872, the city of Grahamstown remained a source of pride and their confidence in its economic and political future was unbounded.³

The understanding of the spiritual independence of the church was the principle at stake. Grahamstown provided the setting, and the conflicting personalities of Bishop Merriman and Dean Williams ensured that the difference of opinion between them was not restricted to dignified debate, but degenerated to the trivial and the brazen.

Dean Williams was an impressive personality.⁴ He had acquired land near the Kowie, and as a landowner identified himself with farming interests.⁵ He was a popular and amusing after-dinner speaker,⁶ and counted among his close friends many leading Grahamstown figures, including the Roman Catholic Bishop Ricards and Mr Justice Dwyer, Dr W.G. Atherstone, James Wood, and R.W. Nelson.⁷ Williams was an

³ M. Gibbens, Two decades in the life of a city : Grahamstown 1862-1882, passim, especially pp.294-353.

⁴ See above, chapter four.

⁵ GTJ 9 Jun. 1876.

⁶ GTJ 6 Nov. 1878.

⁷ William Guybon Atherstone (1814-1898), came to southern Africa with the 1820 Settlers. His father was district surgeon, and subsequently practised in Cape Town until the family came to Grahamstown in 1828. In 1836 he went overseas to complete his medical studies. In 1847, in the course of an amputation, he was the first doctor outside Europe or America to use an anaesthetic. Palaeontologist and geologist, he identified the first diamond discovered in south Africa. He was a pioneer of local health services, and founded the lunatic asylum in Grahamstown in 1875. A city councillor, he was also Member of the Legislative Assembly from 1881 to 1890. (D.S.A.B., vol.I, pp.25-27.) Edward Dwyer (1821-1887), was born in Dublin and graduated from Trinity College there in 1845. He practised at the Irish bar for several years, and was called to the English bar in 1857. Dwyer came to the Cape in 1868 and was appointed to the bench of the Cape Supreme Court. He was

outspoken advocate of eastern Cape separatism, and it was generally accepted in Grahamstown that he expressed his views on political and ecclesiastical events in the columns of the Eastern Star. A public figure with decided opinions trenchantly expressed, the dean attracted controversy. His association with the Eastern Star was particularly likely to generate disputes, especially when the Journal brought its well-established tactics for baiting newspaper rivals into play. Of Williams's predilection for controversy Merriman was to have ample evidence during his episcopate.

Until the late 1870s, Merriman avoided involvement in the political issues of the day, and was only eventually driven into public utterance by what he regarded as the injustice committed by the Cape and Natal

transferred to the eastern division in 1869. A prominent Catholic and a flamboyant character, he played an important part in Grahamstown public life. He was a Freemason. Dwyer returned to Cape Town in 1878. In his declining years, his conduct on the bench provoked criticism. Irascible and intolerant, he preferred British common law to Roman-Dutch law. (D.S.A.B., vol.II, p.211.)

Richard William Nelson was born in Ireland, and lived for some time in Lancashire before coming to Grahamstown in 1862. Nelson made a valuable business alliance when he married one of Samuel Cawood's daughters in 1863. He went bankrupt in 1868, but regained his fortunes in a butchery business. He was an assistant editor of the Eastern Star for many years, Commandant of the First City Volunteers, Justice of the Peace, city councillor of Grahamstown 1866-1880, and mayor 1888-1889. He died in 1906, aged sixty-nine. (M. Gibbens, op.cit., p.450.)

James David Ricards (1828-1893), son of a doctor, was born in Wexford, Ireland, and educated at St Patrick's College, Maynooth. He arrived in Grahamstown in 1849, and was ordained deacon and priest in 1860. A brilliant administrator, he was appointed vicar apostolic, and consecrated in St Patrick's church on 18 Jun. 1871. He built St Aidan's College, Grahamstown, and secured the services of the Nazareth Sisters to open a home for the aged in Port Elizabeth. Trappists he brought to southern Africa founded Mariannahill. He helped Dr W.G. Atherstone identify the first diamond found in South Africa. (D.S.A.B., vol.II, pp.594-595.)

James Wood (1828-1880), was born in Dublin and came to the Cape in 1850 with the Royal Engineers. He served with them until 1863, when he purchased his discharge and settled in Grahamstown. He ran a hotel in New Street before taking over what became Wood's Commercial Hotel in Bathurst Street. An enterprising businessman, in 1878 he purchased the Port Elizabeth postal contract. He was a city councillor 1866 to 1867, and 1870 to 1880. Wood was interested in politics and was nicknamed "the Fenian". Wood and R.W. Nelson formed a team on the city council and in political campaigning during election times. (M. Gibbens, op.cit., p.458.)

governments against people of colour.⁸ He shunned publicity of the kind in which Williams revelled, and in fact disapproved of any clergymen behaving as Williams did, not specifically because he disapproved of the dean's political views, but because he considered his conduct unbecoming in a priest. Merriman's recurrent ill-health throughout the 1870s weakened his capacity to endure with patience or to act authoritatively. Nor did Williams's conduct suggest that he would prove amenable to episcopal authority. Julia Merriman was a source of great support and encouragement to her husband, but at the same time her view of events was personal and partisan, and her often vehement expression of her opinions did not help Merriman keep a sense of perspective. The fact that their son, John X., advocated political policies opposed to those espoused by the Eastern Star provided yet another opening for exploitation by an unscrupulous opponent.⁹

Another factor contributing to an understanding of Merriman's actions in the 1870s is the real respect and love he had for the first Bishop of Cape Town. Although Robert Gray died in September 1872, his memory continued to exert a strong influence on Merriman, who was aware that by refusing to go as bishop to the Free State and then by his breakdown in Cape Town, he had disappointed Gray. He was determined not to add a third betrayal to these two. Gray's death was a severe blow to Merriman : Julia Merriman later recorded that her husband often repeated Tennyson's words,

But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still. 10

The creation of a Province of South Africa governed by synods was the fulfilment of Gray's work, and throughout his episcopate Merriman defended this achievement with Gray's tendency to see great principles at stake in minor events. But the death of Gray at first promised to have a more immediate impact on Merriman's life, as it opened the way for his translation from Grahamstown to Cape Town.

⁸ See below, chapter six.

⁹ P. Lewsen, John X. Merriman, p.92.

¹⁰ GDA 282, JM to Mr Baker, 31 Aug. 1882. The quotation is from A. Tennyson, Break, Break, Break.

When the electoral assembly of the diocese of Cape Town met to choose the new metropolitan on 18 December 1872, one party wished to elect Hopkins Badnall, while another suggested that the task of choosing a bishop be delegated to a group of south African and English bishops to demonstrate the unity between the Church of the Province of South Africa and the Church of England. This latter proposal was narrowly defeated. It was then decided to place the names of two candidates, Merriman and Badnall, before the bishops of the south African province, who would select one of them. Aware of Merriman's reluctance, Badnall's supporters anticipated the withdrawal of the Bishop of Grahamstown from the contest, and the consequent acceptance of their candidate. The second group however knew that the bishops would be reluctant to accept Badnall, and they hoped that Merriman could be persuaded to change his mind.¹¹ The bishops of the province, aware that Merriman was reluctant to be translated, and that there was substantial opposition to Badnall in the Cape Town diocese, referred the matter to an electoral assembly¹² which met on 7 May 1873, but again proved inconclusive. The choice of the metropolitan was then delegated to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Secretary of the S.P.G. and Henry Cotterill, by now Bishop of Edinburgh. The former Bishop of Grahamstown consulted Samuel Wilberforce, who recommended William West Jones. West Jones,¹³ who had been offered the Free State in 1869, after Merriman had declined the see, and who had declined,¹⁴ was thirty-five, a Tractarian, a sound administrator, a disciplinarian and a gentle pastor, who shared Robert Gray's ideals, but who, according to Wilberforce, would put them into practice with patience and tact. On 3 October 1873, William West Jones was asked to become Bishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan, and he accepted.¹⁵

¹¹ PBH, p.118.

¹² UWL, AB867:Bb16, Memorials and Correspondence 1872-1896, Memorandum to the elective assembly of the Diocese of Cape Town, signed by the bishops of St Helena, Maritzburg, Bloemfontein and Grahamstown about a successor for Robert Gray, 19 Feb. 1873.

¹³ PBH, pp.118-121; M.H.M. Wood, A Father in God, is a biography of William West Jones.

¹⁴ Historical Records, p.113.

¹⁵ PBH, p.120.

He was faced almost at once with a difficulty which nearly caused him to withdraw. Before he was consecrated, he was required to sign the constitution and canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa. This he was willing to do, but in terms of the constitution, as future metropolitan of the south African province, he could not take the oath of canonical obedience to the Archbishop of Canterbury. At the same time, in terms of the Prayer Book rubric, this oath could not be omitted. It was eventually agreed that West Jones would take the oath, but that it would be interpreted only in the sense which the constitution of the province allowed. Before his consecration, the bishop-elect signed documents acknowledging that the Archbishop of Canterbury had "first place among all the prelates of the Anglican Communion," but no jurisdiction in the Church of the Province of South Africa except that granted by the constitution. The incident was another stage in the struggle by the Church of the Province of South Africa to clarify her position as an ecclesiastical province in full communion with the Church of England, yet not bound by legislation made for the church in the British parliament.¹⁶ William West Jones arrived in Cape Town on 31 August 1874. In declining the see of Cape Town, Merriman had repeated nolo episcopari for the last time. By the time the new Bishop of Cape Town stepped ashore, it was apparent that the difficulties of his own diocese of Grahamstown were going to tax his energies, experience and patience to the full.

Between 26 June and 3 July 1873, Merriman presided over his first diocesan synod.¹⁷ He pointed out in his opening address that the constitutional position of the south African church had been defined in 1871, and that the 1873 synod would deal largely with local and practical issues.¹⁸ Inevitably, the question of diocesan finance would loom large in synod debates.¹⁹ Although the principle that wealthy parishes should

¹⁶ Ibid., pp.120-121; Historical Records, pp.115-116.

¹⁷ LV 106, Synodical Memoranda 1873, is a record of the synod.

¹⁸ GTJ 27 Jun. 1873.

¹⁹ LV 106, Synodical Memoranda 1873, passim.

support poorer was established in 1873, it had never been practised by the congregation of the cathedral church. Assessed at the rate of £150 a year, since 1869 St George's had contributed less than £200 towards diocesan funds, and in the previous year the amount raised was eight pounds and ten shillings. A motion was put before the synod, expressing "regret and astonishment" that St George's had failed to raise its assessment "in so marked a manner." In the ensuing debate, charges of mismanagement of cathedral funds multiplied, and Archdeacon White pointed out that St George's was not the cathedral church of the diocese as of right : the honour could belong to any other church in Grahamstown. Dean Williams countered by arguing that neither St George's cathedral, Cape Town, nor St Mary's, Port Elizabeth, contributed to diocesan funds. This argument Merriman and Robert Mullins showed to be false in fact and inadequate as an excuse for St George's, Grahamstown. Williams also pointed to the extra expenses incurred by the maintenance of a high standard of cathedral worship, and called the resolution "a mere sentiment of censure calculated to embitter things." He complained that he had endured insult and indignity during the debate over which Merriman presided, "without rebuke or remonstrance from the chair." Williams was absent when the vote was taken, and R.W. Nelson, lay delegate for St George's, cast the only vote against the resolution. Williams and Nelson then withdrew from the synod, although the dean continued to serve on the committees to which he had been elected.²⁰ It is not surprising to find the Eastern Star criticising the synod for dealing with "personal and local matters" which created a "deeper and bitterer feeling of division and offence" than the previous synod. According to the Star, the aim of synods should be to engender "unity and good will."²¹

The 1873 synod had not chosen to discuss the question of finance out of a perverse wish to show the congregation of St George's in a poor light. If the church was to extend its work it had to find the means of raising funds to do so. The question was also related to the determination of leaders of the Church of the Province of South

²⁰ LV 106, Synodical Memoranda 1873, 28 Jun. 1873.

²¹ ES 4 Jul. 1873.

Africa to free the church from the impositions of establishment.

Government grants at the Cape were the legacy of a Batavian decree that the state ought to provide financially for the spiritual welfare of its subjects. Under British administration, the quasi-established Dutch Reformed Church continued to receive aid, and grants were made to other denominations, including the Roman Catholics, Wesleyans, and more obviously, the Church of England. After the midcentury however, while existing grants continued, no new grants were made available.²²

The Anglicans could see several objections to this system of official aid to religion. Firstly, colonial chaplains were appointed and paid by the government, and this gave them security of tenure, even when their actions amounted to violation of episcopal authority.²³ Secondly, there was no provision for redistribution of grants, either between denominations or within denominations. This meant, thirdly, that no aid was available for a new and struggling parish, while settled and wealthy centres, grown fat on government grants, did little to help their less fortunate brethren.²⁴ Implicit in the introduction of the weekly offertory in Anglican churches was acceptance of the voluntary principle, later expressed by synodical government.

Although voluntaryism had strong ecclesiastical implications, it was also an important political issue.²⁵ Schedule C of Ordinance 3 of 1852 set aside £16 000 for the expenses of public worship at the Cape. In 1849, the colony's budget had a deficit of £10 000 which had almost trebled by 1855.²⁶ Obviously, the abolition of ecclesiastical grants would reduce the deficit, yet it was not chiefly on an economic level that the debate on the Voluntary Bill was sustained. Saul

²²W.G.A. Mears, Government Contributions to the Salaries of Clergymen at the Cape 1806-1875, pp.1-17, discusses the history of state grants at the Cape.

²³The Copeman case illustrated this : see above, chapter three.

²⁴GTJ 9 Dec. 1874; W.E.G. Solomon, Saul Solomon, p.39.

²⁵W.E.G. Solomon, op.cit., p.43.

²⁶W.G.A. Mears, op.cit., p.15.

Solomon,²⁷ who first introduced the bill in the Cape Parliament in 1854, and who continued to argue the cause of voluntaryism until the bill passed into law in 1875, was himself a Congregationalist. He saw the issue at its broadest as a struggle for the freedom of the church from the state, a result which would benefit the church. To illustrate this, in his 1854 speech, Saul Solomon pointed to the fact that in one year, after the arrival of Robert Gray, the Anglican church had raised £5 000 from the weekly offertory.²⁸ The Voluntary Bill was unpopular, not only because it would legislate for the separation of church and state, but because it threatened existing property rights. Furthermore, Saul Solomon was an opponent of Cape separatism, an advocate of responsible government and a staunch defender of the rights of people of colour. Almost inevitably, men's response to his Voluntary Bill was affected by their attitude to his strong views on other leading issues debated in the Cape Parliament.

When Merriman became Bishop of Grahamstown in 1871, the battle for the Voluntary Bill was seventeen years old. The debates of the next four years, until the bill passed in 1875, were complex, as alternatives in the form of commutation schemes were put forward. Merriman himself accepted the voluntary principle as a desirable goal, and regarded the potential effect of the bill in areas such as Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth as salutary, but he realised also that its passage into law would result in dislocation in some of the rural districts of his diocese. Small and scattered congregations in outlying areas such as Graaff-Reinet and Fort Beaufort, were unable to raise a clergyman's stipend, and here the government's grants provided relief to already overtaxed diocesan funds. For this reason, Merriman tended to favour commutation, which softened the blow, rather than the Voluntary Bill itself, as a means of phasing out government grants.

Dean Williams, emerging as an advocate of the established church, opposed the abolition of government grants. He found it convenient to ignore the fact that at the Cape, it was not only the Anglican church which stood in this relationship with the administration.

²⁷His son, W.E.G. Solomon, in a biography of his father, Saul Solomon, discusses the struggle for the Voluntary Bill in detail, pp.34-47, 64-66, 173-179.

²⁸Ibid., p.38.

Williams could also argue that government appointment and payment of colonial chaplains gave them a security of tenure and independence of their bishop which approximated to the status enjoyed by a rector in the Church of England, once installed.²⁹ It is also not without significance that Dean Williams, as colonial chaplain of Grahamstown, received an annual income of £400 from the colonial treasury. Bishop Merriman remarked to John X. in 1878 that

...the putting forth of prophecies has a tendency to fulfil those same prophecies, a point which the Dean... was quick enough to see, and troublesome enough to keep insisting on when in any of our Diocesan Boards we any of us spoke as anticipating the withdrawal of Ecclesiastical Grants. He would never let anything of the kind be alluded to in our Reports, because "the prophecy would help to fulfil itself."³⁰

With the bishop and the senior priest of the diocese holding opposite points of view, debate in Grahamstown on the Voluntary Bill was predictably keen. The issue was not restricted to ecclesiastical circles but was discussed at length in the press. Grocott's Penny Mail was an ardent advocate of voluntaryism,³¹ the Journal, with its strong Wesleyan connections, was more non-committal,³² but not surprisingly, the Eastern Star opposed the measure. Williams's ecclesiastical reasons for rejecting the Voluntary Bill partly explain this, but there were other considerations. Saul Solomon's advocacy of responsible government and his opposition to separation were anathema to the Star, and Solomon owned the Cape Argus, with which the Eastern Star sparred editorially from time to time.³³

In 1871, diocesan finances were very badly hit by "so large a withdrawal of persons of all occupations to seek their fortunes at the Diamond fields,"³⁴ as Merriman rather formally put it. In the 1872

²⁹ See above, ch. 4, pp. 192, 197.

³⁰ MP 26-78, NJM to JXM, 21 Mar. 1878. Bishop Merriman was referring in the first instance to the war scare started in 1876 by the Eastern Star. See chapter six.

³¹ E.g., GPM 7 Jan. 1874, 9 Oct. 1874, 15 Jun. 1875.

³² GTJ 10 Jun. 1872.

³³ E.g., ES 27 Jan. 1874; W.E.G. Solomon, op.cit., pp.147-149.

³⁴ SPG mic., vol. D37, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 30 Jan. 1872.

parliamentary session, a commutation scheme was put forward which laid down that if within six months of the passing of both the Voluntary Bill and the scheme, two-thirds of the clergy of all denominations, of not more than average age, who received government grants, requested it, they would be paid twelve times their annual grant in a lump sum, the money to be administered by a body of commissioners representing their denomination, while other grantees would be subject to Saul Solomon's measure.³⁵ It was agreed in Anglican circles that if parliament accepted this commutation scheme, the bishop of the diocese would be a member of the board of trustees which would administer the lump sum.³⁶ In April 1872, in a letter to the Star, Dean Williams stated his conditional support for commutation. He insisted, however, that the sum for which state grants were commuted should be administered by the state and was not prepared to trust an ecclesiastical commission simply because the bishop was one of the trustees. Moreover, control of funds by a synod would, in his view, "tend to degrade the character and self-respect" of the clergy concerned.³⁷ As for the Voluntary Bill itself, the Star referred to it as a "Bill for the starvation of the Clergy" and a "backward step towards barbarism."³⁸ The Star attributed the support the bill received to the fact that parliament had nothing else to do and was bankrupt, and described William Porter and Saul Solomon, the chief advocates of voluntaryism, as "High Priests" of "grovelling materialism."³⁹ The Star itself went so far as to espouse the cause of more equitable distribution of ecclesiastical grants.⁴⁰ By June 1872, when parliament voted on the two schemes, the Eastern Star called commutation "the hollowest of hollow cries"⁴¹ and rejoiced at the rejection of the scheme and of the "mean and unworthy"⁴² Voluntary Bill.

³⁵ GTJ 3 Jun. 1872.

³⁶ ES 19 Apr. 1872.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ ES 21 May 1872.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ ES 11 Jun. 1872, 2 Jul. 1872, 17 Nov. 1874, 4 Dec. 1874.

⁴¹ ES 11 Jun. 1872.

⁴² ES 2 Jul. 1872.

It is not surprising, in the light of his family ties, that John X. Merriman voted for the commutation of ecclesiastical grants, but not the Voluntary Bill.⁴³

His father, the bishop, continued to exhort and encourage Anglicans towards the goal of financial self-sufficiency,⁴⁴ while the Eastern Star lauded government grants to religion as one of the colony's "most important social and moral Public Works."⁴⁵

Throughout 1874, the Eastern Star sustained its criticism of the "nasty, hissing, fizzing, red-hot, turbulent"⁴⁶ Voluntary Bill. Furthermore, it introduced a new element into the debate, inferring that the abolition of state aid to white parishes was but the thin end of the wedge, and that government support of the churches' educational work would be withdrawn in due course if the Voluntary Bill passed into law.⁴⁷ Proposals for commutation the Star called "crude, inconsistent and unstatesmanlike."⁴⁸ Given this attitude in the Star, Julia Merriman's hope that Williams would commute his place and quit his post seems a vain one, although "his departure would be worth any money to the church..."⁴⁹ Bishop Merriman's attitude also contrasted sharply with that of the Star. Although in August 1874 he noted with mingled relief and anxiety that the church had "just escaped for another year from the passing of a 'Voluntary Bill'," this was because "it is too plain that withdrawal would now stop a good deal of our work."⁵⁰ He nevertheless considered it "high time" that the church operated without government grants.

⁴³ P. Lewsen, John X. Merriman, p.23.

⁴⁴ SPG mic., vol. D37, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 14 Jan. 1873.

⁴⁵ ES 2 Sep. 1873.

⁴⁶ ES 14 May 1875.

⁴⁷ ES 16 Jan. 1874.

⁴⁸ ES 14 May 1875.

⁴⁹ MP 60-75, JM to JXM, nd.

⁵⁰ SPG mic., vol. D37, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 11 Aug. 1874.

During the second half of 1874, John X. Merriman drew up a commutation scheme,⁵¹ one of a variety put forward as the struggle for voluntaryism drew to a close.⁵² His father's views were gradually swinging in favour of acceptance of the Voluntary Bill in preference to a prolonged struggle over an alternative. He told John X. at the end of November 1874:

As to commutation, I should be glad to see any scheme if it passed - but I disbelieve its feasibility.⁵³

He had already written to the Church News, making it clear that he was "no new convert adopting fresh opinions", but stating, "long since matured convictions." Government grants had a "deadening effect" on church life, and he thought commutation would result in many clergy leaving their cures. Consequently, he would be glad to see the Voluntary Bill passed during the next parliamentary session. The letter ended:

I am well aware that in our revenues being cut off, we have yet a struggle before us, but it is time that Churchmen...raised their dormant energies to grapple with the very simple work of joint self-support that lies before them...⁵⁴

Merriman's letter to the Church News provided an opportunity for the Eastern Star to attack him. He was described as Saul Solomon's latest convert, and the Star alleged that in supporting the Voluntary Bill, Merriman had turned his back on the whole economy on which the Church of England was founded.⁵⁵

On 30 June 1875, the Voluntary Bill at last became law. Grocott's Penny Mail was jubilant, and full of praise for Saul Solomon.⁵⁶ It also praised John X. Merriman for his consistency and honesty as an

⁵¹MP 52-74, John Paterson to JXM, 13 Oct. 1874; MP 57-74, JM to JXM, 17 Nov. 1874; MP 58-74, NJM to JXM, 24 Nov. 1874; MP 76-74, Agnes Vincent to JXM nd; MP 87-74, Agnes Vincent to JXM, nd.

⁵²MP 58-74, NJM to JXM, 24 Nov. 1874.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴GTJ 9 Dec. 1874.

⁵⁵ES 11 Dec. 1874.

⁵⁶GPM 15 Jun. 1875.

opponent during the debates on the Voluntary Bill.⁵⁷ The Penny Mail acknowledged, without thanks, the assistance of Dean Williams and the Eastern Star who, by their "blind and selfish hatred"⁵⁸ of the principle, had disgusted the community with the effects of state aid, and forwarded the cause of voluntarism. According to Grocott's,

The rowdy and unprincipled blackguardism of the State aid champion in Grahamstown has done no end of good to the Voluntary cause. But in charity we are quite ready to believe he could not help it, personal interest prevented a calm advocacy, and blinded him to the fact that he was damaging his own party.⁵⁹

While it must be argued, in fairness to Dean Williams, that the writer of this piece was guilty of exaggeration and motivated at least in part by editorial rivalry, there is no doubt also an element of truth in what he suggests. Williams had an eloquent but extravagant pen, and unless cleared of authorship of the Star's editorials, he cannot be completely cleared of the Penny Mail's charges.

The Voluntary Bill passed into law as an act "To Amend Ordinance No.3, 1852, 'For Regulating in certain respects the Appropriation of the Revenue of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope by the Parliament thereof.'"⁶⁰ The provisions of this act were very moderate. Clergy who were paid a government grant would continue to receive this salary until they died or ceased to hold office. If a clergyman died or left office within five years of the enactment of the measure, his successor would continue to receive the government grant until the end of the five year period. If however, a clergyman in receipt of a government grant replaced an incumbent who had also received his income from the state, he would continue to be paid the government grant until he died or ceased to hold office. As late as 1900, in terms of Act 5 of 1875, the colonial treasury paid out £5 358 as government aid to religious organisations.⁶¹ The last clergyman to receive a government salary

⁵⁷GPM 4 Jun. 1875.

⁵⁸GPM 15 Jun. 1875.

⁵⁹GPM 27 Nov. 1874.

⁶⁰Act 5 of 1875.

⁶¹W.G.A. Mears, op.cit., p.20.

was the Rev. Abraham Faure of Stockenstrom who died in 1927, aged eighty. The longest surviving Anglican colonial chaplain was A.T. Wirgman who died in 1917.

Obviously, not all clergy could be expected to survive this length of time, and many areas would sooner or later be forced to depend on their own resources. Julia Merriman had scant sympathy for wealthy parishes in Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth, but the rural parishes of the diocese she knew would be hard pressed.⁶² In January 1876, Merriman told Bullock at the S.P.G. that the withdrawal of government aid would "pinch us for some time," but that in the long run, "self help is more valuable than Government aid,"⁶³ though the lesson was slowly learned.⁶⁴ At the end of Merriman's episcopate, the withdrawal of government grants was still teaching churchmen a "wholesome lesson,"⁶⁵ but apparently one very imperfectly learnt. There were many Karoo towns still without clergy and dependent on the "precarious Lay Readership,"⁶⁶ and the diocese as a whole was still dependent on the S.P.G., not only for aid to the missions, but for maintenance of work among white colonists.⁶⁷

When Williams withdrew from the 1873 synod, he made a statement in which he declared that

As far as I am concerned, it shall make no difference in my relations towards my Bishop or my brethren. These relations I hope may remain as before. It shall be my endeavour to carry out all the plans of the Synod as far as I am able, retaining the freedom of judgment to which I am entitled, and to yield a due canonical obedience in all things lawful, as I have ever done. ⁶⁸

⁶²MP 62-75, JM to JXM, nd.

⁶³SPG mic., vol. D44, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 10 Jan. 1876.

⁶⁴SPG mic., vol. D44, Grahamstown Diocese, NJM to WTB, 27 Nov. 1876.

⁶⁵SPG mic., vol. D50, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 22 Jan. 1879.

⁶⁶Ibid.; SPG mic., vol. D57, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 4 Jan. 1881.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸LV 106, Synodical Memoranda 1873, 28 Jun. 1873.

Despite this avowal, subsequent events suggest that from this time onwards, Williams set his course towards open disagreement with his bishop and defiance of synodical regulations, and used his claim to be defending the principles of the Church of England to justify his actions.

Twenty years earlier, Bishop Armstrong had been given a copy of Leonardo's "Virgin of the Rocks" for his cathedral, but the picture had never been hung in St George's. Merriman, who inherited the work, proposed to place it in the private chapel he was building at Bishopsbourne, until St George's vestry requested that the painting be used as the cathedral altarpiece. The original donor, Beresford Hope, was consulted, and expressed pleasure at the prospect of the gift being used to fulfil its original intention,⁶⁹ and Merriman willingly surrendered the painting to its "fitting destination." At the same time, he rebuked Williams for calling the exchange of correspondence about the painting a "vexed question." As Merriman told him, "I have never done any other than express the greatest readiness that the Picture should be removed."⁷⁰

A second incident shows Williams in an even more provocative mood. The Albany Brethren Benefit Society⁷¹ marked its anniversary each year with a service in St George's cathedral, among other festivities. Rev. George Thompson, chaplain to the society, died in 1874, and Merriman succeeded him in this honorary office, but as he would be away on visitation at the time of the annual service on 3 November 1874, he nominated L.S. Browne, headmaster of St Andrew's to preach in his place. Unfortunately, the bishop did not inform the dean of this arrangement, and this, together with the fact that Browne had been very critical of Williams at the 1873 synod, and reports that Merriman had suggested that the Albany Brethren hold their annual service in Christ Church, goaded the dean into writing a letter to the secretary of the society, in which he described Bishop Merriman as "your

⁶⁹ CVMB, vol.II, 10 Jul. 1873 - 23 Dec. 1873, pp.145-158.

⁷⁰ CVMB, vol.II, NJM to FHW, 29 Oct. 1873, pp.157-158.

⁷¹ Cory Library, PR 3531, J.M. Berning, The United Albany Brethren Benefit Society...a short history.

Chaplain," and announced that he would take the service himself. Merriman then wrote directly to Williams, explaining that he would be away. He hoped this would overcome the "difficulty" or "informality" to which Williams had taken exception. The dean replied, insisting that he would take the service himself if Merriman was not present, and asserting that his action was based on "grounds broader than any personal feeling." He did not at the time explain what these grounds were. The concluding paragraph of the letter reveals his capacity for verbosity, his love of public explanation and his want of proportion. Williams told Merriman, who had already made it plain that it would be most inconvenient for him to return to Grahamstown on 3 November:

Should it be the least inconvenient to you to be home...I should be most happy to provide for the service as I have done in former years in the absence of the Chaplain. I shall be still more pleased to see you there but only on the condition that it puts you to no inconvenience and I shall be glad to know as soon as possible which arrangement will be the more convenient of the two so as to make it known in good time lest any mistake... should oblige a public explanation of the position. ⁷²

The insolence and implied threat in this letter, as well as its complicated treatment of a very simple issue exasperated Merriman, who replied crisply, but pointedly:

As I presume your note is intended to convey a refusal to my request to allow my honorary named substitute to act for me...I shall return and take the duty myself. ⁷³

These two exchanges demonstrate the increasing animosity between Williams and Merriman, and suggest that Williams was no longer amenable to any authority but his own. His involvement in the plans to build a clock tower as part of the cathedral confirmed this impression: it was clear that Williams would not encourage the congregation of St George's to conform to synod regulations on diocesan finance.

The hideous appearance of St George's church, Grahamstown, which occupied a prominent position at the top of the High Street, made a forcible and usually unfavourable opinion on all who saw it. ⁷⁴ In

⁷²For correspondence relating to this controversy see CVMB, vol.II, pp.167-170.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴PBH, p.44.

1861, Prince Alfred, youngest son of Queen Victoria, laid the foundation stone of a new tower for the structure,⁷⁵ but no such improvement was raised to adorn the High Street and conceal the rest of the building from view.

In 1870, with the withdrawal of the troops and the consequent silencing of the military gun which had hitherto regulated Grahamstown's time, the need for a clock for the city became pressing, and despite its want of aesthetic appeal, the cathedral offered a convenient central site. It was decided in 1872 to place a town clock in the existing tower at the west end of St George's.⁷⁶

It is unfortunate that at this point, the relationship between the town clock and the cathedral tower was not clearly defined. There were those who saw the clock as a purely civic venture, but as the time-piece was to be part of the cathedral building, this position was illogical. Moreover, both Bishop Cotterill and Dean Williams hoped to raise funds to build a new cathedral.⁷⁷ It was natural therefore that dean and vestry should see the renovations needed to accommodate the town clock as a means of improving the appearance of St George's. Nor were they alone in this hope. A correspondent in the Grahamstown Journal in May 1872 suggested that the tower, once the clock was in place, should be painted a neutral shade, not the existing ochre, which made the "obtrusive building," if possible, even uglier.⁷⁸

To accommodate the clock, it was necessary to raise the height of the cathedral tower. It was decided to add a bell chamber, and to paint the finished structure grey.⁷⁹ The parts of the town clock arrived in August 1873,⁸⁰ and on 22 November the newly-installed clock

⁷⁵ GTJ 15 Aug. 1860.

⁷⁶ M. Gibbens, op.cit., pp.160-162; Cory Library, MS 14,803, J.M. Berning, Notes on the replacement of the old tower of St George's church, Grahamstown, and the construction of a new tower and spire, 1874-1879.

⁷⁷ CVMB, vol.II, 12 May 1868, p.75; GDA 1033, Copy of a resolution of the Select Vestry of St George's church, 28 Aug. 1868.

⁷⁸ GTJ 3 May 1872.

⁷⁹ GTJ 13 Sep. 1872, 2 Feb. 1873, 28 Mar. 1873, 18 Jun. 1873.

⁸⁰ GTJ 7 Jul. 1873.

began to strike the hours and to chime the quarter hours.⁸¹ The Journal noted with satisfaction that once the debt was paid, the clock would be

...handed over to the Corporation of the city in trust for the general benefit of the town... The clock tower too is certainly an improvement to the appearance of our main street.⁸²

Within a year however it was decided that this renovated structure was unsafe, and would have to be demolished.⁸³ By mid-December 1874, bells and clock had been removed, and a month later the structure was little more than head high.⁸⁴ On 16 December 1874, a public meeting was held to discuss the rebuilding of the tower.⁸⁵ A correspondent to the Journal complained that, while deliberations went on,

...our, at all times, conspicuously plain "Cathedral" exhibits the appearance of an unsightly ruin.⁸⁶

The rebuilding of the tower did nothing to clarify the status of the venture, which was variously known as the Cathedral Tower, the Clock Tower, or the Prince Alfred Tower. It was not clear whether it was a civic or an ecclesiastical project, or whether it could be solely one or the other. In the course of time it became clear that whatever the original intention, Dean Williams was determined that he would acquire control of the money raised and have chief say in the selection of the design, and that ultimately, the tower would be known as the Cathedral Tower.

Bishop Merriman, Dean Williams, other Anglican clergy in Grahams-town and the members of St George's vestry attended the initial public

⁸¹ GTJ 24 Nov. 1874.

⁸² GTJ 28 Nov. 1874.

⁸³ There was some dispute between the City Council and St George's vestry about the necessity of demolition. GTJ 2 Nov. 1874, 11 Dec. 1874; ES 3 Nov. 1874, 10 Nov. 1874, 11 Dec. 1874, 15 Dec. 1874, 18 Dec. 1874.

⁸⁴ Cory Library, MS 14,803, J.M. Berning, Notes....

⁸⁵ GTJ 18 Dec. 1874.

⁸⁶ GTJ 2 Aug. 1875.

meeting, but also present were the solicitor-general, and prominent Grahamstown Wesleyans, businessmen and civic leaders, such as Samuel Cawood, William Webb and George Wood, and two hundred others. Samuel Cawood proposed that the clock tower be erected on the foundation stone laid by Prince Alfred, and the motion was carried. Williams suggested a plan providing for a tower a hundred foot high, with a spire adding another eighty feet, which would cost £3 000. He promised to give between £100 and £300 towards the cost, "going in rags or living in a cottage if necessary to do so." Bishop Merriman spoke next. He regretted that he "could not feel any honest pride in looking at this Cathedral, which was just like an old barn." He pointed out that during the middle ages, a bishop was responsible for repairs to his cathedral. Ownership of St George's church was not, however, vested in the bishop of the see, and Merriman proposed that under these circumstances, the tower should be called the Prince Alfred Tower and that

...the sympathies of all parties and sections of the community be appealed to join in the above work.

The resolution was passed. Merriman's statement that he was willing to make a donation towards the cost of the tower, "though he was not going to make any loud noise or great promises at that meeting," met with applause. The meeting agreed that money raised for the tower should be administered by the Mayor and by the Civil Commissioner and not by the cathedral authorities.⁸⁷

Despite this decision, Williams was determined to establish himself as the prime mover in the construction of the tower. Within a month, more than £2 000 had been raised, £1 000 from St George's funds, and the rest in donations of £100 each, from, among others, Dean Williams, Samuel Cawood, George Wood, W.G. Atherstone, Messrs. Birch and Copeland, and "A Farmer."⁸⁸ In March 1875, Williams went to Port Elizabeth to raise money for the project. The Grahamstown Journal approved.⁸⁹ Bishop Merriman did not. His own attempt to establish a fund for theological training in south Africa had met with poor

⁸⁷ GTJ 18 Dec. 1874, contains a detailed report of this meeting.

⁸⁸ ES 9 Feb. 1875.

⁸⁹ GTJ 1 Mar. 1875.

response, and he wrote with some sorrow, but his usual honesty, to John X.:

I don't know whether the reputed Editor of the Eastern Star is thought much of at Capetown but he seems to have been in high feather at Port Elizabeth - and has had a good deal of money poured into his coffers in a week - for the Cathedral Tower - than I have been able to gather in 6 months towards the establishment of a Theological Tutor. Out of 60 circulars about 7 replies have come. The Governor very kindly one of the 7. But while I have scraped together £395 for a great spiritual work, the Dean has gathered between £4 & 5000 for the material fabric of the Cathedral Tower. So it is no use saying he is not popular and has no influence. He has a great deal. I think he talks of visiting Cape Town on the same errand. And I wish him God speed! - for if people won't give their money for spiritual objects, they may as well pay for something visible. Though I should have thought £4000 was enough for a Tower for our High Street. ⁹⁰

It was decided to build the tower according to Sir Giles Gilbert Scott's design for a restructured cathedral. ⁹¹ The plans were received early in August 1875, and the Star editorial claimed that the tower, when complete, would be "the only real architectural work of High Art in the Gothic Style in South Africa." ⁹² By November 1875, demolition work on what remained of the old tower had commenced. ⁹³ The Journal published a letter from "A Word of Caution," in which the correspondent suggested that Williams was not to be trusted, and that he would use the tower for his own ends:

However clever, good, and even holy a person the Dean may be, there are people (strange as it may appear) who have not the most implicit confidence in a committee of which he is a member. Whether this arises without reason, or from a stupid and wrong impression of him... matters not, but such a feeling does appear to exist, and that feeling should not be lost sight of in public matters of this kind. ⁹⁴

⁹⁰MP 10-75, NJM to JXM, 15 Mar. 1875; ES 12 Mar. 1875.

⁹¹Cory Library, MS 14,803, J.M. Berning, Notes....

⁹²ES 6 Aug. 1875.

⁹³ES 12 Nov. 1875, 16 Nov. 1875.

⁹⁴GTJ 17 Nov. 1875.

"A Word of Caution" complained that the Eastern Star referred to the clock tower as the Cathedral Tower when it had been agreed to call it the Prince Alfred Tower. He saw the phraseology as the thin end of the wedge in a deeply-laid scheme devised by Williams to rebuild the cathedral with public money.⁹⁵

These predictions seemed fulfilled by Williams's action over the foundation stone of the tower in January 1876. During January and February 1876, Merriman was in Cape Town, attending the second Provincial Synod. Before his departure, Merriman made it clear to William Gilbert, who was in charge of building operations, that if another foundation stone was laid, or if the name of the tower was changed, he would call a public meeting to repudiate the action.⁹⁶ The bishop subsequently signed a document which was to be added to that placed in the foundation stone in 1860. It read:

This Record is to Certify
That the tower, known as the Alfred Tower...whose corner
stone was laid August 9, 1860...was not carried out by
the promoters. The present Record is therefore inserted
to testify that the Old Tower of St George's Church...
was taken down...Whereupon it was resolved to build a
new Tower as the commencement of a new Cathedral after
designs gratuitously furnished by Sir Gilbert Scott,
Bart., R.A.⁹⁷

The document was also signed by Williams, Archdeacon White, by the churchwardens and members of St George's vestry, and by members of the building committee. On 13 January 1876, after a service in St George's, Williams conducted a ceremony in the presence of the churchwardens in which the document placed in the foundation stone in 1860 was removed and replaced by a copy of the document quoted above. It rained heavily, and few members of the public attended this ceremony, but according to the Eastern Star, "the result promises to be a more solid one than came of the sham ceremonial of 1860."⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ GTJ 28 Jan. 1876, 2 Feb. 1876.

⁹⁷ GTJ 24 Jan. 1876.

⁹⁸ ES 21 Jan. 1876, quoted in GTJ 24 Jan. 1876.

The removal of the original document which associated the name of Prince Alfred and the tower, the Grahamstown Journal described as an insult to the Queen.⁹⁹ The act was clearly part of Williams's determination that the new tower should become known as the Cathedral Tower.¹⁰⁰ More seriously, Williams's action was contrary to the spirit of the bishop's instructions. The dean did not deny that Merriman had forbidden interference with the 1860 document, and had insisted that the name, Prince Alfred Tower, be retained. He argued instead that these instructions had been given before Merriman signed the document which was placed in the stone, the bishop's signature indicating that he had changed his mind.¹⁰¹ Williams came under fire because he ignored the executive committee which raised money for the tower. To this criticism also, Williams had a reply ready. He argued that the land on which the tower was to be built belonged to the cathedral, not to the executive committee.¹⁰²

The tower controversy was reported and discussed in detail in the Grahamstown press.¹⁰³ While the Eastern Star applauded Williams, Grocott's Penny Mail deplored his "hole and corner"¹⁰⁴ proceedings, and the Journal wondered why the cunning, secrecy and trickery Williams had employed were necessary if his proceedings were, as he claimed, all above board.¹⁰⁵

Of the dean's activities while he was in Cape Town, Merriman wrote:

My sheep here want a whip in one hand and a crook
in the other. Our Tower complaints are dying out. Yes!
Madame de Stael was right, the 3 things that carry all

⁹⁹GTJ 21 Jan. 1876.

¹⁰⁰GTJ 24 Jan. 1876.

¹⁰¹GTJ 2 Feb. 1876, 27 Feb. 1876.

¹⁰²GTJ 28 Jan. 1876.

¹⁰³GTJ 26 Jan. 1876, 28 Jan. 1876, 31 Jan. 1876, 23 Feb. 1876;
GPM 8 Feb. 1876; ES 22 Feb. 1876.

¹⁰⁴GPM 21 Jan. 1876.

¹⁰⁵GTJ 28 Jan. 1876.

before them are Impudence Impudence Impudence. Prince Alfred would not be flattered to hear his doings mocked at. Nevertheless the Tower grows, and I really have no tangible ground of complaint except that the Dean is reported to have said his prayers once too often - and I am afraid if he did so nobody heard him. It would be a queer thing to haul a man over the coals for - that on a certain wet morning by himself or with 2 others he said an extra prayer and then bragged of it after. ¹⁰⁶

Merriman realised the wisdom of letting the issue die down, and told West Jones:

So you may be sure I don't wilt under this, though some angry zealots want me to "take action" as they are pleased to call it. ¹⁰⁷

Effectively, and apparently to his own satisfaction, Williams had staged a well-managed coup, giving cathedral personalities control of the tower. ¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, he kept alive the idea that the tower was a public building and contributions towards its construction continued to come in from all sections of the community. ¹⁰⁹ The Eastern Star

¹⁰⁶ GDA 233, NJM to WWJ, 6 Apr. 1876.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Williams's achievement is recorded on his tombstone, the inscription on which reads:

Erected by his only son as a tribute of love for a father whose life, beset by many trials, spent in his Master's service, was laid down in the defence of the doctrines and liberties of the Church of England in this Colony. And whose distinguished virtues won the esteem of a wide circle of friends. To his exertions this diocese is indebted for the Cathedral Tower, Clock and Bells.

The texts engraved on the tombstone are Luke 6.22 and II Timothy 4.7-8. The cathedral was rebuilt as Williams might have wished, to the designs of Sir G.G. Scott and his son, John Oldrid Scott. Of the original building, dating back to the period 1824-1830, only the south wall remains. The chancel was added in 1893, the nave was rebuilt in 1912, and the Lady Chapel added in 1952. J.M. Berning, "Cathedral of St Michael and St George," Grahamstown Historical Society Annals, vol.II, no.4, pp.9-12.

¹⁰⁹ ES 5 Jan. 1875, 6 Jul. 1875, 5 Jun. 1877, 2 Nov. 1877; GTJ 22 Feb. 1878.

went as far as to assert that the tower would be "as much the property of every section of the community as St Paul's is of every citizen of London."¹¹⁰ By mid-1879, the tower was complete, the clock and bells were in place, and the west doors were opened for use. In September 1879, the city clock once more marked Grahamstown time.¹¹¹

Merriman had refused to be drawn into the controversy over the tower, but Williams and the Eastern Star managed to provoke two court cases related to the issue involving less wary citizens. Charles Hugh Huntley, Civil Commissioner and Resident Magistrate for Grahamstown had been a member of the tower executive committee, and had resigned in protest against what he regarded as Williams's shady dealings. As if in retaliation, the Eastern Star ran a campaign to discredit Huntley, who was Merriman's friend, and who had long worshipped and served as churchwarden at St Bartholomew's.¹¹² The Star alleged that an unlicensed canteen operated on Huntley's farm : the Resident Magistrate thereupon subpoenaed Thomas Sheffield to appear in his court. Sheffield refused to divulge the names of the editor of the Star or of the author of the offending paragraph, although Sheffield admitted that he was responsible for printing the Star. He also acknowledged that there was no canteen on Huntley's property, and his legal representative said Sheffield would apologise in a paragraph inserted in the Eastern Star. Huntley was satisfied, until the paragraph appeared. Sheffield stated:

I had nothing to apologise to Mr Huntley for. I consider his course of procedure...to have been illegal, and his attempt to make the occasion one for obtaining information as to the personality of the editor of the Star and to exert an admission as to who was the writer of the paragraph in question to have been most unwarrantable. An apology was rather due from him to me.¹¹³

The Star's refusal to divulge the identity of its editor was another element in the rivalry between the two Grahamstown newspapers. The

¹¹⁰ ES 19 Nov. 1875.

¹¹¹ Cory Library, MS 14,803, J.M. Berning, Notes....

¹¹² GTJ 5 Mar. 1876.

¹¹³ GTJ 21 Apr. 1876.

Journal announced on 3 April 1876 that Alfred Geary had been appointed editor of the paper, a pointed comment on the Star's silence on a similar issue.¹¹⁴

After the publication of Sheffield's paragraph, C.H. Huntley saw the wisdom of forbearance, but according to the Journal, the Star had not yet done its worst. On 2 May 1876, the Eastern Star triumphantly reported that the original paragraph to which Huntley had taken exception was true. It was certainly true that in his capacity as Resident Magistrate Huntley fined a man ten pounds for selling liquor on his farm without a licence,¹¹⁵ but the Journal pointed out that the event for which the canteen keeper was fined occurred after the original report had appeared in the Star.¹¹⁶

A second court case arose out of the tower controversy. William Webb was sued for libel by Dean Williams for calling him a liar. In return, William Webb claimed that Williams had assured him that the tower foundation stone had not been removed at a time when the dean was well aware that the stone had been tampered with. The dean claimed £1 000 damages.¹¹⁷ Julia Merriman had hopes of the trial, although she was aware of the astuteness of the dean:

...oh! the guile of that man! He is truly a child of the Old Serpent and manages to elude a grasp. Whether the trial close at hand will nobble him remains to be seen. 118

She hoped that if Williams proved a liar and a scoundrel,

...Govt. would think it time to remove him from a post which affords such opportunity of mischief to say nothing of such waste of public money. 119

The case was heard on 7 June 1876, and although the judges pointed out that the circumstances which had given rise to the complaint were

¹¹⁴ GTJ 3 Apr. 1876.

¹¹⁵ GTJ 22 May 1876.

¹¹⁶ GTJ 26 May 1876.

¹¹⁷ GTJ 21 Feb. 1876.

¹¹⁸ MP 28-76, JM to AM, nd.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

"trifling," and described the affair as a "storm in a teapot," Williams was awarded damages of £100.¹²⁰ Filled with indignation, Julia Merriman remarked to Agnes that "the Plaintiff has no fear of an oath," and added,

...Fancy the Dean coming off apparently victorious! not really so, even though no appeal is made and he pockets 100£, for the trial was damaging to what little character he had... 121

It could be argued that by failing to make a stand on the tower issue, and to challenge Williams's interference with the foundation stone as he had threatened, Merriman had displayed a weakness and irresolution of which Williams would not be slow to take advantage. There is, however, another explanation for Merriman's willingness to let the issue pass. He was aware that another trial of strength between himself and Williams was approaching, and that this contest would focus immediately on the issue close to his heart, the constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa as drawn up in 1871 and ratified in 1876. Before the battle proper commenced however, there was a preliminary skirmish, over the seemingly innocuous question of hymns.

Although the history of vernacular hymns in England dates back to Caedmon, it was only after the Methodists had popularised the practice of hymn-singing that it was adopted by the Church of England. First taken up by the Evangelicals, the leaders of the Oxford Movement also encouraged the use of hymns. Besides original compositions, notably by Newman and Keble, the Tractarians used translations of medieval hymns which emphasised the antiquity and catholicity of the church. By the mid-nineteenth century, the practice of hymn-singing was established in the Church of England. In 1805, the legality of the use of hymns was challenged by the congregation of St Paul's, Sheffield. In 1820, the Archbishop of York, Vernon Harcourt, sanctioned the use of hymns in his province. In 1870, E.W. Benson, then Archbishop

¹²⁰ GTJ 9 Jun. 1876.

¹²¹ MP 82-78, JM to AM, 8 Jun. 1876.

of Canterbury, stated that the use of hymns was acceptable if they did not interrupt the service, basing his decision on Edward VI's first Act of Uniformity.¹²²

In line with the south African church's emphasis on episcopal authority, one of the canons drawn up in 1870 and ratified in 1876 decreed that

No Hymn or collection of Hymns shall be hereafter introduced into the Public Services of any congregation of this Province without the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese. ¹²³

Acting on this canon, Bishop Merriman wrote to C.H.L. Packman, rector of St Bartholomew's, on 24 April 1876, objecting to the words of a hymn which had been used in the church.¹²⁴ The hymn was by F.W. Faber, a convert to Rome in 1845, and Merriman took particular exception to the third verse, which ran:

Faith of our Fathers, Faith and prayer
Shall win our country back to thee:
And through the truth that comes from God,
England shall then indeed be free. ¹²⁵

Merriman acknowledged that it was impossible to tell what meaning those singing the hymn had attached to the words, but he considered

...such language and such aspirations liable to an interpretation...highly qualified to bring a very undeserved reproach upon our honour and consistency. ¹²⁶

¹²² ODCC, pp.681-682.

¹²³ Constitution and Canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa, as revised, amended, and confirmed by the Provincial Synod held at Capetown, A.D. 1876, Canon 15, Of the Services of the Church, section 3.

¹²⁴ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to C.A.L. Packman, 24 Apr.1876.

¹²⁵ The hymn is quoted in full in ES 12 May 1876. F.W. Faber (1814-1863), was born at Calverley in the West Riding of Yorkshire and educated at Shrewsbury and Harrow, and at Balliol and University Colleges, Oxford, where he came under Newman's influence. He was ordained priest in 1839. After his conversion, he was ordained priest in 1848 and joined the Oratory of St Philip Neri, of which he became London head in 1849. ODCC, p.496.

¹²⁶ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to C.H.L. Packman, 24 Apr. 1876.

He requested Packman not to use the hymn again and to obtain the bishop's approval before he introduced any other hymns. Merriman was obviously concerned about the doctrine taught in the churches of the diocese. Nevertheless, the words of the hymn were ambiguous and the letter was ill-timed. He was aware that Packman was a supporter of Williams, having complained to John X. in 1874 that the dean had "won over that old Hedgehog Packman."¹²⁷ Moreover, Williams was in a particularly touchy and dangerous mood. The clergy of the diocese of Grahamstown had not elected him as one of their representatives to the 1876 Provincial Synod, a clear vote of no-confidence and a blow to his pride. Nor can his own conscience on the question of the music used in St George's have been altogether easy. Although a decade earlier Williams had set out to raise the quality of cathedral worship, in 1876 Merriman described the services in St George's as characterised by "unbounded license":

...I know a Cathedral where publick singers, Christy Minstrels or other, are habitually invited, and advertised by Placards, whenever they visit the city, to give attention to the Service.

On one recent occasion Eve's lament to her flowers on leaving Paradise - (from Paradise Lost) was sung as an anthem... The American Christy Minstrels of course did not sing with blackened faces. ¹²⁸

Packman did not reply to the bishop's note. Instead, press coverage of the case commenced. Julia Merriman described it with her usual vigour:

The long tirade in the E. Star was the first intimation (more than a fortnight after Father's note was sent to Mr Packman) that it had been rec^d. The next issue contained the Hy. accompanied by a hypocritical, unctuous wonderment how any one cd. see aught wrong in it. Father then desired Mr Mullins to send the note for publication in the E. Star and P. Mail. This act has made Decanus rage more furiously, as it shows the real state of the case, and was followed by another long leader on the "Liberty of the Church" full of specious reasoning, an oz. of falsehood to a barleycorn of truth, and a most insolent attack on Father from the Pulpit last Sunday morning... ¹²⁹

¹²⁷ MP 63-74, NJM to JXM, 29 Dec. 1874; GTJ 15 Oct. 1875.

¹²⁸ GDA 242, NJM to WWJ, 11 Oct. 1876; GTJ 22 Oct. 1873.

¹²⁹ MP 28-76, JM to AM, nd.

The Star leader of which Mrs Merriman complained, stated:

We trust the Canon of the Provincial Synod, so called, will be resolutely resisted as an...illegal tyranny... an impudent attempt to substitute a capricious despotism for the old law of the Church of England. ¹³⁰

The Star argued that in terms of the Act of Uniformity Amendment Act of 1873, hymns could be freely used in the Church of England. ¹³¹

Julia Merriman gave scant credit to this argument:

The Dean's aim is complete lawlessness, but by proclaiming his attachment to the "Ch. of Engl." he gains a hearing, though he flies in the face of Prayer Book law...and ignores that of the Privy Council. ¹³²

The Eastern Star insisted that liberty of speech, of thought and of publication was at stake, and that Merriman's exercise of episcopal authority would turn clerical life into a round of "lifeless, tasteless, mindless duties," performed by "a set of blocks." ¹³³

Nevertheless, the Star urged that "the most temperate spirit should be shown." ¹³⁴ Arguments like this provoked Julia Merriman into describing the Star's caption, when it published the hymn, as "hypocritical" and "unctuous," although in fact it was relatively innocuous:

To those who view the "Faith of our Fathers" referred to in it as the faith taught by the Apostles and delivered by them to the early Fathers of the Church previous to any errors that crept into it in subsequent centuries - the view, we should imagine, that all men not influenced by some very strong feelings would take - the inhibition of this hymn is unaccountable. ¹³⁵

Grocott's Penny Mail saw no objections to Merriman's inhibition of the hymn : it was the duty of a bishop to ensure purity of doctrine. ¹³⁶

¹³⁰ ES 9 May 1876.

¹³¹ ES 30 May 1876.

¹³² MP 28-76, JM to AM, nd.

¹³³ ES 19 May 1876.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ ES 12 May 1876.

¹³⁶ GPM 16 May 1876.

The Journal published correspondence from "A Broad Churchman"¹³⁷ and "A member of the Church of England,"¹³⁸ which criticised the Star's defence of the hymn, and also printed a series of learned articles by Archdeacon White, that questioned the integrity of Williams's attitude to the 1870 Canons and refuted the Star's assertion that a bishop had no right to control the use of hymns in his diocese.¹³⁹ To this the Star's response was:

We can only say that the Archdeacon's history is equal to his law, his law is equal to his logic, and any of the three ought to "pluck" a senior Freshman, much more a candidate for Orders. ¹⁴⁰

Merriman took no direct action against Williams, but left the issue of the rebellious dean to be discussed at diocesan synod. He certainly did not regret his action and to the metropolitan he suggested concerted action by the bishops of the province on the canon:

There was perhaps less of a danger when Hymn singing formed as it did 50 years ago a very subordinate place in the Service, but now, it is a great feature in almost all and the main feature in a good many churches. ¹⁴¹

This being the case, if Williams's view prevailed, a dangerous situation could arise:

...either Christy Minstrel songs...or Colenso's Hymn Book, from which I understand that every address to our Blessed Lord is carefully expunged may according to the theory set up (i.e. if the Bishop has no power of interference) be sung in that or any other Church. ¹⁴²

There is an echo of Robert Gray's attention to detail in Merriman's proposal to West Jones:

Now looking what Hymnology has done, both for good and for evil, for Heresy and Orthodoxy, and looking at the strides being made towards an intellectual

¹³⁷ GTJ 24 May 1876.

¹³⁸ GTJ 15 May 1876.

¹³⁹ GTJ 2 Jun. 1876, 16 Jun. 1876.

¹⁴⁰ ES 6 Jun. 1876.

¹⁴¹ GDA 242, NJM to WWJ, 11 Oct. 1876.

¹⁴² Ibid.

infidelity, and towards an unsettlement of men's faith, I cannot but think that this power which our Canon imparts, should be claimed by the whole Episcopate, or else we stand in a very invidious position. ¹⁴³

Merriman also proposed to raise the issue at the second Lambeth Conference,¹⁴⁴ but in reality the danger was not as widespread as the dispute in his own diocese led him to imagine. Nevertheless, he was correct in perceiving that the issue at stake was the question of where authority in the church lay.

This quarrel with Packman was merely a symptom of the more serious difference of opinion between Merriman and Williams. Late in 1875, Williams used a new psalter in St George's without consulting Merriman. As had been the case with Packman, the bishop insisted on his right to be consulted before such a step was taken. Williams denied this right. Moreover, Merriman's intervention moved him to set out fully to the bishop his own view of his powers and privileges as Dean of Grahams-town. Williams described his own position as equivalent to that enjoyed by the Deans of London, Westminster and Manchester, all royal appointees. This claim about his own status affected his control over the cathedral, and Merriman's own rights therein, and he told the bishop

...I think to make the rule practically a rigid one that no one else should preach when the Bishop is present is not a healthy practice.

Williams's justification for this statement was that the practice was not known in England.¹⁴⁵

Although the dean claimed to be acting on the basis of practice in the Church of England, Julia Merriman accounted for his action on grounds other than principle. Ever since the 1873 synod, Merriman's

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ GDA 292, N.J. Merriman, Statement of my relation to the so-called Pan Anglican Synod, 1878.

¹⁴⁵ ES 4 Feb. 1876, quoting FHW to NJM, 28 Dec. 1875.

relationship with Williams had deteriorated, but the bishop had continued to attend and participate in St George's,

...for in spite of the Dean's vile doings F.[ather] will not turn his back on the congregation, indeed the Decanal exasperation proceeds I believe from the same cause which heightened that of Daniel's enemies viz. that "they cd. find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful." 146

Merriman recognised that the dean's claims, whatever their origin and motive, had to be taken seriously. On 30 December 1875, Merriman replied to the dean's letter. He argued that craving for English ecclesiastical law in the colony was "crying for the moon," pointed out that colonial deans and bishops were different from English deans and bishops, and expressed his confidence that the moral weight of synods would be proved in time.¹⁴⁷ Williams replied the same day. He disputed all that Merriman had said, insinuated that the Church of the Province of South Africa had disowned English ecclesiastical law, and insisted that the relationship between English bishops and deans and between their colonial counterparts was the same.¹⁴⁸ The fundamental difference of opinion between dean and bishop had been openly stated. Merriman stood by the Constitution and Canons of 1870, based on English ecclesiastical law which the civil courts had declared to have no force outside England, but which the south African church had adapted for her own needs. Williams on the other hand, insisted on the application of the law of the established Church of England.

Williams added further insult by allowing this private correspondence with Merriman to be published in the Eastern Star without the bishop's consent.¹⁴⁹ Williams's association with the Eastern Star, and the fact that the nature of this association was kept secret, added to public interest in and speculation about the issue, especially as almost from its inception, the Star was critical of the synodical form of church government espoused by Merriman and the Church of the

¹⁴⁶ MP 64-74, JM to JXM, 28 Dec. 1874.

¹⁴⁷ ES 8 Feb. 1876.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ GDA 241, NJM to WWJ, 9 Sep. 1876.

Province of South Africa. The publication of the correspondence with Merriman was thus only another stage in the sustained attack by the Eastern Star on the constitution of the south African province.

In January 1872, shortly after Williams had presided over Merriman's election as Bishop of Grahamstown, the Star carried an article which emphasised the importance of unity between the Church of England and the Church of the Province of South Africa, spoke of the existing union as "capricious" and called the existing means of choosing south African bishops "novel and artificial." The Star warned:

Nowhere are Bishops likely to be so weak and time-serving as where they are nominated by popular election in small and isolated communities... 150

Even more hurtfully, after the death of Robert Gray, the Star leader commented of his life's work:

There are many - and we confess to be amongst them - who feel that the present position of the Anglican Church in South Africa is not altogether satisfactory - is, in short, too much tending towards isolation from the great Church of England. 151

In his sermon in St George's, however, Dean Williams avoided any criticism of the work of Robert Gray.¹⁵² Nevertheless he stepped up the number of sermons he preached questioning synodical government and emphasising the importance of unity with the Church of England.¹⁵³ In similar vein, the Star expressed shock at the suggestion by the 1873 episcopal synod that Gray's successor as metropolitan should be called Archbishop of Cape Town, regarding it as further evidence of separation from the Church of England.¹⁵⁴ The 1873 diocesan synod again provided the Eastern Star with an opportunity to air its views. It complained that lay delegates were not truly representative of colonial laity,¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ ES 9 Jan. 1872.

¹⁵¹ ES 3 Sep. 1872.

¹⁵² ES 10 Sep. 1872.

¹⁵³ ES 1 Apr. 1873, 29 Apr. 1873.

¹⁵⁴ ES 2 May 1873.

¹⁵⁵ ES 10 Jun. 1873.

that synod members were told how to vote by the "pet Bishop in the chair,"¹⁵⁶ and worst of all, that synods had severed the colonial church from the Church of England "legally, canonically, organically and in...usages, habits and character..."¹⁵⁷ The Eastern Star lauded the fact that the Church of England was administered by public law in open court, and not by "Bishops or capricious little Diocesan Assemblies," and Cotterill's episcopate was ludicrously described as a "reign of terror."¹⁵⁸ The Provincial Synod of 1870 had been "panic-stricken,"¹⁵⁹ and its provisions should be reversed, or the Church of the Province of South Africa would turn into an "unloved and unrespected abortion."¹⁶⁰

At intervals during the next two years, the Star repeated criticism in this vein,¹⁶¹ but from the end of 1876, its invective grew more strident and sustained. This may be explained by Williams's own hardening attitude, and particularly by the fact that he was not elected to attend the 1876 Provincial Synod. Denied this forum, he sought another outlet for his views, and at the same time, his non-election increased his resentment.

The Eastern Star called the method of electing lay representatives to the Provincial Synod "utterly and ludicrously unreal," and complained that the synod itself was "a body utterly unknown to law,"¹⁶² an "impotent assemblage representative of nothing but itself." There was cause for rejoicing however as, whatever "unmixed mischief" the 1876 Provincial Synod caused, it would not be repeated : "Synod mania" showed signs of dying out.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁶ES 6 Jun. 1873.

¹⁵⁷ES 10 Jun. 1873.

¹⁵⁸ES 25 Jul. 1873.

¹⁵⁹ES 3 Jun. 1873.

¹⁶⁰ES 25 Jul. 1873.

¹⁶¹E.g., ES 13 Feb. 1874, 29 Jun. 1875.

¹⁶²ES 4 Feb. 1876.

¹⁶³ES 8 Feb. 1876.

Press rivalry ensured that the Journal did not allow the Star assertions to pass without comment. Why, it enquired, if the dean was devoted to the Church of England, did he not obey the injunctions of the Prayer Book to say Morning and Evening Prayer in the cathedral, and why, contrary to an injunction to fast, did he attend a public dinner on a Friday in Ember week? The Journal also pointed out that in England, clergy were not allowed to trade, and yet Williams's name was closely linked with the Star.¹⁶⁴ The Journal doubted the sincerity of Williams's motives:

...it would seem that a clergyman may take office in a Colonial Diocese, raise a cry of the Prayer Book in danger, repudiate the authority of the Church Synods and ignore the obligation he entered into with his Bishop. We can conceive that there might be circumstances which would dispose a man to endeavour to shake off an authority which has power over him, in favour of one far distant which he knows to be powerless.¹⁶⁵

It is interesting in the light of Williams's love of litigation, and the determination he evinced to defend his good name in his suit against William Webb, that the dean did not bring a charge of libel against the editor of the Journal for thus maligning his character as a clergyman and a gentleman. There are two possible reasons for this. Either Williams was aware that the libel laws of the nineteenth century¹⁶⁶ could not sustain such a case, or he was reluctant for the exact nature of his association with the Eastern Star to be revealed in court.

Whatever its undesirable effect on Williams, the fact that he was not elected to attend the 1876 Provincial Synod made that assembly, which met in Cape Town from 25 January to 16 February 1876, a pleasant and relaxing experience for Merriman. At this synod, Merriman had the satisfaction of signing the Deed of Association of the Church of the Province, a copy of which was filed in the Deeds Registry Office of the colony, on behalf of the order of bishops.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ GTJ 21 Jan. 1876.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ For a contemporary libel case, see Regina versus Don, Report of the trial, with opinions of the press, 1885.

¹⁶⁷ UWL, AB1163, Minute Books of Provincial Synod, 1876, p.172.

He told West Jones after the synod, in a humorous letter full of literary allusions, that he had not realised that he had "such a sense of enjoyment left in me."¹⁶⁸

His buoyant mood left him, however, soon after his return to Grahamstown. The Star kept up its attack on synodical government, and on the south African bishops, whom it described as "little popes."¹⁶⁹ Distressing as this was, the knowledge of Williams's own adherence to these views was even more disturbing. Nor can Merriman have derived much comfort from attacks on the senior priest of his diocese in the Grahamstown Journal, which alluded to Williams's disgraceful behaviour, coarse language and hypocrisy.¹⁷⁰ The Argus was even more scathing, even allowing for political differences between itself and the Star. It described Williams and the Eastern Star as a "scandal" and a "disgrace," and the Star it called "the cesspool...of the colonial press."¹⁷¹

It had been clear to Merriman, ever since he received Williams's claim that the Dean of Grahamstown enjoyed equal status with the deans of London, Westminster and Manchester, that he would have to take some kind of action about the dean. The controversy and court cases of the first half of 1876 in which Williams was involved reinforced this resolve. Two courses of action seemed open to Merriman. Firstly, the bishop hoped that by reasonable discussion with senior clergymen in the diocesan chapter, agreement could be reached, and Williams persuaded to reaffirm his loyalty to the Church of the Province of South Africa and to behave in a more decorous manner. It was already clear, from the letters patent constituting the diocese of Grahamstown that the dean owed his status to the bishop. According to the letters patent, the Bishop of Grahamstown was given authority to constitute one or more dignitaries in his cathedral,

...provided always such Dignitaries...shall exercise such jurisdiction only as shall be committed to them

¹⁶⁸GDA 232, NJM to WWJ, 2 Mar. 1876.

¹⁶⁹ES 13 Jun. 1876.

¹⁷⁰GTJ 24 Mar. 1876, 29 May 1876, 12 June. 1876, 28 Jun. 1876.

¹⁷¹The Argus article is quoted in GTJ 9 Feb. 1876.

by the said Bishop and his successors...Provided always that the Dignitaries...aforesaid shall be subject and subordinate to the said Bishop of Grahamstown and his successors. 172

To ascertain the exact conditions under which Williams had become Dean of Grahamstown, Archdeacon White wrote to Bishop Cotterill in April 1876. White explained that it had been agreed at the 1876 Provincial Synod that a dean and chapter would only be considered duly constituted when constituted by deed of the bishop and governed by a body of statutes approved by him. Under these conditions, the Grahamstown chapter was not duly constituted unless Cotterill had constituted it by some formal but forgotten act.¹⁷³

Cotterill's reply confirmed Archdeacon White's impression that as Bishop of Grahamstown he had been very cautious and circumspect in the authority he bestowed on Williams:

I had suffered too much from the folly of his predecessor to give him any such powers as he claims. My experience of these two led me to a conclusion perhaps too hastily drawn though my own observation elsewhere confirmed it viz. that there was only one use of Colonial Deans and that was to try the temper of Bishops. 174

Of the status he himself had conferred on Williams, Cotterill wrote:

...he was instituted as Dean under the general condition of the rules made by the Diocesan Synod. There was no deed of constitution but there were canons appointed under a resolution of the Synod...I looked forward to the action of the Provincial Synod for a completion of the Cathedral System...The claims of Dean Williams to the status of an English Dean...are simply ridiculous. (What may be his legal rights as Colonial Chaplain I cannot say. The interpretation of every church question depending as it does at the Cape on the view taken of them by individual judges is very uncertain.) At all events whatever Ecclesiastical status he has he holds under the condition of obedience to the rules of the Synod...I have only my memory to trust to, but I feel sure that the Dean was simply instituted and I am

¹⁷² L.S. Browne, Abstract of the Proceedings of the Grahamstown Diocesan Synod 1876, p.36.

¹⁷³ GDA 1456, H.M. White to HC, 11 Apr. 1876.

¹⁷⁴ GDA 1456, HC to H.M. White, 20 May 1876.

persuaded that the rights of the Bishop to minister in the Cathedral were reserved in the Document. He was never installed.¹⁷⁵

This statement confirmed Merriman's impression of Williams's status, and formed the basis of his plan to bring Williams to heel through the chapter. Should this fail however, there was an alternative course.

With the agreement of synod, the government which paid Williams's salary as colonial chaplain could be asked to discipline its employee. The Copeman case had shown that this would not be easily achieved,¹⁷⁶ but these tactics were suggested as early as December 1874.

John X. was consulted about the best approach to government, and the church's case appeared strengthened by Williams's association with the Eastern Star.¹⁷⁷ Public servants could be disciplined for

Becoming editor of a newspaper, or taking any part in the management thereof. Speaking in public, or writing articles for newspapers, or other publications, on political subjects. Writing anonymous letters or articles, of any other but a purely scientific or literary character, in any public print. ¹⁷⁸

Possibly to test whether this regulation would apply to Dean Williams, Archdeacon White, who also received a salary from government, wrote to the Colonial Secretary in May 1876 to enquire whether the government would exercise control over him in the same way as it would

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. Institution is the term used to describe the admission of a new incumbent into the spiritual cure of the parish. Institution is performed by the bishop of the diocese and may take place anywhere. Induction occurs subsequently and admits the incumbent to the temporalities of his cure. Installation is the formal admission to a seat in a cathedral, symbolising admission to the chapter and the right to perform the duties and enjoy the privileges of office. In the case of canons appointed by the crown, installation is not strictly necessary. ODCC, pp.706-707.

¹⁷⁶ For the Copeman case, see above, ch.3.

¹⁷⁷ MP 64-74, JM to JXM, 29 Dec. 1874; MP 6-75, JM to JXM, nd; MP 28-76, JM to AM, nd.

¹⁷⁸ E.F. Kilpin, comp., The Cape of Good Hope Civil Service List 1885, p.76.

over other civil servants.¹⁷⁹ The question was referred to the attorney-general, whose opinion was not altogether encouraging. Although "strictly speaking," the archdeacon was a civil servant, the appointment was hardly of the same nature as that of other civil servants.¹⁸⁰

Although Merriman pinned his hopes on the first alternative, the attitude of Dean Williams and St George's congregation to the approaching synod indicated the nature of the resistance he would encounter. The Star alleged that Williams's predecessor, Dean Mee, had been "hobnailed out of the Diocese by unscrupulous and persistent clique persecution."¹⁸¹ The allusion indicates that Williams was aware of Cotterill's rejection of the authority claimed by Mee as Dean of Grahamstown, and was determined to stand his ground. A meeting of parishioners of St George's church met early in May 1876 to elect lay delegates to the diocesan synod which was to be held in Grahams-town in July. Instead, this meeting passed five lengthy resolutions, the verbosity of which suggested that they had been drawn up by the dean himself. The basic theme of all five resolutions was that the constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa tended to

...separate the Church in the Colony from an identity in law, discipline, and freedom with the Mother Church in England...in direct opposition to the strong feeling of the most loyal and liberal members of the English Church in South Africa, and ought to be earnestly resisted by all faithful members of that Church.¹⁸²

The resolutions also declared "with great regret and with all due personal respect,"¹⁸³ that Merriman was guilty of contravening the law and discipline of the Church of England, firstly by allowing services to be held at Christ Church,¹⁸⁴ and secondly, by his attempt

¹⁷⁹ Cape Archives, CO 1018, H.M. White to Colonial Secretary, 29 May 1876.

¹⁸⁰ Cape Archives, CO 1018, Note from the Attorney-General, 19 Jun. 1876.

¹⁸¹ ES 30 May 1876. See above, ch.4, pp.190-197.

¹⁸² ES 12 May 1876. See also CVMB, vol.II, p.196.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ See above, ch.4, pp.205-212.

to control the use of hymns in the parishes of his diocese. To show the weight of their disapproval of these alleged deviations from the pattern of the Church of England by the Church of the Province of South Africa, the parishioners declined to elect lay delegates to represent them at the synod.¹⁸⁵ This gesture was apparently based on principle, but there is another more mundane explanation for this gesture. It had been pointed out at the 1873 synod that parishes which failed to meet their diocesan assessment could be deprived of the right to lay representation at synod.¹⁸⁶ The financial returns for St George's in 1876 reveal that the income of the parish was devoted solely to parochial expenses, largely to the cost of the tower.¹⁸⁷ By sending no representatives to synod, St George's forestalled any attempt to exclude them from the assembly because of the congregation's failure to contribute to diocesan funds. Moreover, although the cathedral congregation elected no delegates, one of the churchwardens, R.W. Nelson, took his seat in synod as lay delegate for Port Alfred.¹⁸⁸

The meeting of St George's parishioners agreed that copies of their resolutions should be sent to Merriman and the press. These resolutions required an answer, and Merriman wrote to Dean Williams on 17 May 1876. He expressed surprise and regret at the resolutions, and left Williams in no doubt that he was aware that the dean had done a great deal to "misguide" the members of St George's congregation. He also objected to the fact that the resolutions had appeared in the Eastern Star before he had seen them himself. Of the fundamental issue at stake, Merriman wrote:

This Separation of the Cathedral...from the remainder of the Diocese is fraught with issues which it is very painful to me to contemplate. Nor do I think that the repudiation of the authority of your own Bishop or the refusal to send representatives to a Synod of which he is president in consequence of injunction given or services allowed elsewhere has a tendency to unite you and your congregation to the mother Church of England but entirely the reverse.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ ES 12 May 1876.

¹⁸⁶ LV 106, Synodical Memoranda 1873, 28 Jun. 1873.

¹⁸⁷ ES 10 Mar. 1876.

¹⁸⁸ L.S. Browne, op.cit., p.29.

¹⁸⁹ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to FHW, 17 May 1876.

The bishop asked Williams to summon the diocesan chapter to discuss the issues raised by the St George's resolutions, but the dean refused. Merriman then summoned the assembly himself, with Williams's concurrence.¹⁹⁰ He arranged that the diocesan chapter meeting would coincide with diocesan synod, which would bring the chapter members who lived outside Grahamstown to the city. The resolutions passed by St George's congregation were a blow to Merriman's hopes that the chapter would make Williams see reason and he looked forward to the synod with anxiety. He told West Jones:

It seems as if Satan was permitted to raise up troubles all at once from numerous quarters, nor do I at present see much of light through the darkness - save in the assurance that...the great Head of the Church will bring forth peace and order out of this confusion. ¹⁹¹

He was so afraid that the laity would be taken in by Williams's attack on synods "under the plea of English liberty,"

...that I dare not look for that rallying round the Bishop that I should certainly have expected half a dozen years since.

I seriously fear some of the worst effects of schism, and I seem at present powerless to do much more than witness against it, and that most feebly for my natural energy is much abated under the depressing attack in the head from which I am suffering. It is melancholy to think that all our divisions should thus be hauled before the public by a Diotrephes, who works in secret. I see no remedy but prayer and patience. I need much of both and I have a comfortable assurance that many are praying for me. ¹⁹²

The sixth session of the synod of the diocese of Grahamstown opened on 1 July 1876.¹⁹³ The bishop began his charge with an account

¹⁹⁰ L.S. Browne, op.cit., p.32.

¹⁹¹ GDA 235, NJM to WWJ, 15 Jun. 1876.

¹⁹² Ibid. Diotrephes is one who "likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge my authority. So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, prating against me with evil words. And not content with that, he refuses himself to welcome the brethren, and also stops those who want to welcome them and puts them out of the church." III John, vv.9-10.

¹⁹³ For a record, see LV 107, Synodical Memoranda 1876, and L.S. Browne, op.cit.

of the legal and constitutional history of the Church of the Province of South Africa, and its development as a voluntary association governed by diocesan and provincial synods. Its growth followed a pattern also adopted in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and along lines recommended by the bishops of the Anglican Communion at the 1867 Lambeth Conference. The first Provincial Synod had been held in 1870, and at the second in 1876, the constitution and canons had been ratified. English ecclesiastical law remained the guideline, but did not have the force of law at the Cape.¹⁹⁴ Without referring to any particular person by name, and regretting that his "advice and admonition" was at all necessary, Merriman warned:

...I am bound to proclaim to you that those who have either directly or indirectly given their assent to these rules framed for the common guidance and common welfare of all, stand plainly in the character of covenant-breakers, if they attempt of their own self-will to set them aside...¹⁹⁵

To those who passed "sentence of outlawry" on themselves, Merriman made no blustering threat:

...we must trust that length of time and more mature reflection will, by God's help, bring them to a better mind, while it will be the duty of the rest of our number to endeavour, ...by a loyal adherence to our joint compact, to neutralize such evils as others by their perverseness have caused...¹⁹⁶

Merriman then turned, with an expression of relief, to discuss details of diocesan administration. In another brief opening address to clergy and laity on 1 July 1876, Merriman referred again to "certain grave matters pertaining to the administration of the Diocese,"¹⁹⁷ by which he meant the dean's claims. He expressed the hope that they would not be brought before the synod, as he felt that the good result of a conclusion would not counterbalance the harm done by a public airing of the questions.

¹⁹⁴ N.J. Merriman, Charge of the Right Reverend the Bishop of Grahamstown, Delivered in the Cathedral Church of St George, Grahams-town, 29 June 1876, pp.4-10.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p.10.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p.11.

¹⁹⁷ L.S. Browne, op.cit., p.24.

The chapter meetings held in the early days of the synod proved to be a fiasco.¹⁹⁸ Merriman had summoned the chapter to discuss the drawing up of a deed of constitution for the body. This seemingly innocuous topic was rendered controversial by an item on the agenda which affected all the others. Merriman had asked the chapter

To consider and advise upon the claims set forth by the Dean in a correspondence between himself and the Bishop, and the validity of the grounds on which the Dean claims to be in the same position as a Dean in the Mother Church and to be absolved from observing the Canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa.¹⁹⁹

Thus plainly set out, the issue was explosive. Two chapter meetings, one lasting three hours and another two, were wasted in "fruitless debate." Archdeacon White proposed two resolutions arguing that the dean had no powers in the cathedral but those conferred on him by the bishop, and that the bishop had a right to officiate at cathedral services or to preach when he chose. On both occasions, Williams refused to put the resolutions to the chapter as he considered them a breach of privilege, although White suspected that if he had proposed "that the Dean's powers over the Cathedral are absolute," Williams would have had no hesitation in allowing discussion to proceed. As Williams took his stand on English law, White quoted an authority which showed that statutes of Henry VIII and Queen Anne prevented a dean from exercising any kind of veto over the chapter.²⁰⁰

The situation had apparently reached an impasse. The chapter clearly could not deal with Williams. On 3 July 1876, Williams prevented the threatened stalemate by raising in synod the issues which Merriman had clearly indicated that he preferred to be left to the chapter. The bishop realised that this question would now dominate the diocesan synod, and in tones of deep emotion, he read a

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., pp.25-36. The members of chapter present were the dean, Archdeacons Kitton and White, and Canons Steabler and Espin. Other chapter members at the time were the Rev. H.R. Woodrooffe, and the Rev. T. Henchman.

¹⁹⁹ L.S. Browne, op.cit., p.25.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p.28. The authorities quoted by White were Statutes 33, Henry VIII c.27, and 6 Anne c.21.

memorandum summarising the dispute he had hoped the chapter would resolve. Dean Williams, in various letters, had claimed to be in the same position as the deans of London, Westminster or Manchester, and to have the sole right of ordering services in the cathedral, so that bishop and canons required his permission before they could officiate. He also claimed to be free from observing the canons of the Church of the Province where they were not "in his opinion in exact accordance with English Statute Law." This applied particularly to the hymns used in the cathedral. To his objections to the activities of Dean Williams, Merriman added the fact the dean had allowed the congregation of St George's, "without any remonstrance," but with his "assumed concurrence," to cut themselves off from the rest of the diocese by refusing to elect lay delegates to synod. Williams's association with the Eastern Star formed the final item in Merriman's memorandum:

Abusive attacks upon Church authority as upheld amongst us, have been found continually recurring in a newspaper published in this city. Grave scandal to the Church is caused not only by the general belief that the Dean is editor or joint editor of this newspaper and author of these articles, but still more by the fact that he has never disavowed the connection almost universally imputed to him. ²⁰¹

The next day, with the permission of the synod, Williams replied to these charges. He stated first of all that he had never seen the memorandum which Merriman had read to the synod. This appears to have been the case, and as at least one of the other chapter members had read the memorandum,²⁰² it was a foolish mistake on Merriman's part, and one which gave Williams a tactical advantage. Nevertheless, Williams's claim that he had no idea of the contents of the memorandum or of the questions that would be raised at the chapter meeting²⁰³ is spurious. The contents of the memorandum summarise the contents of his own statements to Merriman, some of which subsequently appeared in the press, and the bishop had made his own views clear in his letter of 17 May,²⁰⁴ and by his request to the dean to summon a chapter

²⁰¹ Ibid., p.26.

²⁰² Ibid., p.27.

²⁰³ Ibid., pp.26-27.

²⁰⁴ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, NJM to FHW, 17 May 1876.

meeting, which Williams had refused.²⁰⁵ Moreover, the circular Merriman had sent to the clergy, summoning the chapter, had stated quite clearly that Williams's claim to enjoy the status of a dean in the Church of England and to be independent of the canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa, would be discussed.

Having established to his own satisfaction that by reading the memorandum to synod, Merriman had done him a great wrong, Williams went on to deal with each paragraph of the memorandum separately. He pointed out first of all that he made no mere claim about his position in the cathedral:

...that would imply a doubt in his own mind as to what was his position there - of which he never had the slightest doubt.²⁰⁶

Secondly, he denied that he had debarred canons from assisting at services in the cathedral, pointing out that on the previous Sunday, two canons had taken part in an ordination service there. This again was a half truth : he did not allude to the fact that he had prevented Archdeacon White, who was a canon, from preaching the sermon.²⁰⁷ Thirdly, he stated that he questioned the authority of the south African canons

...only when they conflicted with the common law of the Church of England. Otherwise he had advanced no "claim" to be free from their authority, nor did he intend to do so.²⁰⁸

To the charge that he had allowed his congregation to cut themselves off from the rest of the diocese, Williams replied that he attended parochial meetings "only by courtesy, and as a listener," adding that he had no power to make any remonstrance against the resolutions of such a meeting.²⁰⁹ His reply to the complaint about his involvement with the Eastern Star demonstrates his talent for avoiding a direct

²⁰⁵ L.S. Browne, op.cit., pp.26, 33-34.

²⁰⁶ ES 7 July. 1876.

²⁰⁷ GDA 241, NJM to WWJ, 19 Sep. 1876.

²⁰⁸ ES 7 July. 1876.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

answer and is a masterly piece of special pleading. Williams argued that,

...as Dean, he could take no responsibility as to the editorship of any newspaper, nor had he ever been asked one question as to the authorship of any article that had appeared in that paper. He again stated the surprise that he had felt on having so grave a document make a statement that assumed his connection with that newspaper. If any person would put his finger on any article that had appeared in that paper, and ask him as to the authorship of it, he would give a plain and straightforward answer. 210

Clearly the recalcitrant dean could only be dealt with by an appeal to the government; but the first major resolution passed by the 1876 synod was an expression of loyalty to Bishop Merriman. While it was discussed, Merriman left the synod chamber. Proposed by Arch-deacon White, the resolution expressed gratitude for the bishop's charge, in which the "principles of...allegiance to the Mother Church of England" were set out. The clergy in particular recorded "their recognition of the duty of loyal obedience to the Bishop," adding that they considered themselves fortunate to have as their bishop one who by "long experience" in southern Africa could "thoroughly sympathise with them in their trials." Merriman had "set an example of dutiful obedience to authority, combined with independence of thought," and could be relied on to "correct and punish...according to such authority as he has by God's Word and the laws of this Church," and not "by any exercise of arbitrary power."²¹¹ This resolution was adopted, and after a vote by orders it was also resolved that

...the Synod desires to express its thankfulness to Almighty God for the successful completion of the organization of the Church in South Africa by the Provincial Synod lately held in Cape Town, and its deep sense of the duty of all members of the Church...to uphold the Constitution of the Church...and to obey the Canons and Rules then and formerly enacted by the Authority of the Church of this Province. 212

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ L.S. Browne, op.cit., p.3.

²¹² Ibid.

Twenty-three clergy and seventeen lay delegates voted for this resolution. The three clergy who voted against it were C.F. Patten, missionary at St John the Baptist's, Bolotwa, who during the 1876 synod emerged as an ally of Dean Williams, and predictably, Williams himself and Packman of St Bartholomew's. Among the five laymen who opposed the resolution was R.W. Nelson, St George's churchwarden, and lay delegate for Port Alfred.²¹³

Merriman was still absent from the assembly, and Archdeacon Kitton continued to preside,²¹⁴ when a resolution critical of Williams was proposed by the lay secretary, Richard Tillard:

...the Clergy and Lay Delegates of the Diocese of Grahamstown, ...being of opinion that the notorious connection of Dr F.H. Williams, Dean and Colonial Chaplain of this city, with the Eastern Star newspaper, is a hindrance to Church work and an offence against good morals; and feeling further that owing to the said Dr F.H. Williams' position as a government officer, he is, to a certain extent beyond the control of Ecclesiastical authorities, do hereby resolve that the Government be requested to take such steps as may be necessary to cause the scandal to cease. And that the Archdeacons of the Diocese be requested to forward the resolution to Government, and to take any further action arising thereon.²¹⁵

Synod debate on all three of these resolutions was open to the public, and speeches were interrupted at intervals by "indecent and unseemly" noise²¹⁶ from that quarter. Debate on this third resolution was lengthy. In his own defence, Williams pointed out that A.P. Stanley, Dean of St Paul's, wrote for The Times. However, when asked to acknowledge that he had furnished material or written articles for the Eastern Star,

²¹³ Ibid., pp.5, 10, 29, 31.

²¹⁴ Manual of Instructions with reference to the Ordering and Regulation of Business in Synod, Diocese of Grahamstown, 1869, pp.5-6, 9-10.

²¹⁵ LV 107, Synodical Memoranda 1876, 4 Jul. 1876. Richard Tillard, an ironmonger who had premises first in High Street, and then Church Square, lived in Worcester Street, West Hill. He married Amy, daughter of William Ogilvie, in St Bartholomew's in 1872. Tillard was a member of the Grahamstown Volunteers, a Justice of the Peace, and a city councillor.

²¹⁶ LV 107, Synodical Memoranda 1876, 4 Jul. 1876; MP 65-75, JM to JXM, 1876.

Williams declined to answer. Dr Ross, headmaster of St Andrew's College closed the debate. Quoting from a letter from the Dean of Cape Town and citing certain articles in the Eastern Star, Ross provided proof that Williams had given information to the Eastern Star about a strictly private conversation with the Dean of Cape Town at which no third party was present. He also pointed out that there was no question of the synod condemning the dean : Williams was being given a fair chance to explain his actions to the government. In another vote by orders, twelve clergy and twelve laity voted for the motion, and seven members of each house voted against it. Eventually, at 11.30 pm on 4 July 1876, synod adjourned until the next day.²¹⁷

The controversy was not yet over. Routine administrative business of synod, the discussion of annual reports from diocesan boards dealing with finance, with education and with the sick and aged clergy fund, and the election of new members to these boards was on several occasions held up by questions relating to the person and claims of Dean Williams. An attempt was made on 6 July 1876 to rescind the resolution to complain to government about Williams, but feeling in synod had hardened, and while the initial resolution had been carried by twenty-four votes to fourteen, the move to withdraw it failed by nine votes to thirty-six.²¹⁸ Williams, Packman and R.W. Nelson also claimed that a young man had been rejected as a candidate for ordination for refusing to disavow authorship of an anonymous letter to the press questioning Merriman's action on the issue of the inhibited hymn. A motion expressing regret at this action was rejected, with Williams, Packman and R.W. Nelson forming a minority of three.²¹⁹ Another controversy threatened to erupt when C.F. Patten moved that the Provincial Canon on hymns gave bishops too much power and ought to be repealed. Canon Espin moved an amendment requesting Provincial Synod to consider the question at its next meeting. This amendment was put, carried, and then accepted as a substantive resolution.²²⁰ When Archdeacon White moved that a commission

²¹⁷ L.S. Browne, op.cit., pp.2-10.

²¹⁸ Ibid., pp.12-15.

²¹⁹ Ibid., pp.10, 13-14, 31.

²²⁰ Ibid., pp.19-20.

be appointed to investigate the desirability and means of promoting repeal of the church ordinances, Williams was loud in opposition. He argued among other things, that it was "another attempt to introduce politics into their Synod discussions," adding that the lay representatives of the parishes concerned were not present. This was not a wise argument. It was pointed out to him that the measure was in any case merely consult^{ry}, and moreover, that if the congregation of St George's was not represented, it was because the parishioners had disenfranchised themselves. The motion was carried.²²¹ To show that there was no ill feeling in synod towards the congregation of St George's, the resolution of the 1873 synod which had censured the congregation for their failure to pay their diocesan assessment was removed from the codified edition of the acts of synod.²²² Synod ended on 11 July 1876 with the Te Deum, and the Benediction pronounced by the bishop.

Synod proceedings provided lively copy for the Grahamstown press. The Eastern Star was scathing in its criticism, describing the assembly as "factious,"²²³ and equating its activities, which had been characterised by "personal malice" and "dread of a free press," with the inquisition.²²⁴ The Journal took the opposite point of view : it described the Eastern Star as a "low newspaper,"²²⁵ and expressed considerable sympathy for Bishop Merriman, as did Grocott's Penny Mail.²²⁶

The synodical criticism of his activities produced no noticeable improvement in Williams's conduct. He continued to enjoy the support of influential members of the cathedral congregation and was confirmed in his stand by a number of close friends who clustered around him.²²⁷

²²¹ Ibid., pp.21-22.

²²² LV 107, Synodical Memoranda 1876.

²²³ ES 11 Jul. 1876.

²²⁴ ES 7 Jul. 1876.

²²⁵ GTJ 5 Jul. 1876.

²²⁶ GTJ 14 Jul. 1876, 17 Jul. 1876, 21 Jul. 1876; GPM 18 Jul. 1876, 25 Jul. 1876.

²²⁷ GTJ 10 Jul. 1876, 17 Jul. 1876.

He clearly felt that his treatment by synod justified the text on which he based his sermon on 9 July: "And they cast him out of the synagogue."²²⁸

While Williams remained in rampant mood, the synod had drained Merriman's energies and left him feeling very depressed as well as suffering from influenza. He had exhausted the means of dealing with Williams and told West Jones:

I am so done up and my head is troubling me so much again that I hardly know how to carry on...²²⁹

He suggested to the metropolitan that T.E. Wilkinson, who had recently resigned as Bishop of Zululand, should come to Grahamstown as assistant bishop:²³⁰

I am sorely perplexed when I look forward to work to which I am not in any wise equal. The thought of resigning with all the existing difficulties at their height seems to me unworthy...the hand of God is sore upon me now and I am in my 68th year...the flesh is weak and the brain feeble.²³¹

After a letter from William West Jones, which he described as "a cordial," and after the passage of two weeks, Merriman's perspective changed, and he was able to discuss the results of synod more objectively. He recognised that good had come of the assembly as most clergy and laity had expressed their support for the constitution and canons. Moreover, the synod had demonstrated how little support Williams had. Merriman

²²⁸ GTJ 10 Jul. 1876.

²²⁹ GDA 236, NJM to WWJ, 12 Jul. 1876.

²³⁰ The Constitution and Canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa, as revised, amended and confirmed by the Provincial Synod, held at Cape Town A.D. 1876. Canon 6 provided for the election of coadjutor bishops who would automatically succeed as bishop of the diocese when the see became vacant. Although the 1873 episcopal synod had agreed in principle to the election of a coadjutor bishop for Grahamstown, it was not proposed that T.E. Wilkinson should occupy this position, but that he should assist Merriman in such duties as ordination, visitation and confirmation. On Bishop Wilkinson, see UWL, AB 867: Aa2.1, Aa5, Ab1.1, Ab1.2, Ab3.1, AB3.2, Ab3.4, Ab3.5, Ab3.7, Ab3.10.

²³¹ GDA 236, NJM to WWJ, 12 Jul. 1876.

was satisfied that no respectable leading Anglicans had taken part in a meeting to express sympathy for the dean:

...three Irishmen, a Roman Catholic Judge, a Fenian Innkeeper noted as an unbeliever, and the Irish Demagogue Nelson being the three leading figures in the piece. ²³²

Nevertheless, Williams had reduced the chapter to the level of "mere dummies," and reigned supreme at St George's, only allowing Merriman to minister with permission of the dean. The government had not appointed a committee to enquire into the dean's activities,²³³ and it would be useless to cite him before an ecclesiastical tribunal for a canonical offence such as neglect of duty. There was only one course of action open to Merriman:

...the only plan now is to let the Dean alone. He is master of the situation, and I at all events must bear it with meekness and resignation... ²³⁴

A month later, after a visitational tour which proved to Merriman that he could still ride "a good day's journey,"²³⁵ the bishop was reviewing this policy. On a diocesan level, he realised that there was little he could do, but Williams's claims about his power in the cathedral and on the chapter were very trying to Merriman, and he was practically forced to abandon the cathedral.²³⁶ Williams refused to co-operate in the drafting of proper statutes, and Merriman had little hope that the issue would be resolved during his own lifetime or tenure of the see.²³⁷

Merriman tried once more to come to terms with Williams. He "wrote and begged"²³⁸ the dean to meet the chapter members who lived in

²³²GDA 232, NJM to WWJ, 25 Jul. 1876; GTJ 10 Jul. 1876, 17 Jul. 1876; M. Gibbens, op.cit., p.320. See above, note 7.

²³³Cape Archives, CO 1018 H.M. White to Colonial Secretary, 5 Jul. 1876, minuted to the effect that the synod's request to the government would "receive consideration."

²³⁴Ibid.

²³⁵GDA 240, NJM to WWJ, 30 Aug. 1876.

²³⁶GDA 239, NJM to WWJ, 25 Aug. 1876.

²³⁷GDA 240, NJM to WWJ, 30 Aug. 1876.

²³⁸GDA 241, NJM to WWJ, 19 Sep. 1876.

Grahamstown and to draft a body of statutes which could then be discussed with other members of the chapter. At first Williams refused, but meetings along the lines suggested by Merriman were held on 23 September 1876 and on 7, 14 and 21 March 1877, to discuss cathedral statutes. The result of these meetings was inconclusive : the draft of the proposed statutes indicates that members of the chapter were unable to agree about the powers to be bestowed on the dean.²³⁹ Archdeacon White produced a learned pamphlet,²⁴⁰ partly in response to a resolution of Provincial Synod requesting advice on the constitution of capitular bodies,²⁴¹ but also to illustrate that Williams's claims could not be justified by appeal to English precedent and English ecclesiastical law. Williams remained unmoved, and Merriman stoically resolved:

...I see nothing for it but patience. Argument and remonstrance are lost upon him and he has a great Lay following at his back of those who care nothing for the Church but a convenient subject for an Irish row. 242

Silent endurance in the face of obvious wrong was not natural to Merriman, and the strain began to tell on his health to such an extent that in February 1877, he agreed to go to England,

By the urgent requirement of 2 Doctors, by the advice of my elder clergy, and the solicitations of my family, coupled with that of the Metropolitan...for the purpose of - alas! how impossible! - entire rest. I do so most reluctantly, but the Doctors threaten me that, unless I do, it will soon be too late. 243

²³⁹GDA 1068, J. Espin to NJM, 22 Mar. 1877, with draft statutes for the cathedral chapter.

²⁴⁰H.M. White, Memorandum submitted for consideration to the Dean and other members of the chapter of Grahamstown.

²⁴¹AB 1163, Provincial Synod Minute Books, 1876, p.

²⁴²GDA 241, NJM to WWJ, 19 Sep. 1876.

²⁴³SPG mic., Grahamstown diocese, vol. D46, NJM to WTB, 2 Feb.1877.

Merriman derived much strength and support from his home and family. The basis of this security was the quality of his marriage to Julia, who in 1874 told John X. and his new wife Agnes²⁴⁴ of her own happiness with Nathaniel James:

...how good God has been to us! How happy has been our lot! But you see dear Children the happiness was to be found in simple pleasures within the grasp of all, whilst allowances for human weaknesses were to be made (how tenderly he has borne with mine God only knows)...God grant that you may have as few trials and as much happiness. ²⁴⁵

The Merrimans' simple but generous way of life is illustrated by the way in which they chose to celebrate John X.'s marriage to Agnes Vincent. The bishop wrote:

...we kept you fully in remembrance yesterday, and instead of Telegraphing a parental Blessing and a sisterly Congratulation as we at first purposed, we devoted the money to Bunn-ing, Tea-ing and Meat-ing a few old women in the alms house, and the old patients in the Hospital...6 flags flying on the verandah, children to tea and games and snapdragon in the Evening completed our festivities. ²⁴⁶

Not usually given to sermonising, Merriman felt the occasion warranted a serious word to John and Agnes:

We trust to hear that all went off well with you and what is of more consequence, that you have begun your married life in happiness and enjoyment. May you continue in such as long as your mother and I have done and longer if it be His will. ²⁴⁷

Julia Merriman had strong views on the proper relations between the sexes:

²⁴⁴J.X. Merriman and Agnes Josephine Hester Vincent were married on 16 September 1874. See G.F.M. Merriman, Pedigree of the Family of Merriman, pp.114-115; P. Lewsen, John X. Merriman, pp.48-51.

²⁴⁵MP 49-74, JM to JXM and AM, 28 Sep. 1874.

²⁴⁶MP 43-74, NJM to JXM, 28 Sep. 1874. Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable defines snapdragon as "raisins soaked in spirit, lighted and floating in a bowl of spirituous liquor," p.418.

²⁴⁷MP 43-74, NJM to JXM, 28 Sep. 1874.

...I think one argument ag[ain]st allowing us the "women's Rights" some of our sex are clamouring for, is, that so few of us are independent in our political views - it wd. be an evil day for the happiness of domestic life, if we ceased to be influenced by those we are bound to love and respect...

This belief did not prevent her holding decided views on the political and ecclesiastical events of her day, and expressing her opinion with great vigour, but the welfare of home and children, and beyond that circle, of poor and needy, occupied much of her attention. As at Street, work parties met in the Merriman home to make clothes for the indigent, and Julia took a great interest in the hospital and the lunatic asylum. She supported a project to purchase a piano for the latter "as music is such an amusement to the poor creatures," and when a bazaar raised £700 for the hospital, she opposed a scheme to buy benches for the old patients, insisting that they should have comfortable chairs to sit in.²⁴⁹

All Nathaniel and Julia's children grew to adulthood, a situation unusual enough in Victorian times for Mrs Merriman to count it a great blessing. Inevitably, as their sons grew up and left home, family life came to revolve around the Merriman daughters, their husbands and their children. The girls continued to be called by their baby names: the eldest, Julia Letitia, was Doody, Charlotte was Narney, Katherine Grace and Sarah Agnes were inevitably Kitty and Sally, and Esther Louisa was Nessie.

Julia and John Ashburnham had seven children, four girls and three boys,²⁵⁰ while Charlotte and "Jac" Barry had a family of nine, four girls and five boys, the youngest of whom was born after his maternal grandfather's death and was called Nathaniel James Merriman Barry.²⁵¹ There was anxious speculation in the family in the 1870s about Jacob Barry's prospects of a judgeship, and when he was elevated to the

²⁴⁸ MP 115-74, JM to Agnes Vincent, 27 May 1874.

²⁴⁹ MP 7-76, JM to JXM, 16 Mar. 1876.

²⁵⁰ G.F.M. Merriman, *op.cit.*, pp.116-117.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp.117-118. Charlotte Barry died at Fiesole, near Florence, Italy, in 1904.

bench and knighted in 1878, Charlotte became Lady Barry. The third daughter, Mary, who had married Arthur Christian Tawke, had a sad little family of five, the first three boys dying in infancy. Two daughters were born in 1877 and 1888.²⁵² Nessie, the Merrimans' youngest daughter, married John Baldwin Smithson Greathead, a Grahamstown doctor, in January 1881. The Greatheads had seven children, the youngest son born just a year before his mother's death in 1892 when she was only thirty-four.²⁵³ The Merriman daughters came home to have their babies, and on these occasions Julia was glad if the bishop was away, as "he was not equal to a stir and a something, which wd. keep me upstairs away from him..."²⁵⁴ The proximity of her grandchildren was a special joy to Julia, but she was restrained in her praise of them, "wholesome and sensible-looking," and "fat, red, roly-poly" being favourite adjectives.²⁵⁵ During the 1870s, Sarah Agnes was already acquiring the character of the daughter who stayed at home to look after her parents, and was generally described as "a blessing."²⁵⁶

Katherine Grace, fifth Merriman daughter, spent much of the decade of the 1870s in a precarious state of health. At the end of 1872, John X. brought Ernest Wilberforce, son of the Bishop of Oxford to Grahamstown.²⁵⁷ He and Katherine Grace fell in love and were to have married, but he broke off the engagement. She was heartbroken and her mother very indignant, but Bishop Merriman firmly refused to write repeatedly to the young man's father.²⁵⁸ Julia continued to think of Ernest Wilberforce as "that treacherous man,"²⁵⁹ and when she

²⁵² Ibid., p.119.

²⁵³ Ibid., p.120.

²⁵⁴ MP 26-75, JM to JXM, 3 Jul. 1876.

²⁵⁵ MP 107-79, JM to JXM and AM, 1879; MP 6-81, JM to AM, 7 Mar. 1881.

²⁵⁶ MP 57-80, JM to AM, 31 Jan. 1880.

²⁵⁷ MP 105-73, JM to JXM, 20 Dec. 1873. J.B. Atlay, The Life of Ernest Roland Wilberforce.

²⁵⁸ MP 25-73, NJM to JXM, 31 Jul. 1873.

²⁵⁹ MP 105-73, JM to JXM, 20 Dec. 1873.

heard reports that he was engaged to several women, she described him as "a regular schelm."²⁶⁰ Ernest Wilberforce became Bishop of Newcastle in 1882. Julia Merriman thought that the occasion warranted several exclamation marks and the comment, "Let us hope he is a different man from what he was 10 years ago."²⁶¹ Her mother's indignation cannot have made Katherine Grace's recovery any easier. The announcement of Ernest Wilberforce's marriage at the end of 1874²⁶² re-opened the wound, and in 1875 and 1876 she grew thinner and thinner.²⁶⁵ However, on 25 September 1877, she married a clergyman, Frederick William Doxat, and they returned to England,²⁶⁴ where Mary's soldier husband was posted.

Domestic detail did not overwhelm Mrs Merriman, but she was of a practical turn of mind and ran her household efficiently with the help of servants. Most faithful of these was Miss Ruth Short, who had come to Grahamstown with the family in 1849 as a governess, and who remained with them, as friend and companion, until her death in 1880.²⁶⁵ Julia's complaints on the score of servants in general have a familiar ring. One Grahamstown January, when the weather was "stewing and boiling," the house was full of people, and there were guests to dinner,

...no Kafir cook appeared! really one does feel vexed with natives sometimes. ²⁶⁶

Wine for household use the family loyally ordered from John X. in Cape Town, and even after his "winkeltjie"²⁶⁷ had closed, they looked to

²⁶⁰ MP 53-74, JM to JXM and AM, 17 Oct. 1874.

²⁶¹ MP 130-82, JM to AM, Jun. 1882.

²⁶² MP 61-74, JM to JXM and AM, 19 Dec. 1874.

²⁶³ MP 6-75, JM to JXM, early 1875; MP 58-75, JM to JXM and AM, 20 Dec. 1875; MP 27-76, JM to JXM, 13 Jan. 1876.

²⁶⁴ G.F.M. Merriman, *op.cit.*, p.120. The Doxats had no children. For some years they were in Korea and Manchuria, and were shut up in Niu Chwang during the Sino-Japanese war. They died in the 1930s.

²⁶⁵ LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to Mrs Tuff, June 1880.

²⁶⁶ MP 13-82, JM to AM, 28 Jan. 1882.

²⁶⁷ P. Lewsen, *John X. Merriman*, pp.49-51.

him for supplies, and were glad when they were "soon likely to be replenished."²⁶⁸ Julia was also a ready dispenser of practical advice. She told John X.:

If you are troubled with a cough, buy and take Cherry Pectoral - it is a first rate medicine.²⁶⁹

She took great pride in her daughters' domestic skills, exclaiming of work done by Mary and Katherine and sent from England,

...really the crewel work, done by their own hands, exceeds in beauty.²⁷⁰

Pretentiousness in dress was foreign to mother and daughters. Charlotte was able to patch an old gown so that it looked like new, while Julia was content to "jog on with a past mending black silk."²⁷¹ The bishop was not above noticing feminine fashions, but his attitude was summed up by his words to his wife, "let the Mother please herself. I like what she likes."²⁷²

James, the Merrimans' youngest son, entered the Standard Bank in 1869. In 1879, he married Ann Handfield Hopley at Swellendam.²⁷³ John X. did not like his sister-in-law, but his mother found her sensible, amiable, truthful and industrious."²⁷⁴ "Jem" and his wife were "incorrigably bad correspondents"²⁷⁵ and there was not much contact between them and the lively home at Bishopsbourne.

The Merrimans' second son, Thomas Reginald, was a cause of great anxiety to his parents. Neither he nor James had the advantage of an

²⁶⁸MP 69-75, JM to JXM, 4 Dec. 1875.

²⁶⁹Ibid.

²⁷⁰MP 1-80, JM to JXM and AM, 3 Jan. 1880.

²⁷¹MP 38-80, JM to AM, 8 Jul. 1880.

²⁷²MP 106-82, JM to AM, 7 Oct. 1882.

²⁷³G.F.M. Merriman, op.cit., p.116. James became manager of the Standard Bank in Durban. He retired in 1914, and died in 1925. He and his wife had no children.

²⁷⁴MP 53-79, JM to AM, 27 May 1879.

²⁷⁵MP 27-82, JM to JXM, 14 Mar. 1882.

overseas education. Tom worked first as registrar to Jacob Barry, and after an episode at the diamond fields, as a magistrate in the Transkei. In 1872 he married Eliza Florence Rawstorne. The couple had three children, only one of whom, Julia, survived beyond childhood.²⁷⁶ It seems to have been an unfortunate marriage, although Julia Merriman was determined to love her daughter-in-law:

...a more true-hearted, humble minded, patient, affectionate, anxious-to-do right creature could scarcely be found. Tom might have done better as regards health and money and manners perhaps, but he might have got all these with a bad heart and frivolous mind and therefore as Eliza is our daughter I intend to make the best of her.²⁷⁷

Eliza was a poor housekeeper, a sickly and ineffectual woman,²⁷⁸ unable to exert a stabilising influence on a husband who soon began to exhibit wayward tendencies.

Tom's first misdemeanour was to get into debt. His father was "most shocked," and after consultation with Jacob Barry, paid the amount while arranging that Tom did not know the source.²⁷⁹ When he exerted himself, he was good at his job : his father remarked that Tom had established "a good name for official efficiency,"²⁸⁰ and his mother noted with pride that Jonathan Ayliff called him a "statesmanlike magistrate."²⁸¹ Nevertheless, he was unable to find employment in the colony,²⁸² and that he was not dismissed from his post in the Transkei was due to the good will of his superior, Captain Blyth,²⁸³ and the

²⁷⁶ G.F.M. Merriman, op.cit., pp.115-116, 121.

²⁷⁷ MP 5-75, JM to JXM, Jan. 1875.

²⁷⁸ MP 53-79, JM to AM, 27 May 1879.

²⁷⁹ MP 60-78, NJM to JXM, 10 Nov. 1878.

²⁸⁰ MP 14-76, NJM to JXM, 21 Oct. 1876.

²⁸¹ MP 76-81, JM to AM, 28 Nov. 1881.

²⁸² MP 58-76, JM to JXM and AM.

²⁸³ Captain Matthew Smith Blyth, formerly Government Agent with the Mfengu, was the first chief magistrate of the Transkei.

efforts of his family.²⁸⁴ Tom was irresponsible, weak and easy going, but attractive, charming and popular.²⁸⁵ John X. disapproved of his conduct,²⁸⁶ his father was aware of his capacity for "humbug,"²⁸⁷ but his mother was inclined to sentiment:

...poor darling! he has not had a joyous life, though endowed with so many gifts to make it happy. My heart yearns over him...²⁸⁸

In 1880, there was new cause for anxiety about Tom. Merriman, past seventy, and already careworn by the Williams case, had seen Captain Blyth and been left with the "distinct conviction" that despite Tom's "virtuous letter to his mother," the charges of drunkenness against him were true. Merriman told John X. that Captain Blyth had offered to take the pledge with Tom for three months, but Tom had refused. The bishop himself intended to "try to induce Tom to become Teetotal."²⁸⁹ It is not clear how far he succeeded, but this second son continued to be a cause of anxiety. Agnes told John X. how, after the bishop's funeral, his mother and Charlotte "had talks" with Tom, "but I really think it is like so much water on a duck's back."²⁹⁰

²⁸⁴MP 60-78, NJM to JXM, 10 Nov. 1878; MP 40-80, NJM to JXM, 14 Feb. 1880.

²⁸⁵MP 31-79, JM to JXM, 15 Mar. 1879.

²⁸⁶MP 26-79, JXM to NJM, 26 Feb. 1879.

²⁸⁷MP 60-78, NJM to JXM, 10 Nov. 1878.

²⁸⁸MP 33-79, JM to AM, 31 Mar. 1879.

²⁸⁹MP 40-80, NJM to JXM, 14 Feb. 1880. In 1876, Bishop Merriman was taken to task by a correspondent to the Journal for saying that "Good Templars are apt to make out total abstinence to be the one only panacea for all moral evils." The correspondent, P. Davidson of Adelaide, begged Merriman "If he cannot speak a word of encouragement to us...for mercy's sake, for the sake of many who are perishing and whom we are trying to save,...for God's sake, let us alone." (GTJ 21 Feb. 1876.) In April, Merriman convened a meeting to establish a branch of the Church of England Temperance Association in Grahamstown. Merriman moved that "this meeting, recognizing the prevalence and grave mischief of intemperance, and the Christian duty of promoting temperance in all things, resolves to take part in the work of witnessing and striving against intemperance." Merriman opposed consumption of "intermediate wets," but not drinking at meals. At this meeting, Dean Williams expressed his belief "that for one barrel of drink that went to promote crime, ten thousand went to testify to the advancement of society." (GTJ 3 Apr. 1876.)

²⁹⁰MP 84-82, AM to JXM, 22 Aug. 1882.

Julia Merriman was prolific letter writer, with what her husband described as a "ready and voluble pen"²⁹¹ and she found her eldest son and his wife very satisfactory correspondents. They exchanged family news and commented on domestic arrangements, but a large proportion of their correspondence was taken up with discussion of the ecclesiastical troubles in Grahamstown, John X.'s public life and current political events.

John X. was a member of the Molteno ministry from July 1875 to February 1878, and of the Scanlen ministry from 1881 to 1884.²⁹² Julia rejoiced when her son was appointed to the cabinet,²⁹³ and read newspaper reports of his speeches with avidity. When the senior Merrimans went to England in 1878, the bishop reminded his son

...to keep us - your mother especially - au courant with all that is of importance in that august assembly, and I need not say that all your utterances are of great importance to the Maternal eyes. ²⁹⁴

From England, Julia wrote to John X.:

...you may be sure Father and I are delighted at our son's power in the house and the country. ²⁹⁵

Newspapers and letters were not enough, and she told Agnes "how I should enjoy a talk with you and John on the political situation."²⁹⁶ On occasion, Julia ventured to offer John X. advice, but indirectly, through Agnes. Merriman acquaintances in Grahamstown received with gloom the news that the Sprigg ministry had resigned and that John X. would be resuming office. Julia discovered that the reason for this was not opposition to Merriman's policies, but the fact that John X. had apparently cut members of the family on one occasion. She told Agnes:

²⁹¹MP 63-74, NJM to JXM, 29 Dec. 1874.

²⁹²P. Lewsen, John X. Merriman, ch.5-7.

²⁹³MP 21-81, JM to JXM and AM, 6 May 1881; MP 22-81, JM to AM, 11 May 1881; MP 26-81, JM to AM, 18 May 1881.

²⁹⁴MP 17-77, NJM to JXM, 22 May 1877.

²⁹⁵MP 29-77, JM to AM, 26 Jul. 1877.

²⁹⁶MP 6-76, JM to AM, Mar. 1876.

It only shews one how little things make an impression - and how easily avoided they may be... I think a manner adopted with a view to popularity is wicked and odious...but a genial, attentive manner is another thing, and I wish our dear John wd. try and cultivate it. Both he and his father are shy and that is often the cause of their apparent unconcern. 297

Julia shared her son's disappointment when Bartle Frere dismissed the Molteno ministry in 1878. She told John X.:

...yr mother can enter into yr feelings ab[ou]t the change of position and consequent alteration in public observance better than your father can. "The chances and changes" of this world are only with him the ups and downs over the troublesome waves which carry us sooner or later into a haven of rest. I don't think any one could be less affected by the opinion of men. 298

Bishop Merriman sought to moderate his wife's indignation at the treatment meted out by governor and press to John X.:

Father says "never mind" when he sees me in a rage or cast down, "all statesmen worth any thing have an ordeal to undergo, and John is sure to be appreciated, and brought to the fore some day." 299

Julia Merriman was eventually comforted. In February 1879, when John X. had been out of office a year and Bishop Merriman's quarrel with Dean Williams was reaching a climax, she told Agnes:

I am really thankful that it is the lot of husband and son, to be repaid with "hatred for their good will" and work, for as Kingsley again says, "It is not the many who reform the world, but the few, who rise superior to that public opinion which crucified our Lord many years ago." 300

Julia was right to link father and son in this way. When John X. was first appointed to the Molteno cabinet, his mother wrote perceptively:

...You may be sure the E. Star will not only for yr own, but yr Father's sake, try to pick holes in everything you do and hold you up to public reprehension - his Leader in last night's E. Star is

297 MP 22-81, JM to AM, 11 May 1881.

298 MP 1-79, JM to JXM and AM, 3 Jan. 1879.

299 MP 45-78, JM to AM, 29 Aug. 1878.

300 MP 24-79, JM to AM, 22 Feb. 1879.

ludicrous. Fancy yr appointment being an insult to the British Empire!! at any rate he must think you a very important person. ³⁰¹

John X., a thorough Westerner, was never popular in Grahamstown, but the association between Williams and the Eastern Star and the family relationship between John X. and Nathaniel James Merriman sharpened the edge of the Star's editorial comments on John X.'s political activities.³⁰² Julia acknowledged that she was "too ready and impulsive as to speech,"³⁰³ and the Eastern Star's attacks on her husband certainly roused her ire. She described the newspaper as her "biweekly irritant,"³⁰⁴ which provided Williams with "a channel where from to belch forth his filth." She added, "excuse the expression, it is more vigorous than polite."³⁰⁵

Although Bishop Merriman could never share his wife's passionate interest in their son's political career, the relationship between father and son in the 1870s had an ease and spontaneity which contrasted sharply with the stilted exchanges of John X.'s teenage years.³⁰⁶

On occasion, Nathaniel asked his son's advice about church property,³⁰⁷ or enlisted his help in righting a wrong.³⁰⁸ The bishop

³⁰¹MP 29-75, JM to JXM, 10 Jul. 1875. See also, MP 21-81. JM to JXM and AM, 6 May 1881.

³⁰²ES 8 Feb. 1878. The editor attributed John X.'s "overbearing insolence and presumption" to his "having unfortunately for himself never been thrashed at a Public School."

³⁰³MP 26-75, JM to JXM, 3 Jul. 1875.

³⁰⁴MP 3-76, JM to AM, 5 Jan. 1876.

³⁰⁵MP 46-80, JM to AM, 25 Sep. 1880.

³⁰⁶See above, pp.117-121.

³⁰⁷MP 81-79, NJM to JXM, 4 Sep. 1879; MP 134-82, NJM to JXM, 17 Jan. 1882.

³⁰⁸Denny Ashburnham, John Ashburnham's brother, was convicted of fraud. Bishop Merriman considered that the young man had not had a fair trial, and went to great but unavailing trouble to secure justice for him. See GPM 29 Sep. 1874, 26 Jan. 1875; GTJ 25 Jan. 1875; MP 3-75, NJM to JXM, 29 Jan. 1875; MP 8-75, NJM to JXM, 2 Mar. 1875; MP 10-75, NJM to JXM, 15 Mar. 1875; MP 11-75, JM to JXM, 16 Mar. 1875; MP 16-75, NJM to JXM, 10 Apr. 1875; MP 17-75, NJM to JXM, 13 Apr. 1875; MP 26-75, JM to JXM, 3 Jul. 1875; MP 62-75, JM to JXM, nd.

also found himself bombarded with requests to use his influence with John X. He told his son:

If I did not think you were rather rusty in your Horace, I should begin a letter to you as Horace begins one of his elegant epistles...For like Horace I am beset by many a Septimius. ³⁰⁹

The bishop went on to quote from a letter addressed to the young prince Tiberius on behalf of one Septimius, ³¹⁰ and ended his own epistle,

Well! I feel it a very fine thing to be Father to an Honble Commiss[ione]r of Crown lands and works, but these fellows bore me out a little with their requests. ³¹¹

Nathaniel disapproved of a search for worldly status, and advised John X. not to accept a knighthood in recognition of his services during the 1877-1878 frontier war, advice ironically given at the time John X. was dismissed from the ministry. ³¹² When his father received news of the dismissal, he accepted it with more equanimity than Julia could:

I don't know whether to console or congratulate. I dare say a little of each is in season although you may think only the former is so. The situation is too new and so very likely to change by the time we are with you that I cannot see the way of the future at all clearly. ³¹³

The correspondence between the bishop and his son shows a delightful ability to escape from what Nathaniel had once described as "the hubbub of politics, business and war." ³¹⁴ Merriman stayed with

³⁰⁹ MP 17-76, NJM to JXM, 7 Dec. 1876.

³¹⁰ Merriman quoted Horace, Epistles, Ep. IX, 1.1-2. Of this letter, the editor of *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica* in the Loeb Classical Library has written: "The delicate tact of the writer, who would seem selfish if he did not heed his friend's request, and might be guilty of effrontery if he did, has often been admired." See also MP 26-82, NJM to JXM, 13 Mar 1882.

³¹¹ MP 17-76, NJM to JXM, 7 Dec. 1876.

³¹² MP 22-78, JXM to NJM, 19 Feb. 1878.

³¹³ MP 26-78, NJM to JXM, 21 Mar. 1878.

³¹⁴ See above, p.123.

John X. and Agnes during the 1876 Provincial Synod. He had left Grahamstown "overflowing with health and spirits,"³¹⁵ and departed from Cape Town in a similar condition. He wrote John X. a letter of thanks from Beaufort West:

Here am I
as spry as a fly
singing
Hey diddle diddle
as fit as a fiddle

But hold! let me begin my historical Narrative. Not long after the censorship of your aristocratic eye was withdrawn - ...being tired of my solitary dignity I migrated, to the guard's amusement, to the adjoining 2nd class carriage assuring the guard that wherever 3 such distinguished Civil Servants as C. Pears, P. Barrow and Mr Jackson were was 1st class to me.

In the second class carriage, Merriman enjoyed "much pleasant converse" in exchange for dignity. As for food:

One Penn'orth of grapes (the best of their kind) at Stellenbosch more than supplied me with a morning's meal. Bread and cheese and Beer at Ceres Road, Coffee and Pears and a Pipe at Ceres, made me save Agnes' good provender till night, and what with snatches of fruit and bread I arrived here this morning in the stomachil condition of the West country ploughboy whose only reason for wanting to change places with George 3rd was that he might...be allays Vull. 316

Father and son shared a delight in books. The bishop's comments on G.O. Trevelyan's Life of Macaulay,³¹⁷ recommended by John X., reveal a great deal about Nathaniel himself. He told his eldest son:

I owe you a debt of very sincere thanks for commending to my attention the book I have just finished, Macaulay's Life. I have not taken up any work that has so absorbed me for a long time...

I should never have known the man but for this delightful biography. I could not have dreamed that he was so keen in his domestic affections, so kind to children (his nieces) and so very impressible to emotions of joy and

³¹⁵MP 27-76, JM to JXM, 13 Jan. 1876.

³¹⁶MP 5-76, NJM to JXM, 27 Feb. 1876.

³¹⁷On the Whig view of history, see H. Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation of History. On Macaulay, see G.P. Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century, pp.282-307.

sorrow as well as - in conduct - so honest and straight-forward and thoroughly independent and above base and mercenary considerations. I am not sorry to have formed my estimate of the History before reading his life, for I should have been dazzled by his fine qualities into trusting his History more implicitly than I ever can do, and probably should have been captivated by his style to the forgetfulness that under its glitter lies a good deal of fallacy, and prejudice, and a very perverted estimate of many great men who not being Whigs found no favour in his sight.

Marlborough and Penn are shameful instances to let alone poor Dundee and a few others whom he joins with the rest of the world in hunting down most cruelly...

But apart from all this I love and admire the man as much as I can a man who is not very deeply imbued with Religion. 318

Twenty years after his previous visit, Merriman set foot in England again, accompanied by Mrs Merriman and Sarah Agnes. The change of air brought Merriman some measure of relaxation. In London, he took his wife and daughter to the Crystal Palace and to the Tower. Sarah Agnes, seeing the city for the first time, exclaimed at the noise and bustle;

...at first I thought I should be cracked very soon, however I am still in my right mind. 319

There were family reunions in Marlborough at which forty people sat down to dinner, and much exclamation at family likenesses and exchange of family news. 320 Merriman made a point of travelling to see old friends and acquaintances, 321 and with his wife and daughter he made a return visit to Oxford.

In one of its perorations on the inferiority of the colonial church when compared with the Church of England, the Eastern Star had pointed

318 MP 28-77, NJM to JXM, 17 Feb. 1877.

319 MP 27-77, JM to AM, 7 Jul. 1877.

320 Ibid.

321 MP 29-77, JM to AM, 26 Jul. 1877.

out that elected colonial bishops were not awarded honorary degrees by their universities as was done as an "act of courtesy to the Crown" in the case of royal appointees.³²² In 1877, Oxford redressed the balance. On 14 June in the Sheldonian Theatre, the university conferred the degree of Doctor of Divinity honoris causa, on Nathaniel James Merriman. An amateur poet recorded the occasion:

Now have seen his face again and loudly
Rang forth our greetings when we saw him come.
See! like a loving Mother Oxford proudly
Grasp's her son's hand and bids him welcome home.³²³

If the verse was trite, the poet was perceptive. Merriman stood before them, "bent, and scathed, and smitten," and it was obvious that the motive of his work was not "such honours," or "earthly guerdon."³²⁴

Although Merriman was in England to rest, he soon felt it necessary to take a stand in defence of the constitution of the south African church, and specifically of the work of Robert Gray. He discovered that clergy ordained by Colenso were allowed to minister in England,³²⁵ while those ordained by Macrorie were specifically excluded.³²⁶ Merriman wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury in the hope of finding assurance that this was not so, or in the hope of persuading him that it should not be allowed to continue, but from Archbishop Tait he received an answer couched in Erastian terms which gave him scant satisfaction. Merriman, distressed that the Church of England was apparently in communion with Colenso, failed to see the very real difficulties of English bishops bound by the establishment.³²⁷ This

³²²ES 3 Jun. 1873.

³²³GDA 215, "Nathaniel N. Merriman" by C.H. Woodruff, with H.R. Horsley to H.M. Matthew, 3 Jan. 1953.

³²⁴Ibid.

³²⁵GDA 251, W.K. Macrorie to NJM, 6 Jul. 1877.

³²⁶GDA 292, Merriman's visit to England and the second Lambeth Conference 1878, N.J. Merriman, Statement of my relation to the so-called Pan Anglican Synod, 1878.

³²⁷GDA 292, Merriman's visit to England and the second Lambeth Conference 1878, NJM to A.C. Tait, Aug. 1877, NJM to A.C. Tait, 24 Sep. 1877, A.C. Tait to NJM, Oct. 1877; GDA 253, A.C. Tait to NJM, 31 Aug. 1877.

correspondence with Tait was an aspect of a larger grievance on Merriman's part - that Gray's sentence of excommunication on Colenso was not recognised in England. This point of view coloured Merriman's attitude to the second Lambeth Conference, which coincided with his visit to England. This had at first seemed happily fortuitous, but in the course of time, the coincidence appeared less fortunate.

The first call for a second Lambeth Conference came from the Canadian bishops in 1872. The proposal was supported by G.A. Selwyn, now Bishop of Lichfield, and by the Convocation of the Province of York.³²⁸ In January 1876, the Provincial Synod of the Church of the Province of South Africa also expressed itself in favour of another conference.³²⁹ Archibald Campbell Tait, Archbishop of Canterbury since 1868, decided to comply with these requests, but his own Erastianism,³³⁰ and the disruption caused at the 1867 conference by the Colenso controversy, made him determined that the agenda for the 1878 Lambeth Conference would be drawn up in advance and that questions of doctrine and discipline would be avoided. Official invitations were sent out on 10 July 1877. The agenda was not dictated by Tait, but incorporated suggestions from the bishops of the Anglican Communion, and those of Selwyn in particular, although it reflected Tait's proviso that the aim of the conference was not the discussion of regional and specific issues but the sharing of common problems and ideas. Items on the agenda were firstly, the best way of maintaining the union of the Anglican Communion; secondly, the creation of voluntary boards of arbitration for churches within the communion; thirdly, the position of missionary bishops; fourthly, the position of Anglican chaplains in Europe; fifthly, the best means of dealing with modern forms of infidelity, and sixthly, the condition, progress and needs of the churches of the Anglican Communion. The Lambeth Conference was to begin on 2 July, and to last four weeks. Merriman was one of one hundred and eight bishops who accepted Tait's invitation,

³²⁸ R. Davidson (comp.), The First Five Lambeth Conferences, pp.14-17.

³²⁹ GDA 292, Merriman's visit to England and the second Lambeth Conference 1878, NJM to A.C. Tait, Aug. 1876.

³³⁰ R.T. Davidson and W. Benham, Life of Archibald Campbell Tait, vol.II, pp.271-275.

and one of eight who eventually did not attend.³³¹

The agenda as set out in the formal invitation disappointed Merriman. When he had been consulted in 1876, he had stated his opinion that the conference should adopt some measure

...to relieve the Province of S. Africa in general and the Diocese of Maritzburg in particular from the grievous wrong at present sustained through either the non-recognition of the Spiritual sentence pronounced against Dr Colenso in the Provinces of York and Canterbury or by the violation of Article 33 of 39 Articles on the part of those who communicate with him and with the Clergy ordained by him since his separation from the Church. ³³²

Once in England, Merriman tried to gain support for his proposal to raise this question at Lambeth. He was filled with "pain and chagrin" to find "a disinclination and refusal to listen,"³³³ when he raised the issue with the Bishops of Lichfield and Salisbury. This prompted Merriman to draw up a memorandum setting out the reasons put forward by the English bishops for leaving the Colenso issue alone, and his own response. The bishops of Salisbury and Lichfield had argued that the Lambeth Conference was not a synod, and therefore it was not its function to pronounce on the Colenso case. To this Merriman replied:

When all the Anglican Bishops meet by invitation under an acknowledged President...they seem to me to be essentially and for practical purposes a Synod of Bishops and that they may declare themselves as such and proceed to business... ³³⁴

In asserting this, Merriman was ignoring the provision of Article XXI of the Thirty-Nine Articles, which forbade the holding of a general council in England without royal permission, and the fact that the royal supremacy, however undesirable, was a present reality in the established Church of England. It had also been pointed out to Merriman that English bishops trod warily in dealing with Colenso.

³³¹ R. Davidson, op.cit., pp.15-19.

³³² GDA 292, Merriman's visit to England and the second Lambeth Conference 1878, NJM to A.C. Tait, Aug. 1876.

³³³ GDA 292, Merriman's visit to England and the second Lambeth Conference 1878, Memorandum.

³³⁴ Ibid.

They could not afford the risk of his returning to England and being presented to a benefice, as the law would require them to institute him. This Merriman thought a feeble argument:

The risk if such there be of Colenso being appointed to an English living should be cheerfully faced and met with all the supposed pains and penalties accompanying a refusal to institute on the part of the English Bishops. 335

To the contention of the English bishops that it was not uncanonical to communicate with Colenso's clergy if they signed the formularies of the Church of England, Merriman replied curtly - and in Greek - "let the ancient usages prevail."³³⁶ To the inference that his insistence on discussion of Colenso's status was born of a personal grudge, Merriman replied that

Such grave matter should not be treated as a Crotchet. A matter that concerns the integrity of the Faith, that touches the honour, the unity, the consistency, the orthodoxy of the whole Anglican Communion has a right to be heard, enquired into and provided for. 337

There is an echo of Robert Gray in this paragraph, and Merriman acknowledged that the memory of this revered leader influenced his actions:

My long associations...with Robert Gray and my great love for him and the admiration for the noble stand which he had made and sympathy for the trials and obloquy he had received in 1867-8 at the hands of certain English Bishops made me feel more keenly on this subject. 338

Merriman sent copies of his memorandum to Richard Chevenix Trench, Archbishop of Dublin, to Henry Cotterill, to a lay friend, F.H. Dickinson, and to Bishop Potter of New York who had supported Gray in 1867. Potter did not reply at all, while the other three emphasised the value of Lambeth as a consultative assembly and advised Merriman

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ GDA 292, Merriman's visit to England and the second Lambeth Conference 1878, N.J. Merriman, Statement of my relation to the so-called Pan Anglican Synod, 1878.

against any attempt to force the English bishops to condemn Colenso.³³⁹ This opinion was echoed by Merriman's friend, Archdeacon White, and by William West Jones.³⁴⁰

Merriman would not abandon his belief that the bishops of the Anglican Communion assembled at Lambeth could assume the functions of a synod if they so wished, nor would he accept that the grievance of the south African church was not a proper subject for discussion at the conference.³⁴¹ Nevertheless, it became clear that his views would not prevail. In October 1877, Merriman wrote:

...I ceased to have any great wish to attend the Lambeth Conference where apparently I should have stood alone as an ineffectual upholder of the principle laid down by Robert Gray, and where my presence accordingly must have been a great trouble to many for I had resolved under any circumstances as God should enable me to speak my mind freely.³⁴²

The prospect of any early return to southern Africa became attractive to Merriman.³⁴³ It was also perhaps the wisest course. He was aware that even the south African bishops regarded him as a potential source of embarrassment, and certainly, on this issue he presents a pathetic picture : an ageing and ailing bishop, whose influence in England had never been strong, pursuing a crusade against Colenso which was altogether too personal and harped on a controversy long irrelevant to most of the Anglican Communion. His insistence that the conference assume the authority of a synod was not only a failure to perceive the delicate position of the bishops of the Church of England, and to

³³⁹ Ibid., GDA 257, R.C. Trench to NJM, 10 Sep. 1877; GDA 259, F.H. Dickinson to NJM, 13 Aug. 1877.

³⁴⁰ GDA 292, Merriman's visit to England and the second Lambeth Conference 1878, N.J. Merriman, Statement of my relation to the so-called Pan Anglican Synod, 1878.

³⁴¹ GDA 292, Merriman's visit to England and the second Lambeth Conference 1878, N.J. Merriman, Statement of my relation to the so-called Pan Anglican Synod, 1878.

³⁴² GDA 292, Merriman's visit to England and the second Lambeth Conference 1878, N.J. Merriman, Statement of my relation to the so-called Pan Anglican Synod, 1878.

³⁴³ GDA 250, NJM to WWJ, 30 Oct. 1877.

accept the fact that Colenso had not been invited to the Lambeth Conference as sufficient condemnation of the Bishop of Natal,³⁴⁴ but a failure to realise that the value and future of the Lambeth Conference lay in the opportunity it provided for discussion among bishops of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The visit to England had not done a great deal to improve Merriman's health,³⁴⁵ and his disappointment over the Lambeth Conference of which he had had high hopes,³⁴⁶ did nothing to restore his spirits. Moreover, most of the south African bishops would be in England for the Lambeth Conference, and he could be of real service by returning to south Africa "so that Africa will not be deserted by all its Bishops..."³⁴⁷ Drought on the Cape eastern frontier had been followed by the outbreak of war,³⁴⁸ and he was anxious to return to his diocese. Mrs Merriman remarked that he would be "more easy when back in the midst of his suffering flock."³⁴⁹

For the sake of the mission stations, Merriman was relieved to be back in his diocese by August 1878,³⁵⁰ but he found that his absence had done little to improve the uneasy relationship between himself and Dean Williams. Julia Merriman, in a rather exaggerated description to Agnes, noted that the dean took no notice of Merriman's return, being

³⁴⁴GDA 174, H. Badnall to NJM, 19 Jun. 1878.

³⁴⁵SPG mic., vol. D48, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 16 Jan. 1878.

³⁴⁶GDA 292, Merriman's visit to England and the second Lambeth Conference 1878, N.J. Merriman, Statement of my relations to the so-called Pan Anglican Synod, 1878.

³⁴⁷SPG mic., vol. D48, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 16 Jan. 1878.

³⁴⁸Ibid.; UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, p.86, WWJ to NJM, 14 Jan. 1878. See chapter six.

³⁴⁹MP 31-78, JM to JXM, 27 Mar. 1878.

³⁵⁰GTJ 28 Aug. 1878.

too busy organising an evening service which took the form of a "great musical performance," with kettle drums before the sanctuary and at which the dean read the latest telegram from England in lieu of a sermon. Only St Philip's honoured the bishop's return with a "tea-fight."³⁵¹

It is clear that Merriman returned from England firmly determined to assert his authority over Williams in the cathedral by preaching in St George's once a month, a practice he had abandoned after the 1876 synod. Julia Merriman recorded:

Father and Decanus have already begun a passage of arms. The former wrote a polite note to say he would preach at the Cathedral last Sunday morning and once a month when in residence, to which a gushing reply with thanks for Bp.'s "offer" &c &c arrived. Bp. replied ...that he had not made an offer...but claimed a right. This brought a reiteration of former assertion... coupled with a repudiation of Provincial Synod Law...So Father is determined to bring things to an issue.³⁵²

Ironically, while Merriman took steps to carry out his resolve, an event occurred which enabled the Bishop and the Dean of Grahamstown to co-operate for the last time on an ecclesiastical question, albeit in a very minor way. The occasion was the reception into the Anglican Church of the Rev. William Impey, hitherto a prominent Wesleyan, Chairman of the Grahamstown District, and General Superintendent of Wesleyan missions in south east Africa.³⁵³

Impey, a Yorkshireman, came to south Africa in 1838 as a newly-ordained Wesleyan minister, to work as a missionary under the Rev. William Shaw, whose daughter he married in 1841. Impey's administrative ability and his experience as a missionary and as a minister in the centres of settler Methodism made him an obvious successor to Shaw when the latter returned to England in 1856. In 1877, when he was nearly sixty, and after almost forty years as a Wesleyan minister, Impey found his doctrinal views at variance with those to which his church required him to subscribe. He therefore went to England to

³⁵¹MP 76-78, JM to AM, nd.

³⁵²MP 45-78, JM to AM, 29 Aug. 1878.

³⁵³D.S.A.B., vol.II, pp.327-328.

consult leaders of the connexion, and eventually felt compelled to resign.

The Eastern Star found opportunities in these events to criticise the government of the Church of the Province by implication and by direct reference. When it became known that Impey was going to England, the Star rejoiced that he was going to discuss his doctrinal views with Wesleyan leaders "at the metropolis of Wesleyan law and thought."³⁵⁴ The paper declared that, unlike the Wesleyans who had retained their close links with England, the Church of the Province of South Africa was cut off from similar desirable contact with the mother Church of England.³⁵⁵ When news of Impey's resignation was received, the Star leader writer had little difficulty in changing his tune. After discussions in England with the secretaries to the Methodist Conference, Impey realised that his position was untenable. He resigned on 11 April 1878, writing that his views on the doctrine of eternal punishment were at variance with Wesleyan teaching and that there appeared to be

...no prospect of such liberty of thought being allowed as may enable me consistently to retain my position as a Minister in the Connexion...³⁵⁶

The Star now drew parallels between the Wesleyan Connexion and the Church of the Province. Both were governed by synods, of whose "bigotry and autocracy"³⁵⁷ Impey was the victim, a point which was laboured in numerous editorials.³⁵⁸

The Journal recorded its regret at Impey's resignation,³⁵⁹ but showed no inclination to pursue the subject until provoked by the Eastern Star's criticism of the form of government of the Wesleyan

³⁵⁴ ES 29 Jan. 1878.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ W. Impey, Why I leave the Wesleyan Methodist Church, p.16.

³⁵⁷ ES 5 Jul. 1878.

³⁵⁸ ES 9, 12, 16, 23 Jul. 1878.

³⁵⁹ GTJ 17 Jun. 1878.

Church. The Journal described the Star criticism as "foul-mouthed"³⁶⁰ and countered it by giving examples of parliamentary tyranny over the church.³⁶¹ The Journal was nevertheless aware of the Star's underlying motive. Impey was yet another tool in the attack on synodical government:

Possibly the Star would not have been so unreasonable had it not its pet craze about Synods been somehow or other, mixed up with this subject.³⁶²

The Journal editor felt his paper's interests would be best served by dismissing the Star editorials with contempt:

...we consider that the writer deserves no further notice in our columns.³⁶³

This lofty tone however did not stem the tide of Star editorials on the subject.³⁶⁴

Early in 1878, Impey approached Merriman and asked if the bishop was prepared to accept him as a candidate for ordination.³⁶⁵ Merriman's first response was to refuse, but was prompted to reopen the issue by a letter from the Bishop of Lincoln,³⁶⁶ and by the urging of of, as Merriman put it, "the Dean!"³⁶⁷ This is perhaps not surprising in the light of the editorials in the Star. Williams and the congregation of St George's put pressure on Merriman to ordain Impey,³⁶⁸ but he resisted precipitate action. He consulted William West Jones,³⁶⁹ and his own chapter, and after satisfying himself that Impey's doctrine

³⁶⁰ GTJ 3 Jul. 1878.

³⁶¹ Ibid.; GTJ 1 Jul. 1878, 10 Jul. 1878.

³⁶² GTJ 3 Jul. 1878.

³⁶³ GTJ 10 Jul. 1878.

³⁶⁴ ES 12, 16, 23 Jul. 1878, 16 Aug. 1878.

³⁶⁵ GDA 262, NJM to WWJ, 16 Dec. 1878.

³⁶⁶ GDA 261, NJM to WWJ, 29 Oct. 1878.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.; CVMB, vol.II, 7 Nov. 1878, p.209.

³⁶⁸ GDA 262, NJM to WWJ, 16 Dec. 1878.

³⁶⁹ GDA 261, NJM to WWJ, 27 Oct. 1878.

was sound,³⁷⁰ finally agreed to ordain the former Wesleyan. William West Jones, without condemning, expressed reservations about this decision,³⁷¹ but Merriman replied that he considered Impey "a very safe and very moderate man," adding,

I wish we had no more dangerous or troublesome man in the church at Grahamstown than he.³⁷²

Impey was made deacon in 1878, and his first sphere of work as an Anglican clergyman was St George's cathedral, Grahamstown. He was ordained priest on 30 November 1879.³⁷³

Meanwhile, Merriman had been exploring means of resolving his dispute with Williams. He attempted to do so first by correspondence with the dean, making it clear however that the correspondence was not to appear in the press. Numerous letters yielded little fruit.³⁷⁴ Williams stuck to his assertions that English ecclesiastical law applied at the Cape, that he enjoyed the status of an English dean and that the bishop preached in St George's "by courtesy of the Dean." Williams implied that if he yielded an inch, Merriman would use the opportunity to exclude him from the pulpit altogether. It is easy to understand how galling some of Williams' unctuous phrases must have been to Merriman. On 27 August 1878, Williams told Merriman

I am not at all desirous of a controversy on the Dean's rights in the Cathedral. It is your raising, not mine.

The dean also wrote:

³⁷⁰GDA 262, NJM to WWJ, 16 Dec. 1878.

³⁷¹UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, WWJ to NJM, 23 Jan. 1879.

³⁷²GDA 264, NJM to WWJ, Mar. 1879.

³⁷³GTJ 1 Dec. 1879.

³⁷⁴This correspondence is quoted in N.J. Merriman, Some Considerations for the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral of St George's, Grahamstown, pp. 1-viii.

...perhaps you little know the anxious responsibilities felt by those who for the last three years have been deeply interested in the Cathedral. Still my most earnest wish is that at any cost, save of principle, bygones may be bygones, and that we may all work in peace.

Merriman on the other hand asserted his right to officiate in the cathedral, firstly as bishop of the diocese, secondly by virtue of the fact that the dean was appointed by the bishop, and on the strength of the license Williams held from the bishop. Merriman also pointed out that he only wished to preach in the cathedral on one Sunday a month. He pointed out the need for a body of statutes to define the powers and statutes of capitular officials. As far as Williams was concerned, the sole function of cathedral statutes was to regulate the administration of capitular endowments, and as these did not exist in Grahamstown, such a document would be redundant. Merriman told Williams that, rather than

...enter into a public contest for the maintenance of my rights in a way which would cause scandal and endanger the peace of the Church,

he would use another church in Grahamstown as his cathedral.³⁷⁵ This was easier said than done. St Bartholomew's, with Packman as rector, was out of the question, and, as Mrs Merriman remarked:

Christchurch is under a peculiar trust which prevents its consecration. St. A[ndrew]'s chapel is only a temporary building under the like restrictions. St. Philip's the Kafir Church is alone free from obligation and what a storm of indignation wd. be roused amongst the whites by such a choice!!³⁷⁶

The correspondence between Merriman and Williams was conducted politely, but with mounting exasperation at least on Merriman's side, and on 7 November he closed it by telling Williams:

I have expressed my views and feelings so often upon the points at issue that I do not desire to discuss them further in correspondence.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ MP 1-79, JM to JXM and AM, 3 Jan. 1879.

³⁷⁷ N.J. Merriman, Some Considerations for the Dean and Chapter..., p.viii;

This did not mean that Merriman had yielded. Nor did he intend to remain silent, as this would in his view, be tantamount to acquiescence. He decided to summon the dean and chapter, and to hold a visitation of the cathedral, and in preparation produced a pamphlet clearly marked "For Private Circulation Only," in which he laid down the grounds of the jurisdiction he claimed in the cathedral church of St George, Grahamstown. He made it plain that there was no question of

...a want of personal courtesy, but simply...an erroneous view of the relations of the two offices of Bishop and Dean, as existing in this branch of the Colonial Church. ³⁷⁸

In his pamphlet, Merriman quoted the dean's published statements, in which Williams's claims were embodied, and he listed the occasions on which the dean had acted on his own claims. These included the controversy over the annual service of the Albany Brethren in 1874, and his actions in chapter and synod in 1876. There was no reference to Williams's association with the Eastern Star. Merriman included, as an appendix to this pamphlet, copies of the recent correspondence between himself and the dean. He drew the arguments with which he refuted Williams's claims, from antiquity, medieval church law, English church history, contemporary English law, rules in other south African dioceses, and the licences held by clergy in the diocese of Grahams-town. ³⁷⁹

Williams replied to this pamphlet with "An Apologia" addressed to the clergy and laity of the diocese, valuable because it sets out clearly Williams's championship at the Cape of the cause of the Church of England as by law established, and his views on the constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa, in a document of which he unequivocally acknowledged authorship. The tone of the pamphlet was a blend of injured innocence and enduring patience in the face of grave injustice to himself and the Church of England, with Merriman as villain-in-chief. Merriman's own pamphlet the dean described as

³⁷⁸ Ibid., p.2.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., pp.5-10.

...an elaborate indictment of the Dean's public life, views, and acts, as a Churchman, founded on short and insufficient extracts from what he may have said or written, whether deliberately and for publication or otherwise, during a period of three years, and going back in the search for acts to be attributed to him, mistakenly and therefore unjustly so attributed, as much as eight years. 380

Williams threw the whole blame for the Grahamstown ecclesiastical controversy on to Merriman : it had been

...forced by the Bishop's procedure both in Synod and out of it, as well as by his own letters, and specific claims, addressed personally or through his subordinates, to the Dean, obliging the Dean, however reluctantly, either to state his own views, and set forth the grounds of them or to violate common courtesy. 381

Dean Williams argued that Merriman's reference in his pamphlet to the dispute over the preacher for the 1874 Albany Brethren annual service, to the question of hymnology, and to Christ Church, obscured the issue at stake which he defined as the extent of the authority colonial bishops claimed to assert over their clergy in relation to that exercised by English bishops. Nevertheless, it is clear from Williams's lengthy discussion of the allegedly extraneous issue of Christ Church that he deeply resented the existence of this church. Williams then discussed the source of his own authority in the cathedral. He based his claim on the argument that there were beneficed clergy in south Africa, that he was one of them, and that as a beneficed clergyman instituted to his office he enjoyed freedom from episcopal interference equivalent to that enjoyed by an English rector. On the strength of this argument, Williams pronounced that the episcopal licence in terms of which Merriman claimed to give clergy permission to officiate in his diocese was both illegal and absurd. Williams's reasoning is deficient. He equated a benefice with the existence of parochial property, but in the Church of England, the term benefice implies an ecclesiastical office which carries with it certain revenues awarded in return for certain prescribed duties. Hinchliff argues that because there was no parochial endowment as

³⁸⁰ F.H. Williams, Some Considerations for the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Grahamstown, p.3.

³⁸¹ Ibid., p.4.

such in south Africa, as opposed to endowment of buildings, there was no question of the existence of benefices in the English sense.³⁸²

If this argument was unsound, some of Williams's other statements were both unfounded and insulting. He remarked that colonial bishops were men of

...second rate pretensions measured by the standard either of scholarship or of social and professional position...³⁸³

Such bishops would not attract clergy of "literary merit and high culture," a category in which Williams no doubt placed himself.

The dean acknowledged that the church in Grahamstown was "distracted and divided," but he argued that this had been the case at the time of his arrival in 1865:

The only change noticeable within the Dean's experience of its history is, that our little handful of a Church community had not then been so schooled in the license of faction and vituperation as it has been since under the influence of the proceedings, and even Resolutions, of our Diocesan Synods.³⁸⁴

The Church of the Province, Williams described as "ipso facto schismatical":

What is it but schism and civil war, if a professed member of the Church of England can be excommunicated in Capetown or Grahamstown, can take steamer home and communicate in a month with the Archbishop of Canterbury.³⁸⁵

This was a clear reference to the fact that Colenso and clergy ordained by him were by law entitled to minister in the established Church of England, but the argument has two flaws. It treats what was a disadvantage of the Church of England as a flaw of the Church of the Province of South Africa, and it ignores the fact that the Church of England was in communion with the south African province. This

³⁸² Ibid., pp.5-24; PBH/BD, p.193.

³⁸³ F.H. Williams, Some Considerations for the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Grahamstown, p.18.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., p.23.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., p.15.

communion was clearly demonstrated by invitations to the south African bishops to attend the Lambeth Conferences, an invitation not extended to Colenso. Williams concluded by suggesting

...as the true modus vivendi, that the Constitution and Rules of Local Synods, Provincial and Diocesan, should conform, and where necessary reform, themselves into exact harmony with the known principles and practices of English Church Law. 386

This, together with the argument that the constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa was the result of "impatience...hurry and intolerance,"³⁸⁷ must have been difficult for Merriman to stomach. His concern, ever since his arrival in south Africa, had been to act on the principles of the Church of England, and to maintain unity with her. At first, it had been assumed that unity was safeguarded in law, but when the Eton College Case had shown that this was impossible, the south African church had retained its adherence to the Church of England, but not to the establishment. As to "impatience," the south African church had delayed several years to consult the bishops at the 1867 Lambeth Conference. To be criticised on these grounds by Williams, whose grasp of English church law was by no means perfect, but had a Humpty-Dumpty like aspect, meaning whatever the dean chose it to mean, must have been doubly trying. The south African church was in communion with the Church of England, if not in "exact harmony with the known principles and practices of English Church law."³⁸⁸

In this pamphlet, Williams went on to list the "precise functions and privileges accorded to a bishop by law," and therefore presumably recognised by himself. Among these were the bishop's right to license clergy and the right of visitation and inspection. This fact did not escape Merriman's notice,³⁸⁹ and perhaps led him to look forward to the visitation of the cathedral, of which he had given formal notice on 15 November, with some degree of optimism.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., p.22.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., p.15.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., p.22.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., p.19. Merriman's own copy of this pamphlet is marked at this point. See GDA 365.

Once again, he was to be disappointed. On 18 December 1878, after a service in the cathedral, Merriman, the dean, the two archdeacons and three canons met in the chapter house,³⁹⁰ and what must have been a painful and embarrassing scene ensued. In accordance with the agenda sent out a month earlier,³⁹¹ Merriman asked to be shown the formal document by which the chapter had been constituted. The chapter members, confirming Merriman's own opinion of the situation, replied that they knew of no such document. He then called on the chapter to produce their letters of appointment. Only John Espin, who had been elected to the chapter during Merriman's episcopate, was able to produce a letter of appointment to the chapter, but the archdeacons and the other canons produced letters of institution or licenses to officiate. Dean Williams however told Merriman that he had no letters of institution as dean. He argued that the act of induction was the instrument of institution,³⁹² but had no documentary evidence to substantiate his claims. The confirmation of his suspicions must have given Merriman some satisfaction, but Williams was unabashed. When Merriman proceeded to seek information about the diocesan library, the burial ground, the cathedral fabric, the frequency of divine service, and the constitution of the cathedral chapter, all questions of which he had given prior notice, the dean's answers were at best evasive. For example, while all the canons stated clearly that the Grahamstown cathedral chapter was not constituted in accordance with the resolution of the 1876 Provincial Synod, Williams replied that he was not aware whether this was the case or not. When Merriman asked what action should be taken to rectify the position, the other chapter members spoke in favour of the formulation and promulgation of cathedral statutes, but the dean made no reply. He did however repudiate responsibility for the record of his verbal answers to Merriman's other questions, which was being taken down in the minutes by the diocesan registrar. After Merriman had laid a copy of the original letters of constitution of the Cape

³⁹⁰GDA 351, Documents relating to Merriman's visitation of St George's Cathedral, Grahamstown, December 1878, Minutes.

³⁹¹Ibid., Printed notice of documents to be examined and subjects to be enquired into.

³⁹²Ibid., Minutes.

Town cathedral chapter³⁹³ and a draft copy of statutes for the Grahams-town chapter before the dean and canons, the meeting was adjourned until the next day.³⁹⁴

Williams's conduct in the chapter house on 19 December was even more disruptive than on the previous day. He insisted on reading a memorandum demanding that proceedings be held de novo and in public, and also that the minutes of proceedings already held be published.³⁹⁵ The bishop refused to allow this memorandum to be included in the minutes as it was "full of false statements," and "the result of the Dean's repeated attempts to argue at the Visitation, which the Bishop declined to permit." In reply, Merriman read out a memorandum of his own, expressing

...his displeasure at the disrespect to the office of Bishop and contumacy shown by the Revd. Dr. Williams D.D. Senior Colonial Chaplain, and reputed Dean of this Cathedral during the present Visitation. ³⁹⁶

With Merriman's permission, Williams then left the chapter house, remarking that without him the chapter was not properly constituted, as he was head. Merriman announced his intention to publish the cathedral statutes, and brought the visitation to an end.³⁹⁷

On the same day, Merriman appointed the two archdeacons, and four other clergymen, William Anderson Steabler, Henry Reade Woodrooffe, Thomas Henschman and John Espin to the cathedral chapter; they in return promised "due and canonical obedience" to the bishop and the statutes of the Church of the Province.³⁹⁸ Williams declined to receive any such letters of appointment, and Julia Merriman wrote:

³⁹³UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A2, pp.288-294, Letters of constitution of a dean and chapter of the cathedral church of Cape Town, and letters of appointment of canons, 1 Jan.1852.

³⁹⁴GDA 351, Documents relating to Merriman's visitation of St George's cathedral, Grahamstown, December 1878, Minutes.

³⁹⁵Ibid., Williams's protest.

³⁹⁶Ibid., Merriman's Memorandum.

³⁹⁷Ibid., Minutes.

³⁹⁸GDA 352, Subscriptions from chapter members, 19 Dec. 1878.

I was so thankful he did refuse - otherwise dear father would have had a hand in fixing him in the saddle... 399

Williams was busy along other lines. He reported details of the chapter meeting to St George's vestry, who in turn requested Merriman to provide them with a copy of the minutes of the chapter meeting during which Merriman had censured Williams. Their resolution was not politely phrased:

The Bishop will perceive that it is within the rights and the duties of the Select Vestry as representing the parishioners to be in possession of the records of proceedings on which such censure was founded as being most nearly interested in it after the official directly affected by it, and they request to be furnished with the information required as early as possible. 400

Merriman did not agree that it was "within the rights and the duties" of the vestry to obtain a copy of the chapter minutes : the terms of the church ordinance certainly made no such provision. Merriman had already made it clear that the chapter record would only be published with the concurrence of a majority of chapter members. Writing to the churchwardens on Merriman's behalf, the diocesan registrar reiterated the episcopal point of view:

The common objections against revealing the affairs of corporate bodies of this character cannot be violated by the Bishop nor have any parochial officers a claim to be made acquainted with the proceedings of the Chapter; but the Bishop will have no objection if requested by the general voice of the Chapter to make known what transpired during the late visitation. 401

Dean Williams meanwhile was pursuing yet another line of action. Merriman had told Williams that he would not preach in St George's on Christmas day as he had already arranged to go to Hilton. To Merriman's surprise, Williams came "in gushing mood" and offered to go to Hilton himself so that the bishop could preach in his cathedral on Christmas day. Julia Merriman surmised that Williams's aim was to add the offertory at Hilton to the £400 a year the cathedral congregation had

³⁹⁹ MP 1-79, JM to JXM and AM, 3 Jan. 1879.

⁴⁰⁰ CVMB, vol.II, 21 Dec. 1878, p.217.

⁴⁰¹ CVMB, vol.II, G.G. Wright to St George's vestry, 25 Dec. 1879, p.219.

agreed to raise for Impey's stipend, and she reported to John X. that Williams had been thwarted:

The Hilton Ch. Wardens very properly stuck to the offertory for "sick and aged clergy fund" as it had been given out (though even then the Dean said "could it not be changed").⁴⁰²

Meanwhile, the cathedral statutes had been hurried through the printers. On Christmas day Merriman took a copy of the statutes, framed and with the episcopal seal appended, to the cathedral, and hung it in the chapter house.⁴⁰³ The letters of constitution stated that the "special office" of the chapter was to "counsel and advise" the bishop on all questions affecting the interests of the church in the diocese. Born of bitter experience, the letters of constitution also provided that in chapter meetings the majority would prevail and that

...the Dean or President of the Chapter shall have no power to prevent the Chapter from coming to a vote upon any question, but that if the Dean refuse or neglect to put a question to the vote when requested by any member of the Chapter, that member may freely propose the question to the Chapter, and take the votes of the Chapter thereon.⁴⁰⁴

No chapter resolution could have force or effect until confirmed by the bishop. The letters of constitution concluded:

...we do hereby reserve to ourselves, and to our successors, all Episcopal jurisdiction, rights and privileges whatever.⁴⁰⁵

The chapter statutes laid down that the dean, together with the archdeacons and the chancellor were appointed to the chapter by the bishop and the four canons were elected by the chapter and by the clergy of the diocese alternately. The dean and canons were required to sign a declaration professing

⁴⁰²MP 1-79, JM to JXM and AM, 3 Jan. 1879.

⁴⁰³Ibid.; GDA 1061 Statutes of the Cathedral Church of St George, Grahamstown, signed by Bishop Merriman and bearing his seal.

⁴⁰⁴GDA 1077 Deed of Constitution and Statutes of the Chapter of St George's Cathedral Grahamstown, 1879, p.4.

⁴⁰⁵Ibid., p.5.

...due and Canonical obedience to the Lord Bishop, and to the Statutes of the said Church... 406

The duties of the dean were, "in subordination to the Bishop," to maintain worship in the cathedral, to have cure of souls in the cathedral parish, to act as archdeacon within the cathedral parish, to preside at chapter meetings when the bishop was absent, and finally, when the see was vacant, to administer the diocese together with the chapter and "to maintain discipline according to the Canons of the Church of this Province," until a vicar-general was appointed. Dean Williams would find cause for complaint in these provisions, but there was one even more controversial rule, because it was very specific. It spelt out the authority Merriman claimed to exercise in St George's:

The Bishop has the right of officiating and performing all Ecclesiastical functions at his own option within the Cathedral as well as in every other Church in the Diocese...

It shall be the function of the Bishop, unless hindered therefrom, to preach at the Morning Service on the last Sunday of each Calendar Month, and at the Morning Service on Easter Day and Christmas day. Notification of any hindrance therefrom is to be given to the Minister in charge. 407

Dean Williams returned from Hilton to find these regulations displayed in the chapter house. Infuriated, he summoned a vestry meeting at which Mr Churchwarden Gilbert reported that

...during the absence of the Dean...a framed document purporting to create Rules and Statutes for this Cathedral Church bearing the signature and official seal of the Bishop of the Diocese had been placed in a conspicuous position in the Chapter House by some person or persons unknown and without the authority or knowledge of the Dean, Wardens and Vestry... 408

The statutes were read and it was resolved

That the Vestry refuse to acknowledge the authority of the Document so published and that it be removed from the Vestry walls, that it be impounded by the

406 Ibid., pp.9-10.

407 Ibid., p.8.

408 CVMB, vol.II, 26 Dec. 1879, p.218.

Churchwardens pending its disposal and that the Churchwardens be authorized to take Counsels' opinion or retain Counsel for defence of any hostile or other steps taken towards a trespass or attempted encroachment on the rights of the Cathedral authorities. ⁴⁰⁹

Williams also expressed his anger in the columns of the Eastern Star, but, as Julia Merriman told John X.:

Father is mercifully guided 'to act wisely, and keep his temper. The Canons also remember they are Xtians and gentlemen and this adds fuel to the Dean's fire. ⁴¹⁰

Merriman pursued his own lines of action. He wrote repeatedly to the government, and finally obtained the assurance he was seeking, namely that Williams had received no other appointment from government but that of colonial chaplain of Grahamstown. ⁴¹¹ He also commissioned the learned John Espin to write a series of letters to the press, ⁴¹² attempting to bring Williams to reason, but this met with no success.

The enactment of statutes for the chapter had clarified the situation, but left both parties with less room to manoeuvre. This was perhaps inevitable, as neither Merriman nor Williams seemed likely to find a basis for compromise. The changed situation placed a strain on Merriman's health as he felt bound to preach in St George's on the occasions stipulated in the statutes. The last Sunday of each month became a trial of strength, and on each occasion an unpleasant scene threatened to erupt. At the end of December 1878, Julia Merriman reported that

Mr H[untley] got out of his bed yesterday...to beg Father wd. not go to the Cath. today as according to the Star the Dean was to pour forth a... tirade ...of wrath after the Nicene Creed. F.[ather] of course is not deterred by the threat from going and preach. ⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ MP 74-78, JM to AM, 29 Dec. 1878.

⁴¹¹ Cape Archives, CO 1079, NJM to Colonial Secretary, 9 Jan. 1879, 20 Jan. 1879; CO 5110, Colonial Secretary to NJM, 16 Jan. 1879, 31 Jan. 1879.

⁴¹² GTJ 24 Jan. 1879, 25 Apr. 1879.

⁴¹³ MP 74-78, JM to AM, 29 Dec. 1878.

Despite Mr Huntley's alarm, this occasion passed without disturbance. Another vestry meeting was held in mid-January. If by declaring his intention to preach in the cathedral on the last Sunday of each month, Merriman had thrown down the gauntlet, the challenge was taken up by this meeting, which opened with the announcement that Merriman had declined to make the record of his November visitation public. This clearly raised the temperature of the vestry and they felt it

...to be a duty...to put publicly on record its sense of regret and surprise that the Bishop should have allowed himself to be betrayed into a proceeding which appears to display injustice in making a serious accusation and unfairness in evading a request to explain the grounds on which it was made.

The Vestry in view of certain claims made contrary as it believes to the law of the Church of England and to the usage and custom of this Cathedral Church... hereby requests the Dean to exercise in his own person the right of preaching at morning service on the last Sunday of each month, such right having been formally and publicly challenged. 414

The substance of this resolution was conveyed to Merriman in a letter from R.W. Nelson. Dean Williams also wrote to his diocesan, informing Merriman that he concurred fully with the views of the vestry, and that he intended to preach himself in the cathedral at morning service on the last Sunday in each month. He assured Merriman however that

On any other Sunday...I shall be happy if you will be good enough to preach at the Morning Service, or at all such Morning Services, or at the Evening Service of the last Sunday in February...

The preaching list at the Sunday Evening Services of all Sundays to the end of February, save for the last Sunday of that month, I have already arranged for or else I should gladly put these also at your disposal. 415

In August 1878, Williams had argued that Merriman's claim to preach in St George's on one Sunday a month was an attempt to exclude the dean from the cathedral pulpit altogether. Now, he seemed to offer Merriman just such an opportunity, excluding the single Sunday service at which

⁴¹⁴ CVMB, vol.II, 16 Jan. 1879, p.220.

⁴¹⁵ GDA 1460, R.W. Nelson to NJM, 20 Jan. 1879; GDA 1443, FHW to NJM, 18 Jan. 1879.

the bishop had declared his intention to preach. At best, Merriman must have considered this document impertinent. It is more likely that he called it contumacious. A man who was capable of such a letter was clearly capable of anything. Aware only of the contents of the vestry resolution, the Journal speculated that recourse to law would result:

Probably this is far the best solution that can be attained; and it will be much more satisfactory to the general public to have the question of right impartially sifted by legal authorities, than to have it discussed in windy rigmaroles week after week, in the above paper. 416

The paper referred to was, of course, the Eastern Star. The Journal's expectation was not immediately fulfilled. The last Sundays in January and February passed without disruption. For Merriman to have preached in St George's at the end of March 1879 would have necessitated a journey from East London, but on this occasion he was advised to stay away by G.G. Wright, the diocesan registrar, who was going to seek legal advice in Cape Town. 417

The pressure was beginning to tell on Merriman. On 25 March 1879, he requested William West Jones to make an official visitation of his diocese in accordance with the Provincial Canons,

...to examine into and correct or at least pronounce your judgment upon certain anomalies and disturbances of order now existing in the Cathedral Church of Grahamstown. 418

West Jones refused to come, explaining that

...the official visitation...would be beyond my due powers as Metropolitan, would be a virtual supersession of the recognized Ecclesiastical tribunals, would be to lift Dean Williams' alleged offence out of the class with which such tribunals are intended to deal, would be a dangerous precedent, tending to undermine the authority of the Bishop of the Diocese, and would be prejudging a case which in the ordinary course of procedure may very probably be brought before me in another place. 419

416 GTJ 22 Jan. 1879.

417 MP 33-79, JM to AM, 31 Mar. 1879.

418 GDA 265, NJM to WWJ, 25 Mar. 1879.

419 UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, pp.143-145, WWJ to NJM, 26 Apr. 1879.

The metropolitan was careful not to condemn Williams's actions, but he clearly expected the case to come before an ecclesiastical tribunal. Hope of a metropolitan visitation having faded, Merriman realised that another course would have to be adopted in "this painful and unseemly conflict."⁴²⁰

It could be argued that Merriman should have taken every precaution to avoid provoking Dean Williams. It was clear that the dean was the strongest and most able advocate of the ecclesiastical point of view he claimed to represent. It was likely therefore that the controversy would collapse when he left Grahamstown or died. It was true that Merriman had inherited a "legacy of muddle and unease"⁴²¹ in chapter affairs from Cotterill, but his experience with Williams had shown that any attempt to clarify the position of the chapter threatened to increase rather than resolve the conflict. Merriman's wisest course therefore would have been to bide his time, and be prepared to live out his life enduring the unhappy situation. This argument ignores the fact that Williams was flying in the face of Robert Gray's work, an area in which Merriman was particularly sensitive. Williams's insistence that as dean he reigned supreme in the cathedral was also offensive to one who held episcopal office in great esteem. Moreover, the argument in favour of passive acceptance does not take Merriman's temperament into account. The years since the 1876 diocesan synod had been immensely difficult for Merriman, and his wife marvelled at the self-control he had shown. She asked Agnes and John X. if they had read a collection of essays on the book of Job, and continued:

Mosley's remark upon the characters of Job and Moses struck me very much - the one famed for patience, the other for meekness and yet neither were by nature endowed with these qualities - they were the outcome of a trial of faith...So dear Father is naturally impulsive, hardly restrained from doing or saying that which strikes him at the moment, but how longsuffering, calm and patient he has been throughout in his conduct towards Decanus. ⁴²²

⁴²⁰GDA 267, NJM to WWJ, 24 Apr. 1879.

⁴²¹MP 1-79, JM to JXM and AM, 3 Jan. 1879.

⁴²²Ibid.

Subsequent events indicate that his long patience was coming to an end. Merriman was determined to preach in St George's at the end of April 1879, and if Williams opposed him in any way, he made up his mind to use another church in Grahamstown as his cathedral.⁴²³ He wrote to Dean Williams in mid-April to inform him of his intention, and Williams in turn wrote to the churchwardens of St George's:

I regret to have to report...as a matter of official duty, that I have received a notice which leads me to apprehend that there will be a breach of the due and peaceable order of Divine Service attempted in the Cathedral...

I should be doing less than my duty did I not report the matter to the officials who are the legal guardians of the people's rights in Sunday worship.⁴²⁴

A letter to Merriman was drawn up at a vestry meeting on 24 April 1879. Dean Williams, with R.W. Nelson and William Gilbert, churchwardens, and Thomas Sheffield, A.C. Galpin, W. Tomlinson and D.H. Kennelly, vestrymen.⁴²⁵ All were leading local businessmen and prominent public figures, but whereas John Heavyside, then colonial chaplain had supported Merriman, in Williams he now had an aggressive opponent. In reply to Merriman's letter informing Williams that he would preach in St George's on 27 April, the vestry told the bishop that Williams would preach on that day

...in the exercise of his own official and legal right, and in compliance with an express request of the Select Vestry...⁴²⁶

The vestry warned Merriman that any attempt on his part to exclude Williams from the pulpit would cause "serious excitement, if not angry disturbance" in the church. The churchwardens, whose duty it was in terms of Ordinance 2 of 1839 to maintain "good order and decency of behaviour" in the church, told the bishop:

⁴²³MP 33-79, JM to AM, 31 Mar. 1879.

⁴²⁴CVMB, vol.II, 24 Apr. 1879, p.223.

⁴²⁵For a discussion of the composition of St George's vestry under Dean Williams, see below, p.420.

⁴²⁶CVMB, vol.II, 24 Apr. 1879, p.223; GDA 1461, St George's churchwardens to N.J. Merriman.

...we hereby throw the responsibility for any breach of such "good order..." on those whose acts may tend to provoke such. 427

They can hardly have been pleased at Merriman's reply, for he did not disavow his intention to preach, and he redirected at the churchwardens their own warning to himself, remarking that he was

...glad to observe under the painful circumstances anticipated by you, that you recognize the duty devolving on you of preserving "good order and decency of behaviour..." 428

Williams was not dealt with so lightly. He was again informed that Merriman would preach in the cathedral on 27 April, and enjoined "not to withstand or interrupt his ministrations." Should he disobey this injunction, Williams was warned:

...you will be proceeded against for contumacious disobedience in this and other matters to the lawful order of the Bishop thus causing great offence and scandal to the church. 429

Throughout the previous three years, Merriman had striven to avoid "a public contest...which would cause scandal and endanger the peace of the Church,"⁴³⁰ but on 27 April 1879 he found himself engaged in such a contest. An unusually large congregation attended the morning service in St George's that day. Together with the Rev. William Impey, Archdeacon White, and the Canon Chancellor, John Espin, Bishop Merriman and Dean Williams processed from the west end to their stalls. The service proceeded smoothly but in an atmosphere of rising tension.⁴³¹ At a point earlier than usual, Williams entered the pulpit and began to announce the text for his sermon. Merriman was heard to say in a quiet voice:

I testify before God and the Church that I am interrupted in my lawful ministrations in this Church.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Quoted in CVMB, vol.II, 24 Apr. 1879, p.223.

⁴²⁹ GDA 381, NJM to FHW, 24 Apr. 1879.

⁴³⁰ N.J. Merriman, Some Considerations for the Dean and Chapter..., p.iii.

⁴³¹ GTJ 28 Apr. 1879. ES 29 Apr. 1879.

He then left his stall, walked down the north aisle of the church, and out by the west door, leaving behind him a written copy of his verbal protest, signed N.J. Grahamstown.⁴³² Williams continued with his sermon.

Merriman could not allow such an event to pass unremarked, but nor could he deal with the situation personally any longer. Eight years of patient endurance were over. Three years of litigation and three major court cases lay ahead.

⁴³²GDA 382, Copy in N.J. Merriman's own hand of the document which the bishop left pinned to a cushion in the chapter house, 27 Apr. 1879.

CHAPTER SIX

MISSIONARY BISHOP

"Blessed is he who has found his work : let him ask no other blessedness."

Thomas Carlyle, Past and Present, ch. 11.

Bishop Merriman's responsibility for the mission work of the vast diocese of Grahamstown¹ freed him from the oppressive ecclesiastical atmosphere of his cathedral city, but his missionary involvement was no mere escapism. He was aware that large areas of his diocese were destitute of missions, and he was alive to the need for theological education in the diocese and the province. Moreover, the last of the frontier wars broke out during his episcopate. In dealing with its aftermath, Merriman's own attitude underwent a significant change, and he exercised the independence of a bishop of the church to criticise injustice wherever it was committed, whether in tribal society or by the imperial or colonial government.

John Armstrong laid the foundations of four mission stations, which he named after the evangelists, with what were considered the four chief black groups on the frontier. Sir George Grey made the grant of land for St Matthew's, mission to the Mfengu, and from the Gcaleka, Ndlambe and Ngqika chiefs came the land for St Mark's, St Luke's and St John's. The episcopate of Henry Cotterill saw the consolidation of these stations, the formation of All Saints', St Alban's and St Augustine's eastward across the Kei, and the growth of town missions in Grahamstown, Fort Beaufort, Graaff-Reinet and Port Elizabeth, to serve the large numbers of blacks who moved into urban areas. Cotterill was an able administrator, and during his episcopate, government of African missions was vested in a conference of ordained missionaries, who met annually under his chairmanship, to define

¹See map above, between pp.122-123.

missionary policy and to administer S.P.G. and government grants for missionary work. This was the missionary network and organisational foundation on which Merriman built when he became Bishop of Grahamstown.²

When Merriman was Archdeacon of Grahamstown, he compiled a list of the names of Anglican clergy who had begun and then abandoned missionary work. Characteristically, he placed his own name at the head of the list.³ On the eve of his election to the see of Grahamstown, Merriman was able to embark once more on a missionary task.

The foundation of St Mark's mission had taken Anglican missions beyond the boundary of British territory into an area which, as Armstrong commented, "as regards peace and war is completely interwoven with the rest of Kafirland."⁴ In 1857, Merriman spoke out in favour of the appointment of a bishop to take charge of the frontier missions,⁵ in 1860 Henry Tempest Waters, missionary at St Mark's, echoed this plea,⁶ and in episcopal synod in 1863, the bishops of the province also advocated the formation of a diocese of "Independent Kaffraria."⁷ Meanwhile, under the direction of the Bishop of Grahamstown and supported by a special fund from the S.P.G., Anglican work expanded across the Kei. When Cotterill left to become Bishop of Edinburgh in 1871, he said in his farewell charge to the diocese of Grahamstown:

I should be thankful if that Church in which I shall be a Bishop should be able to plant and maintain a mission of its own among the Kaffir tribes.⁸

While Cotterill did much work in Scotland to fulfil this hope, in August 1871, Merriman undertook a journey through the territory which

² M.M. Goedhals, Anglican Missionary Policy in the Diocese of Grahamstown 1853-1871.

³ SAL 535, Merriman Letterbook, miscellaneous notes.

⁴ GDA 623, J. Armstrong, Notes from South Africa.

⁵ SPG mic., vol. D7, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to EH, 7 Jan. 1857.

⁶ GDA 829, H.T. Waters to H. Kitton, 2 Apr. 1860.

⁷ Minutes of Proceedings of the Synod of Bishops of the Province of Capetown Held at Capetown on the 15th December 1863.

⁸ SPG Annual Report, 1871, p.45.

would fall under the new bishop. He enjoyed the opportunities for renewed contact with the Moravian missionaries at Shiloh and Bazia, and for relaxation and general conversation in kraals on the way, recording with some amusement that on one occasion his hosts described the rush to the diamond fields as "the white man's Nongquas" and called his tea-kettle, "the Englishman's black cow."⁹ Merriman's more profound observations on this journey, which took him from Grahamstown to Pietermaritzburg and back, confirmed that:

...there seems to be now an urgent call and a hopeful opening for the establishment of an Anglican Bishopric in Independent Kaffraria.¹⁰

The bishops gathered for Merriman's consecration sent a formal request to the Scottish Episcopal Church to support an episcopal mission across the Kei,¹¹ and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel agreed to co-operate with the scheme. Until a bishop was consecrated, Merriman was responsible for oversight of missions across the Kei. He found that his journeys there "quite set him up," adding:

...if I were only twenty years younger I would request the Scotch Ep. Ch. to appoint me their Bishop in Independent Kaffraria, I have such wonderfully increased health and spirits when there.¹²

Henry Callaway was chosen as the first bishop of the new diocese, and was consecrated on 1 November 1873, by the Primus of the Church of Scotland and the Bishops of Edinburgh and Brechin. Callaway took up his work in August 1874, using his former station of Springvale, on the borders of Natal, as his base.¹³

The formation of the diocese of St John's freed Merriman from the responsibility for all Anglican missions across the Kei. Apart from a

⁹ Ibid., p.59. Nongquase, niece of Mhlakaza, was the young girl who saw the visions which led to the cattle-killing. OHSA, vol. I, pp.256-257.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.70.

¹¹ Ibid., p.45; SPG mic., vol. D37, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 13 Dec. 1871.

¹² SPG Annual Report, 1871, p.43.

¹³ M.S. Benham, Henry Callaway, p.267.

rather feeble town mission in King William's Town,¹⁴ and the re-siting of a mission destroyed in the War of Ngcayecibi,¹⁵ the major new missionary enterprise of Merriman's episcopate, and one in which he took an especial interest, was the mission of St Michael and All Angels, Herschel, in the northeast of his diocese. Settled in this area, between the Orange and Tele rivers, were Sotho, Thembu and Mfengu, under a British magistrate. The bishop clearly took a dim view of the western influences, in the form of a police camp and trading stations "dotted about in all directions,"¹⁶ to which the people were subjected, and he regarded the establishment of an Anglican mission as of utmost importance. The magistrate made a grant of land,¹⁷ and the S.P.G. provided the finance,¹⁸ but the first missionary there, T.W. Green, was soon discouraged, and abandoned the mission.¹⁹ Eventually, after the 1877-1878 war, the young S.W. Cox, together with A.J. Newton whose station of St Peter's, Gwatyu had been burnt, moved up to Herschel.²⁰ The Anglicans had the support of the local magistrate, a benevolent Captain Hook, but Merriman's attitude to government assistance showed more caution than Robert Gray's thirty years before, when Sir Harry Smith had introduced the bishop to the assembled chiefs.²¹ The magistrate assured a gathering of headmen in the Herschel district that schools and missions had government approval: when Merriman spoke, he

¹⁴MCMB 1866-1883, pp. 55, 118, 130, 157, 181, 223; SPG mic., Grahamstown diocese, vol. D37, NJM to WTB, 22 Oct. 1874; vol. D44, NJM to WTB, 10 Jan. 1876; vol. D46, NJM to WTB, 2 Feb. 1877; vol. D53, NJM to WTB, 17 Feb. 1880.

¹⁵Net, 1 Sep. 1880, pp.137-139.

¹⁶Net, 1 Apr. 1876, p.58. On the district of Herschel, see C. Bundy, The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry, pp.146-162.

¹⁷LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to Colonial Secretary, 17 Sep. 1879.

¹⁸SPG mic., vol. D42, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 30 Jul. 1875.

¹⁹MCMB 1866-1883, p.151; SPG mic., Vol. D44, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 10 Jan. 1876, 18 Jul. 1876.

²⁰MF, Mar. 1879, p.102.

²¹See above, ch. 2, pp.88-89.

...took care to inform the people, that, however thankful we were for the Government countenance, that we brought them the 'Word of God,' 'word' is a great name with them for Government messages, and Chief's messages,...and if all the Magistrates in the Colony, the Government included, were to set their faces against us, we were still bound to bring them this Word. To this, I am happy to say, the Magistrate signified his assent. ²²

To Merriman's satisfaction, by 1882 a church was being built at St Michael's, there was a sewing class and a boarding school on the station, and two paid catechists and three voluntary preachers at work. ²³

During the nineteenth century, Christianity and western culture were often so closely identified as to be indistinguishable, and undoubtedly the missionaries of the Victorian age saw their task as not only religious but cultural conversion. One means of achieving this acculturation of Africans along European lines was education. The African perception of the situation was different. They sought education as a means of coping with other changes in their environment, and they also perceived that they would be better paid and have greater mobility if they received an academic education. ²⁴ The European civil government saw the role of education in yet another light. Although Sir George Grey set out to create the political, social and economic interdependence between black and white on the Cape eastern frontier which his predecessors had sought to prevent, the basis of his policy was not racial equality. The pattern of industrial teaching he encouraged is evidence that blacks were to be educated for a subordinate role in society. The initiation of Anglican mission work coincided with the arrival of Sir George Grey, who had worked closely with Bishop Selwyn in New Zealand. By accepting offers of aid for education from the

²² Net, Oct. 1880.

²³ Net, Apr. 1881, Apr. 1882, Dec. 1882.

²⁴ R. Hunt Davis, Nineteenth Century African Education in the Cape Colony: a Historical Analysis, passim; E.H. Berman, "African Responses to Christian Mission Education," African Studies Review, Dec. 1974, vol. 17, no. 3, pp.327-340.

government, the Anglicans, at least implicitly, accepted the underlying motive. George Grey saw Christianity as an essential component of his scheme to bring peace to the frontier : subsequent administrations worked through the churches because missionaries were the only available agents of education.²⁵

Under the 1865 Education Act,²⁶ government control over education increased. As Hunt Davis points out, the act also meant that the amount of aid to black schools remained static and therefore retarded progress, whereas white schools were more generously assisted. This factor also restricted the positions blacks could fill in a plural society.²⁷ In terms of the Education Act, two categories of Anglican mission schools, elementary schools and industrial institutions, received government aid, and were subject to government inspection.

Black education was the focus of a great debate in mission circles in the 1860s. William Govan, principal of Lovedale until 1870, argued that the elevation of a pre-literate people could best be achieved by advanced education for the few, while James Stewart, backed by Alexander Duff and the Foreign Mission Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, advocated elementary education to reach as many as possible.²⁸ At the time, Stewart's view prevailed, perhaps because it coincided with the view of Langham Dale, Superintendent-General of Education at the Cape, who wrote in 1869:

I am inclined to discourage the special preparation of a few native lads...at great expense, and to assist only in the training of a sufficient number of native teachers to occupy the various school-stations at the kraals...To the educated Kafir there is no opening; he may be qualified to fill the post of a clerk...but either there is no demand for such persons, or prejudice operates against persons of colour being so employed.²⁹

²⁵ M.M. Goedhals, op.cit., ch. 4.

²⁶ Act 13 of 1865, An Act for Regulating the mode of appropriating Grants from the Public Revenue in aid of General Education.

²⁷ R. Hunt Davis, op.cit., pp.239-243.

²⁸ R.H.W. Shepherd, Lovedale, South Africa, the Story of a Century 1841-1941, pp.152-167.

²⁹ CPP, G31 of 1869, Report on Schools, Middle and Eastern Districts, by the Superintendent-General of Education. Langham

Dale was pleased to notice that Lovedale, Healdtown and Anglican institutions of higher education on the frontier fell in with his interpretation of blacks' educational needs, but for the missionaries themselves, this was not by design, but enforced by the fact that their students were unable to find work as interpreters or clerks and had no alternative but to accept employment as teachers.³⁰ Nor did the missionaries abandon the idea of academic education for blacks to the extent that Dale anticipated.

Vast tables of official statistics, purporting to reveal the state of black education at the Cape were produced annually.³¹ Likewise, innumerable missionary reports found their way back to England in the nineteenth century.³² The former are confusing, and the latter rose-coloured and propagandist, as missionaries had to justify the financial assistance provided for their work by the devout in England, and to ensure that the supply of funds continued. A more revealing analysis of the state of black education on the Cape frontier is the report of a tour of inspection undertaken by Donald Ross, newly-appointed Inspector-General of Education, in the early 1880s.³³ Like Dale, he thought that education of a lower standard than was provided for whites, and of a practical nature, should be provided for blacks. Nevertheless, his comments on the state of elementary schools, Anglican establishments included, were scathing:

Dale (1826-1898), was educated at Christ's Hospital, London, and Queen's College, Oxford. He was appointed Superintendent-General of Education at the Cape in 1859, and was knighted in 1889. (D.S.A.B., vol. I, pp.201-204.)

³⁰ MF 1 Feb. 1870, p.46.

³¹ N. Etherington, The Rise of the Kholwa, p.269.

³² Missionary reports were published in the Mission Field, and other periodicals such as The Net. It was a practice which Merriman regarded with suspicion. See above, ch. 2, pp.105-106.

³³ CPP, G12 of 1883, Preliminary Report on the State of Education, by Donald Ross. Ross (1843-1883), was appointed Inspector-General of Education at the Cape in 1882. The post was created to enable Langham Dale to concentrate on his administrative duties. Ross's report on the state of education at the Cape displeased Dale, and there was friction between the two men on their relative status. (D.S.A.B., vol.III, pp.723-724.)

In a large - by far the largest - number of schools it would be absolute waste of time to examine the pupils in detail, so very elementary were their attainments and so inferior was the quality of instruction imparted. When...I found 70 or 80 per cent. of those present either scratching strokes upon slates or doing nothing at all; or if the teacher belonged to the illiterate classes; or if he was absent from duty; or, if present, clearly inattentive, there was no good reason for going through the farce of an elaborate examination. ³⁴

He concluded that "the very large part of the grant at present spent upon native education is spent to no purpose."³⁵ Ross found the so-called industrial training also a misnomer : too often it consisted merely of gardening and housework, but he acknowledged three exceptions, Lovedale, St Matthew's at Keiskammahoek, and the Kafir Institute in Grahamstown.³⁶

In 1860, the conference of Anglican missionaries discussed the formation of a higher school in Grahamstown as a training college for teachers, and in September, the Kafir Institute opened in the grounds of Bishopsbourne with six pupils. The first head was William Greenstock, but in 1861, Henry Reade Woodrooffe took over and the school, now with twelve pupils, moved to buildings in the grounds of St Andrew's College. The following year, the school moved again, to Fort England, and Richard Goode Hutt was appointed principal. Woodrooffe replaced Hutt in 1863, and in 1865, when Robert Mullins became head, the Kafir Institute moved back to West Hill.³⁷ Entrants were required to be baptised, fifteen years of age, and able to read English and Xhosa, and while training at St Matthew's was industrial, subjects taught at the Kafir Institute included algebra, geometry, physical science, geography and history.³⁸ In 1871, there were sixty-one African teachers in the diocese of Grahamstown, and Merriman began his episcopate with a commitment to increase their number.³⁹ This meant extension of the Kafir

³⁴CPP, G12 of 1883, p.4.

³⁵Ibid., p.47.

³⁶Ibid., p.53.

³⁷CC., Jun. 1890, pp.162-167.

³⁸MCMB, 1866-1883, p.22; CPP, G31 of 1869, p.35.

³⁹SPG mic., D37, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 13 Dec. 1872, 30 Jan. 1872, 20 May 1872, 19 Sep. 1872.

Institute, and in 1872 Robert Mullins bought new premises for the school. Merriman commented:

It was really time that the Kaffir branch was separated from the European branch of St Andrew's College. They have gone on together very amicably thus far, which a less able manager than Mr Mullins could hardly have secured. But now that the necessity for increasing the Kaffir institution presses upon us, it is best that they should each have separate premises exclusively for their own use, though being in close juxtaposition they will still keep up a healthy intercourse with each other. ⁴⁰

By 1880, numbers at the Institute had risen from fifteen in 1870 to forty-one students who were prepared for the government teachers' examination, and industrial training in carpentry and printing was provided. ⁴¹

By accepting government aid, the Anglican missionaries had to some extent compromised on the kind of education they would offer in their schools. Other financial assistance for missionary work in the diocese of Grahamstown came from the S.P.G., but Merriman, like Henry Venn, ⁴² saw self-support as an essential characteristic of the local church. One of the features of his episcopate was his insistence that pupils at boarding schools contribute to their support, that villages wanting a resident teacher raise his salary, and that black congregations contribute to the stipends of black clergy who served them. ⁴³ The bishop rejoiced too, when missionary congregations raised sums to be sent to the S.P.G. for missions in other areas of the world, as evidence of the catholic nature of the church. ⁴⁴

⁴⁰ SPG mic., D37, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 20 May 1872.

⁴¹ MF 1 Sep. 1880, pp.290-293.

⁴² See above, ch. 2, p.79.

⁴³ SPG mic., Grahamstown diocese, vol. D37, NJM to WTB, 11 Aug. 1874; vol. D44, NJM to WTB, 10 Jan. 1876; MF 1 Oct. 1877, pp.430-432; MF 1 Dec. 1879, p.524; MCMB 1866-1883, passim.

⁴⁴ SPG mic., vol. D37, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 13 Apr. 1872.

White congregations were a potential source of financial support for mission work, but contributions were meagre, not perhaps surprising while the usual attitude of white colonists to black frontiersmen and to mission prevailed among Anglican laity. In 1860, the Rev. T.W. Green attempted to explain that attitude:

...the colonists seemed to think that Christian truths might be taught to the Kaffirs in a more simple manner than by teaching them to read and to write; and they felt that in aiding missions they were enabling the Kaffirs to get that education which they could not get for their own children... 45

One of the lay delegates, Frederick Carlisle, put it quite bluntly:

His knowledge of Kaffirs would not induce him to contribute very liberally to the support of Kaffir missions. 46

Throughout Merriman's episcopate, this hostile attitude to missionary work among Anglican laity found a clerical exponent in Frederick Henry Williams. The bishop told Bullock, Secretary to the S.P.G.:

Advocating the cause of missions is I suppose always a difficult matter in a Colony which has been scourged like ours with Native wars. I am sure it is so where the principal clergyman of the Diocese is either actively hostile or lukewarm in the cause, advocating publicly forced labour first and Missions afterwards (i.e. at the Greek Kalends). 47

In response to this attitude among white colonists, in 1875 Merriman wrote an open letter, in which he refuted the argument that missionaries ruined the labour market. His attitude was not apologetic, and he had some pertinent remarks to make to the critics of missions:

And if there are lazy Kafirs who profess Christianity, so are there in the same proportion, I fear, drunken, dissolute, and fraudulent Europeans who do the same... I am sure it is no lack of charity to say that the religion of those who possess a disbelief in all Kafir conversion is not usually a model of Christian graces

⁴⁵ LV 102, Synodical Memoranda 1860, p.77.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.75.

⁴⁷ SPG mic., vol. D37, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 19 Sep. 1874. See also, e.g., ES 17 Dec. 1875.

and conduct, but rather is, for the most part, of a feeble, faithless, and unscriptural kind. ⁴⁸

During the 1850s, it had been decided that the parochial structure was suited to the needs of white congregations, whereas the mission station characterised African work. An apathetic and often hostile attitude to mission among white laymen reinforced the ~~destruction~~ ^{distinction} that seemed to exist between black and white members of the church in the diocese of Grahamstown, but although in many ways the church conformed to the racial division of the society around it, it was not prepared to legislate for the exclusion of blacks from synod.

In response to Peter Hinchliff's argument that a weakness of the first Provincial Synod was the absence of any south-African born clergyman, let alone any black clergyman, ⁴⁹ Michael Nuttall argues that the real significance of the Provincial Synod was the presence of laity. ⁵⁰ But it could be countered that here too was a failing, for there were no black lay representatives at the diocesan or provincial synods which determined the constitutional future of the Church of the Province of South Africa. The question of lay delegates elected by black congregations was, however, discussed by the Grahamstown diocesan synod as early as 1863.

In that year, St Philip's mission congregation in Grahamstown elected William Ogilvie as its lay delegate to the diocesan synod. The lay delegate for St George's, Edward Booth, argued that this black congregation was not "competent to exercise so important a trust." ⁵¹ The synod, however, resolved by forty votes to four that Ogilvie's election was valid, if unexpected. The principle of lay representation for black congregations was also discussed, and although the view was put forward that the influence of synod would be injured by the presence of delegates representing mission congregations, synod refused to

⁴⁸ N.J. Merriman, Are the Missionaries Mischief-Workers?

⁴⁹ PBH, p.116.

⁵⁰ M. Nuttall, Synodical Government 1870-1970 : The Making of a Tradition.

⁵¹ UWL, AB532, Diocese of Grahamstown, Scrapbooks 1861-1885, vol. I, Synodical Memoranda 1863, p.5.

establish the principle that they should be excluded.⁵²

At the 1867 diocesan synod, to which St Philip's again elected a lay delegate, Joseph Cotterill asked why St Matthew's and St Mark's missions were not similarly represented. Both had large numbers of communicants, those at St Mark's nearly equalling the number of three white Port Elizabeth congregations, and Cotterill argued that lay representation of "the native church" at synod "would be one step to the removal of the wall of separation between colonial and native congregations."⁵³ Henry Tempest Waters, missionary at St Mark's, reported a discussion with members of his congregation who had displayed great interest in reports that "native Christians" in North America had voted in the election of their diocesan bishop, but who were "afraid...that they would not be received on the same terms of equality as other delegates." Waters himself was in favour of the presence of black lay delegates, while admitting that an ability to speak English was a limiting but necessary qualification:

There were many beyond the Kei that were quite capable of taking part in the proceedings, and forming an intelligent opinion...⁵⁴

Greenstock, missionary at St Matthew's was more cautious than Waters. His congregation was content to be represented by its white missionary, and moreover, he considered that

Except they selected a European to represent them, they were scarcely fit to sit and vote...Whenever they would be fit in character and attainments for this duty, he was sure their christian character would be regarded, not their colour.⁵⁵

The synod agreed that a committee of laity, with the bishop as chairman, draw up a scheme for the representation of "the native church," which would be considered by the next synod.⁵⁶ This proposal was mentioned

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ AA 22 Jun. 1867.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ AA 29 Jun. 1867.

by Cotterill in his charge to the 1869 synod. The bishop stated that mission congregations were not qualified to send delegates from among their own number, but recommended that two white delegates be chosen to represent the missions at synod:

...it must be remembered that the mission congregations are affected by our Synodical rules and are ready to co-operate with us. They have contributed more than some of our parishes to...diocesan funds. There must be, from time to time, questions affecting them, and their interests and those of the missionary clergy are not necessarily identical.⁵⁷

The plans for Provincial Synod overshadowed this proposal, and no steps along the lines suggested by Cotterill were taken.

During Merriman's episcopate, diocesan synod continued to be an all-white assembly. Although the bishop ordained several black deacons, only clergy in priest's orders were entitled to a seat in synod, and no special provision was made for the representation of black congregations.

The split along racial lines occurred early in the church in the diocese of Grahamstown, and indeed was perhaps inevitable given the widely different nature of work in white parishes and on black missions. There was perhaps in synod a tendency to make too many concessions for "the weakness of some,"⁵⁸ and to avoid antagonising white lay delegates, but discussion in synod on the subject of mission was largely restricted to the question of white financial contributions to mission work. Actual regulations for the government of missions were made by a conference of missionaries, over which the bishop presided, as he did over the diocesan synod. As this early example illustrates, the Church of the Province of South Africa, whatever its failures in practice, has refused to bow to the standards of a racially divided society and to split the church on racial lines. The bishop

⁵⁷ IV 105, Synodical Memoranda 1869, Cotterill's charge, p.10.

⁵⁸ OHSA, vol.I, p.270. The reference is to the 1857 synod of the Dutch Reformed Church at the Cape which resolved to form separate congregations for blacks and whites, "because of the weakness of some."

has been a focus of unity, ministering to black and white, even when the two groups have little contact with each other, and setting forth in his own person an ideal of unity to which both groups should aspire.

Merriman played no direct part in elementary and industrial education in the diocese of Grahamstown : this work was administered in terms of the 1865 Education Act and required no episcopal intervention. Theological education, however, was of particular concern to Merriman, and in this area, in which the government played no part, he made a valuable contribution to the diocese and the province.

In the year of his death, Robert Gray told his sister that what the Church of the Province of South Africa needed most was a theological college.⁵⁹ At that date, clergymen in the province had received their preparation for ordination in several different ways. There were those like Gray and Merriman who were graduates of Oxford or Cambridge, others like Kitton who had been to St Bee's, a theological college for non-graduates founded in England in 1816, and others like Robert Mullins and Bransby Key, who had been trained at St Augustine's, Canterbury, a theological college for missionary clergy. There was a group of men who had satisfied the S.P.G. examiners that they were fit to minister in the colonies, and who had been ordained with this proviso.⁶⁰ Gray had brought with him from England a group of men who wished to be ordained, and on the journey to the Cape, and in Cape Town, the bishop and Hopkins Badnall acted as theological tutors.⁶¹ Without a

⁵⁹CNG, vol.II, p.552.

⁶⁰Laymen who applied to the S.P.G., after providing sufficient evidence that they were free from debt or other worldly reasons for wishing to escape from England, were required to write an examination set by a board of examiners instituted by the S.P.G. in 1845, the members of which included the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the Bishop of London. H.P. Thompson, Into All Lands, p.113.

⁶¹M. Nuttall, "Theological Training in Historical Perspective," Journal of Theology for Southern Africa, no.18, March 1977, pp.32-37. For other accounts of theological training in the province, see

theological college, and unless the bishop was prepared to undertake the work himself or could afford to send his ordinands to England, all he could do was advise the young men

...to go on in their Bank, Store or shop, and get what Theological help they can, from the (not always well instructed) clergyman that is nearest to them. ⁶²

In the early 1860s, Henry Cotterill had sent two young blacks to St Augustine's, Canterbury, as preparation for ordination, but this experiment, and an attempt to provide theological education at Zonnebloem College in the late 1860s had not met with success. ⁶³

The bishops of the south African dioceses at episcopal synod in 1869 had agreed on the importance of maintaining as high a standard of education as was possible, among candidates for orders in the province, ⁶⁴ and in 1876, Provincial Synod recommended the formation of a theological college in each diocese, and the constitution of a faculty for the province to examine candidates in theology. The synod also agreed that the standard of education required for priests' orders in the Church of the Province of South Africa should be at the same level as in the Church of England, but also agreed that high educational and theological attainments were not necessary for admission to the diaconate, "taking into consideration the character and duties" of that office. ⁶⁵

A.W. Lee, "The Growth of an African Ministry in the Province of South Africa," East and West Review, vol.VI, 1940, pp.116-130; P.B. Hinchliff, "The Theology of Graduation: an Experiment in Training Colonial Clergy," in C.W. Dugmore and C. Duggan (eds.), Studies in Church History, vol.I; T.S.N. Gqubule, An examination of the theological education of Africans in the Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational and Anglican churches in South Africa from 1860.

⁶² SPG mic., vol. D37, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 15 Nov.1873.

⁶³ Net 1 Jul. 1873; Minutes of Proceedings of the Synod of Bishops of the Province of Capetown...1869, p.14. For a history, see J. Hodgson, A History of Zonnebloem College 1858 to 1870 : a study of Church and Society.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.17.

⁶⁵ Constitution and Canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa as Revised, Amended, and Confirmed by the Provincial Synod, held at Capetown, A.D. 1876, pp.76-80.

In 1876, Allan Webb, Bishop of Bloemfontein and formerly vice-principal of Cuddesdon, attempted to establish a theological college, which he called St Cyprian's, for black and white students. The experiment failed, and according to Nuttall, "the South African Bishops remained dilatory for a further period," until the turn of the century, when an examining faculty of divinity was set up, followed by the establishment of St Paul's College, Grahamstown.⁶⁶ Not all the south African bishops were dilatory : an experiment, albeit a makeshift one, was attempted in the Grahamstown diocese, to place theological training on a secure footing, and the man Merriman asked to undertake the work of theological tutor was John Espin, who eventually became the first warden of St Paul's College.

Merriman began his episcopate with a resolve to ordain Africans to the diaconate and ultimately to the priesthood. There were several reasons for this. Merriman saw the creation of a body of black clergy, drawn from black Anglican converts and serving them, as in itself a positive good and evidence of life within the church.⁶⁷ Secondly, black teachers bore much of the burden of evangelisation in the diocese, and it was unfair to limit them to a lay ministry *ad infinitum*, as they would be tempted to seek alternative employment.⁶⁸ Thirdly, missionaries already in the diocese were aging, and the supply from England was dwindling.⁶⁹ Although Merriman did not abandon the hope that missionaries' sons would seek ordination and take up their fathers' work, on the whole he was disappointed.⁷⁰ In January 1873, Merriman discussed with the conference of missionaries the suitability of several teachers for ordination to the diaconate,⁷¹ and although the

⁶⁶ M. Nuttall, "Theological Training in Historical Perspective," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, March 1977, no. 18, p.36.

⁶⁷ *MCMB*, 1866-1883, p.95.

⁶⁸ SPG mic., Vol. D37, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 11 Aug. 1874.

⁶⁹ *MF* 1 Oct. 1877, p.43.

⁷⁰ SPG mic., Grahamstown diocese, vol. D37, NJM to WTB, 22 Aug. 1872; vol. D50, NJM to WTB, 19 Mar. 1879.

⁷¹ *MCMB*, 1866-1883, p.95.

formation of the diocese of St John's meant that several of these men fell under another bishop, by 1878 there were four black deacons in the diocese of Grahamstown:⁷² Jacob Boom, Stephen Mnyakama, Daniel Mzamo and Eleazar Nyovane.

White parishes in the diocese were also in need of clergy. St Andrew's College had not fulfilled its original function of training young men for ordination,⁷³ and Merriman detailed his difficulties in this area to Bullock in 1873:

...our great and crying want is the means of calling out and training for the ministry some of our Colonial youths - or even older.

I fear the Kaffirs have the prospect of an indigenous ministry among them even before our European population. As to inviting feeble and uneducated men out from England, I feel it to be much better to put up with what material I can find here for Catechists and Readers. Their mistakes will be fewer, less fatal and less expensive.

I have never ceased to deplore that a S. African Theological College was not the one object aimed at as a Memorial to our late Metropolitan. It was the one want which he himself began to feel most severely before his death, and which he expressed to me. And this in spite of his Magnetic powers, and widely extended English influence whereby he drew men from England in numbers that no other S. African bishop can hope to do.

It is high time that we ceased to be an exotic Church, but with the wonderful openings for self-maintenance for all lads above 15, it is no great wonder that Parents in general do not wish to see their sons unemployed or unbreadwinning till 23.⁷⁴

Another of Merriman's real difficulties was the lack of a diocesan library; there was "little enough" canon law, and "not much" patriotic law available in the diocese, and he applied to Dr Bray's library fund for a grant towards remedying this defect.⁷⁵

SPG mic., vol. D37, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 6 Aug. 1872. Peter Masiza, first black priest of the C.P.S.A. was ordained deacon by Merriman, and priest by the Bishop of St John's.

⁷³Historical Records, p.259.

⁷⁴SPG mic., vol. D37, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 15 Nov. 1873.

⁷⁵SPG mic., vol. D37, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 8 Jul. 1873.

As early as 1873, Merriman considered the appointment of a theological tutor for his diocese,⁷⁶ basing his ideas on the scheme for probationer theological students in the diocese of Lichfield,⁷⁷ but decided to wait for some initiative from the new metropolitan, William West Jones. When none was forthcoming, Merriman applied for, and received a grant from the Society for ^{Promoting} ~~the Propagation of~~ Christian Knowledge, and John Espin was appointed theological tutor in 1875.⁷⁸

Espin's duties were twofold. He conducted periodical examinations in divinity for catechists and teachers, to ensure that they had an accurate acquaintanceship with the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, and on the results of these examinations, men suitable for ordination were selected.⁷⁹ Secondly, Espin supervised the studies of men in the diocese who were preparing for ordination to the diaconate or the priesthood. By 1881, Espin was pleased to report that nine ordinands, six whites and three blacks, were studying under his direction. Merriman managed to obtain several grants to enable black ordinands to leave their stations and to live for a time at the Kafir Institute in Grahamstown, while studying under Espin.⁸⁰ At the last missionary conference he attended, Merriman asked if any of the black deacons were ready for ordination to the priesthood, but was advised against the step,⁸¹ although by 1883 Espin considered William Philip and Daniel Malgas prepared for the office.⁸²

The standard of education to be required from blacks before ordination was the subject of debate in all missionary organisations on the frontier. At an interdenominational missionary conference in 1870,

⁷⁶ SPG mic., vol. D37, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTJ, 15 Nov. 1873.

⁷⁷ Historical Records, p.263.

⁷⁸ See biographical note below, Appendix F.

⁷⁹ MCMB, 1866-1883, pp.207, 223.

⁸⁰ Historical Records, p.545.

⁸¹ MCMB, 1866-1883, p.237.

⁸² MCMB, 1866-1883, p.243.

James Laing and Tiyo Soga spoke in favour of black and white ministers receiving the same education, whereas William Impey, then still a Wesleyan, considered that black clergy should be educated to the educational level of the people they were to serve.⁸³ Stewart of Lovedale's aim to provide an education tailored to African needs, with the object of producing black teachers and preachers met with opposition from educated Africans, for whom westernisation was seen as a desirable goal, not something to be avoided. Mpambani Mzimba argued that Latin and Greek were "essential ingredients for a complete education."⁸⁴ The Eastern Star poured scorn on Merriman's ordination of Africans to the diaconate, and mocked the establishment of a theological tutorship,⁸⁵ but its editor made one important point, which was intended as a reason for not ordaining blacks at all, but was equally forceful as a guide to determining educational standards that should be set. The Star pointed out that black priests were not merely ordained to minister to the needs of blacks. If the dying child of an important white official needed baptism, and there were no other clergy except a black priest in the area, it would be "impious and sacriligious"⁸⁶ for the parent to baptise the child and not to summon the priest. Probably unintentionally, the Eastern Star was setting out an ideal of racial unity within the church which most Anglicans have still not learnt to accept without comment. This view of the priesthood meant that education for black and white clergy should be of the same standard, but by requiring equal achievements from black and white ordinands blacks would actually be placed at a disadvantage. No examination papers set by Espin during Merriman's episcopate are extant, but he was responsible for black and white ordinands, and there is no evidence that different requirements were drawn up for each race group. There is evidence of black ordinands being required to learn Greek.⁸⁷

⁸³ Cory Library, PR 1573, King William's Town Gazetteer, 18 Jul. 1870.

⁸⁴ S. Brock, op.cit., p.139.

⁸⁵ ES 24 Jun. 1873, 20 Mar. 1874, 29 Dec. 1874. See also above, ch. 5, p.256.

⁸⁶ ES 24 Jun. 1873.

⁸⁷ CC., July 1882, p.218.

In 1891, a compromise was reached. Candidates for the priesthood were required to have a knowledge of the Bible, with emphasis on set portions from the Old Testament and from the New Testament in Greek; of the Book of Common Prayer with special knowledge of the liturgy and ordinal; of doctrine including the Thirty-Nine Articles and the creeds; of church history to A.D. 451 and English church history; of Butler's Analogy and Liddon's Bampton Lectures; of a Latin author, and of the Constitution and Canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa. Black candidates were exempted from the Greek and Latin requirement.⁸⁸

Besides academic qualifications, there was another important component of the Anglican theological training. A select committee of the 1876 Provincial Synod, under the chairmanship of Espin, made recommendations which became resolutions of synod. Anglican ordinands were expected to adopt a rule of life which included the practice of private prayer in the morning and the evening, regular Bible reading, weekday attendance at services where possible, monthly communion, observance of the seasons of the church's year, and a course of reading including Keble's Christian Year, the Imitation of Christ, and Law's Serious Call.⁸⁹

In the pioneering period of missionary work in southern Africa, the missionaries worked first through interpreters and then through black agents, whose level of education Lee calls "derisory," and whose grasp of Christian truth was "elementary." Their strength lay in their sense of community, and in the retentive memory of a preliterate people. These men were often unpaid, and lack of training and support led to failures of faith and morals, but their teaching was in an African language, using African images, and they were mediators between old and new. With government aid, missionaries improved the education of African ministers, necessary as African society as a whole acquired higher standards of education and sophistication.⁹⁰ Merriman's work

⁸⁸ T.S.N.2. Gqubule, op.cit., pp.198-199.

⁸⁹ Constitution and Canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa as Revised, Amended, and Confirmed by the Provincial Synod, held at Cape Town A.D. 1876, pp.76-80.

⁹⁰ A.W. Lee, "The Growth of an African Ministry in the Province of South Africa," East and West Review, vol.VI, 1940, pp.116-130.

in southern Africa coincided with moves towards self-government for the Church of the Province of South Africa. He saw that this implied not only constitutional development, but a need for financial self-sufficiency, and an ability to provide south African-born clergy for the church. In appointing a theological tutor, he not only attempted to fulfil this need, but by giving Espin responsibility for both black and white ordinands and by requiring the same standards of education from both, he emphasised the unity of the church.

Merriman began his ministry in southern Africa with a firm belief in the providence of European rule over the subcontinent and in the fundamental justice of British government of the area. The events of the last five years of his episcopate brought about a complete change in this point of view. Merriman nevertheless retained his belief that in the practice of Christianity by both black and white lay the means of resolving the frontier conflict.⁹¹

The last of the frontier wars, the War of Ngcayecibi broke out in August-September 1877, while Merriman was in England.⁹² In his account of the war, Spicer acknowledges the economic factors which contributed to the outbreak but emphasises the political causes of the conflict. De Kiewiet had pointed out that Gcalekaland was overcrowded, and that there was a shortage of food, but Spicer points out that the Gcaleka had not been driven to labour on a large scale for whites, and that Sarhili himself encouraged overcrowding to give weight to his requests for more land and to strengthen his hand in his dealings with neighbouring chiefs. Spicer on the other hand argues that the colonial authorities saw the existence of a strong and independent Gcaleka chiefdom as a threat to frontier security and that they would exploit any opportunity to break Gcaleka independence. Spicer also points out that the Gcaleka themselves were not united, and that in addition to the delicate diplomatic tactics required in his dealings with the

⁹¹MP 40-78, NJM to JXM, 21 Feb. 1878.

⁹²See above, ch. 5, pp.301-307.

whites, Sarhili, the Gcaleka chief, had to balance progressive and conservative groups within the Gcaleka. The former were in favour of western institutions and British rule, while the conservatives wished to preserve the traditional way of life, and became increasingly in favour of attacking Mfengu and whites who stood in their way. Sarhili was aware that the latter policy would end in disaster for the Gcaleka. The Mfengu, who had moved into former Gcaleka land in 1865, did much to provoke the war. Once attacked by the Gcaleka, they hoped to enlist the support of their white allies, and hoped to secure increased grants of land as a reward for their loyalty. Spicer shows how, with extreme reluctance, Sarhili allowed his people to go to war.⁹³ Spicer also shows how the Xhosa failed to present a united front to the whites, their response to the war depending on the individual chief, the influence of colonial agents and missionaries, and political relationships between and within tribes.⁹⁴

Merriman's letters shortly after the outbreak of war indicate no real understanding of the complex causes of the war, and although he was "very sorry for Kreli,"⁹⁵ he nevertheless considered the Gcaleka chief the "original cause of the disasters that have occurred."⁹⁶

The bishop accepted without question that conversion to Christianity and loyalty to Queen Victoria went hand-in-hand, and in the first stages of the war, he was very anxious that this loyalty be publicly demonstrated. The missionary at St Luke's, Albert Maggs, was accused of "harbouring and abetting rebels," by a government patrol. While Merriman was sure that Maggs was "entirely without blame," he requested the S.P.G. to maintain a discreet silence on the subject by not publishing any accounts of the war as it affected St Luke's.⁹⁷ The

⁹³ M.W. Spicer, The War of Ngcayecibi 1877-8, pp.80-100, 241-244. See also Appendix E.

⁹⁴ M.W. Spicer, op.cit., p.241.

⁹⁵ MP 91-77, JM to JXM, 6 Dec. 1877.

⁹⁶ Net, 1 Dec. 1878, p.179.

⁹⁷ SPG mic., vol. D48, Grahamstown diocese, NJM to WTB, 16 Jan. 1878; Net, 1 Jun. 1878, pp.93-94; MF, 1 Apr. 1878, pp.164-166; 1 Jul. 1878, pp.305-308; 2 Dec. 1878, pp.557-558; 2 Jun. 1879, p.242.

bishop on the other hand encouraged publication of reports from St Matthew's. This station served the Mfengu, colonial allies, and the missionary's reports to the S.P.G. were full of glowing accounts of Mfengu loyalty. Charles Taberer, missionary at St Matthew's, wrote, with no sense of incongruity:

We, as Missionaries, take very great interest in the movements of the colonial and imperial forces now collected on the border to suppress the rebellious tribes, as upon their success depends almost entirely the safety of our Mission stations... 98

In October 1877, Sir Bartle Frere, the Governor of the Cape, visited St Matthew's. Taberer recorded with pride:

We made every preparation to receive him heartily and loyally. We erected a large arch at the entrance to the station and decorated it with evergreens and flowers. Just before His Excellency arrived all the school children were drawn up at the arch ready to cheer and sing the national anthem. All passed off well... 99

In similar vein, Merriman rejoiced that all converts living on Anglican mission stations had "remained loyal."¹⁰⁰ He had little understanding of the cultural crisis conversion to Christianity occasioned for many blacks, or of the reaction in Nguni society prompted by the challenge and threat of western culture as represented by missionaries as well as by government officials and traders. Anglican missionaries had at first attempted to abolish initiation and had expelled all converts who underwent the rite, but by 1871, circumcision itself was permitted, although the ceremonies associated with it were frowned on. Lobola was not allowed, and polygamists remained hearers, although the Christian wives of polygamists could be baptised and were allowed to live with their husbands.¹⁰¹ After the war, when a review of this policy could have been expected, and even with black deacons present at

⁹⁸ MF 1 Apr. 1878, pp.164-166.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Net, 1 Dec. 1878, p.181.

¹⁰¹ M.M. Goedhals, op.cit., ch. 5.

the missionary conference, there was no change in these requirements.¹⁰² Acceptance of Christianity meant abandonment of tribal custom. Etherington argues convincingly that many blacks were able to adjust to missionary requirements because they were already outcasts from tribal society before they sought protection on mission stations. In this group, the temptation to return to the tribe and take up arms would not be strong, and this accounts for their "loyalty."¹⁰³ Sheila Brock notes that few Lovedale graduates joined the forces of rebellion.¹⁰⁴ War was a traditional method of expressing opposition to the religion, education and government of the whites, and for the educated elite, the European political arena offered an alternative means of expressing their opposition. There was a group of Anglican converts for whom the conflict of loyalties was, however, acute. These were the sons of chiefs, who had been educated at Anglican schools. Edmund Sandile, or Gonya, son of the Ngqika chief, who had been at Zonnebloem, and at the outbreak of war was clerk in the magistrate's office at Middledrift, returned to his tribe and led Ngqika forces in battle. He was captured in June 1878, and sentenced to penal servitude for life.¹⁰⁵ Peter Masiza, first black priest of the Church of the Province of South Africa, reproved Edmund Sandile for fighting "so to speak, against his father the government," which nevertheless opened its "merciful arms to receive those that asked for peace."¹⁰⁶

Another chief's son, faced with a choice between education and loyalty to his employers on one hand, and the call of family and tribe on the other, was Nathaniel Mhala.¹⁰⁷ Nathaniel, son of the Ndlambe

¹⁰² Rules and Instructions for those engaged in the Mission Work of the Diocese of Grahamstown, South Africa. This pamphlet was printed at the Kafir Institution in 1878.

¹⁰³ N. Etherington, The Rise of the Kholwa in Southeast Africa.

¹⁰⁴ S. Brock, James Stewart and Lovedale, pp.222-229.

¹⁰⁵ M.W. Spicer, op.cit., pp. 158, 182, 184. J. Hodgson, op.cit., pp.159-160.

¹⁰⁶ MF 1 Mar. 1879, p.105.

¹⁰⁷ M.W. Spicer, op.cit., pp.158-160.

chief, was named for the archdeacon his father had so much admired.¹⁰⁸ He attended Zonnebloem, where he showed great artistic ability, and from 1866 to 1868 attended St Augustine's College, Canterbury.¹⁰⁹ In 1871, Merriman met him teaching at St Mark's mission, and was most impressed by his reading ability:

He was called on quite suddenly to read the First Lesson, the 6th of Jeremiah, at Evening Service, and he read it not only without any hesitation, but with a perfectly English accent and intonation; in fact, a good deal better than five out of six of those who are called educated Englishmen would have read the same. ¹¹⁰

When the War of Ngcayecibi broke out, Nathaniel was working as an interpreter in King William's Town. He felt compelled to resign and join his people, although he did not take up arms. He was arrested and tried for high treason and murder in 1878, before Mr Justice Dwyer, but the former charge was withdrawn, and he was acquitted on the latter.¹¹¹ Merriman made it quite clear that at the time of the war, neither Edmund Sandile nor Nathaniel Mhala had been linked with Anglican missions.¹¹² The bishop seems to have retained an affection for his namesake, and requested Bartle Frere to reinstate him, but the request was turned down.¹¹³ By 1881, when he gave evidence to the Barry Commission on Native Laws and Customs,¹¹⁴ Nathaniel Mhala was working for an attorney in King William's Town.

¹⁰⁸ See above, ch. 2, p.112.

¹⁰⁹ J. Hodgson, op.cit., p.457.

¹¹⁰ SPG Annual Report, 1871, pp.46-47.

¹¹¹ M.W. Spicer, op.cit., p.160. See above, ch. 5, note 7, for a biographical note on Mr Justice Dwyer.

¹¹² Net, 1 Dec. 1878, p.181.

¹¹³ M.W. Spicer, op.cit., p.160.

¹¹⁴ CPP, G.4 of 1883. The Government Commission on Native Laws and Customs, otherwise known as the Barry Commission after its chairman, Sir J.D. Barry, was appointed in September 1880, in the wake of the War of Ngcayecibi, "to enquire into the Native Laws and Customs which obtain in the Territories annexed to this Colony, and to suggest such a code of Civil and Criminal Law as may appear suited to the future condition of these countries." The commission was requested to investigate particularly the law relating to marriage and inheritance of property, and the practicability of introducing

Merriman's first doubts about the benevolent and beneficent nature of white rule began to rise after the 1877-1878 war. In 1878, the Sprigg government announced that in addition to the confiscation of rebel Ngqika land, the "loyal" Ngqika would be moved across the Kei and their lands divided into European farms.¹¹⁵ The Anglican mission of St John's, Kubusi, among the Ngqika, had been destroyed during the war, but the mission inhabitants had remained loyal to the government.¹¹⁶ The new measure meant that they were to be punished on a par with those who had taken up arms. Bishop Merriman went to see Sprigg in the hope of obtaining relief for the people of the mission station, and came back "fuming with wrath and indignation." Julia Merriman told Agnes that Sprigg had been "quite insolent about the business."¹¹⁷ The bishop was appalled at the cruelty of the measure, and wrote at length:

The whole land is to be given out to European farmers, especially those who have distinguished themselves as volunteers during the war. The actual residents on the Mission are, I believe, to be compensated, i.e. if you can compensate people who are turned out of house and home, by giving them land in a new country to which they have a strong objection to migrate. The consternation was tremendous when it was announced to the loyal Gaikas what was to be their fate... "Why, what harm have we done?" "Is our father, the government, angry with us?"...I dare not judge of what is pronounced a "political necessity"...

It was a melancholy sight enough on a recent visit to Kafirland, to witness the ashes of our ruined Mission, but a still more melancholy one on a second visit,...near the Kei river, to meet troops of the banished ones, with the remnants of their flocks and herds which they had saved from the ravages of the war and the terrible drought...plodding their weary way to lands which are taken from Kreli and given to these people, who must defend themselves on them from the raids of the Galekas as best they can.

individual land tenure, and "to report on the advisability of introducing some system of Local Self-Government in Native Territories."

¹¹⁵ M.W. Spicer, op.cit., pp.220-225.

¹¹⁶ Net, 1 Dec. 1878, pp.179-183; MCMB, 1866-1883, p.177.

¹¹⁷ MP 45-78, JM to AM, 28 Aug. 1878.

We first met a company of women, who had been sent forward with the best of the sheep...some poor women were staggering under the skins of those which had died on the road...Then an old man or two hobbling along, with the help of his knobkerie or Kafir staff. Poor little tired children were creeping by their mother's side; some women with infants at their back, but looking lusty and strong; here and there a sickly consumptive-looking woman, quite unfit for such a journey, was plodding her weary way after the rest of the females all alone. The men with the cattle we soon met, bringing up the rear. 118

It could be argued that Merriman's view was influenced by his feud with Williams, who supported Sprigg, and by the fact that Sprigg's government had replaced the Molteno ministry of which John X. had been a member. It is more likely that Merriman's criticism was occasioned by the unjust and inhumane action of a government ostensibly Christian and civilised.

Bishop Merriman also took exception to the Sprigg government's policy of disarming Transkeian blacks.¹¹⁹ He told John X. in February 1879:

I am a quiet man and not given to political discussion, but really this "vigorous native policy" is fraught with so much outrageous injustice, as well as the grossest impolicy that my bile rises and my mind is quite confused by it. The day of retribution must infallibly come...the things I have heard...have raised my indignation to the utmost pitch. I must relate to you one special case - though I dare say you know hundreds - hardly any I think stronger than this one. There is a respectable Burgher farmer close to this, one Piet Davids - a man with a smitch of colour in him...¹²⁰

Davids had settled in the area in 1846, and when required to do so, had handed in his weapons. They had not been returned, nor had any compensation been paid. The bishop thought it a case for Parliament, and concluded his letter to John X.:

¹¹⁸ Net, 1 Dec. 1878, pp.179-183.

¹¹⁹ OHSA, vol.II, pp.257-259.

¹²⁰ MP 74-79, NJM to JXM, 25 Feb. 1879.

I am fairly tired of expressing my opinion which I do loudly wherever I go - against this Jingoism turning John Bull into John Bully, and making the British name a reproach. 121

When the southern Sotho rose against the Cape administration which similarly tried to disarm them in 1880,¹²² Merriman found their rebellion neither surprising "nor very censurable."¹²³ His attitude had undergone a profound change from the days when he had condemned the Khoi of the Kat River settlement for their rebellion against the colony.¹²⁴

The 1883 Barry Commission Report is regarded as ushering in a more enlightened attitude to customary law by the colonial administration,¹²⁵ but the Merrimans themselves, from their knowledge of Jacob Dirk Barry, held out no such hopes. Barry was a Spriggite, and Julia Merriman thought his attitude "horrid," adding that her son-in-law "wd. like nothing better than extermination..."¹²⁶ His attitude did undergo a change, as Julia reported to Agnes in Cape Town:

...the more white people see and hear of the natives, the more they will learn to respect them. J.D.B. [Barry] is vastly more inclined to believe they are men and not beasts since he was president of the N.Com. and obliged to look into native affairs... 127

For Nathaniel Merriman, the final disillusionment with British rule came with what he regarded as Bartle Frere's betrayal of Cetshwayo in the interests of federation, and the Zulu king's banishment to Cape Town.¹²⁸ Julia Merriman was full of indignation:

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² OHSA, vol.II, pp.267-271.

¹²³ Net, 1 Apr. 1881.

¹²⁴ See above, ch. 2, pp.91-92.

¹²⁵ See above, n. 114.

¹²⁶ MP 33-79, JM to AM, 31 Mar. 1879.

¹²⁷ MP 94-79, JM to AM, 25 Nov. 1879.

¹²⁸ OHSA, vol.II, pp.261-267.

...the way in which our natives and the Zulus are spoken of makes one think colonists generally are blind. Ketchwayo being called a blood thirsty tiger and a rebellious brute because when we invade his land he receives us after our own example and gets the best of us! 129

The subject, she admitted, was one that made her "perfectly wild.":¹³⁰

I did get so angry to hear Mr Wylde of Cetchwayo, "never been so happy before," doesn't want more than food and raiment. Much he cares for the latter, and a man who has had a country to reign over and fine subjects as the Zulus, really how can people talk, as if he had no feelings at all.¹³¹

Both Nathaniel and Julia rejoiced at Bishop Colenso's championship of Cetshwayo,¹³² but the bishop felt compelled by the cumulative effect of the confiscation of the Ngqika lands, the disarmament policy in the Transkei and Basutoland, the Koegas atrocities,¹³³ the invasion of the Zulu kingdom and the deposition of the Zulu king, to make a deliberate and public protest. He chose a course which he knew would make him unpopular with the white farmers in his diocese.¹³⁴ On 24 May 1880, the bishop applied to join the Aborigines Protection Society. He deplored both responsible government for the Cape, which resulted in "a hideous injustice called a 'vigorous Native Policy'," and demands for confederation, which had produced

...fear and bloodshed under the idea that the natives must be subdued and forcibly disarmed in order to make way for the existence of a S. African Dominion. 135

Merriman referred particularly to events in Zululand:

¹²⁹MP 26-79, JM to AM, 1 Mar. 1879.

¹³⁰MP 53-79, JM to AM, 27 May 1879.

¹³¹MP 94-79, JM to AM, 25 Nov. 1879.

¹³²MP 35-79, JM to AM, 20 Apr. 1879.

¹³³T. Strauss, War Along the Orange, deals with the Koegas atrocities on pp.107-114.

¹³⁴See below, ch. 7, p.397.

¹³⁵LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to F.W. Chesson, 24 May 1880.

The tyranny by which the Zulu War was forced on, and the blackening of Cetshwayo's character and intentions, have been nobly testified against by Dr Colenso. And though one of the clergy who presented him for trial, and who has ever since maintained the same repugnance to his heresies, and the same repudiation of his position as a minister and a member of the flock of Christ, I venture to hope that he is winning for himself the grace of repentance and enlightenment by his manly defence of the oppressed and maligned King of Zululand...

It makes one blush for the name of Englishman to think of one's fellow country men being deliberately guilty of such things as the very heathen account to be unmanly and abominable. ¹³⁶

At the age of seventy-one, Merriman was able, under the dictates of his Christian conscience, to review the position he had held for thirty-two years, and to criticise openly and publicly, the treatment meted out to people of colour, by men of his own race.

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Long visitational tours, first as archdeacon and then as bishop, were one of Merriman's hallmarks. In his seventies, the bishop no longer travelled on foot or horseback, but in a buggy, accompanied by his chaplain. He had lost none of his vigour of spirit, nor had the charm of camping out abated for him. In the course of a visitation to Fort Beaufort, Alice, Peddie and Port Alfred in June 1880, Merriman and his chaplain, W.H. Turpin

...spanned out beside a vley...prepared our own breakfast, boiled our kettle, and fried some bacon, and we enjoyed our breakfast exceedingly. ¹³⁷

On another occasion, they lost their way:

There was no farm house near, so we drove down beside a small clear stream, with a thick bush along its banks, and finding a nice sheltered nook, we encamped

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ CC., August 1880, pp.127-128.

here for the night. We found plenty of dry wood... so we had a splendid fire all night; we slept very well, waking up occasionally and kindling the fire, and when well warmed, went off to sleep again. ¹³⁸

On the same visitation, Merriman was staying in Fort Beaufort and horses were to have been sent to take him to the mission outside the town. When they had not arrived at the appointed time, Merriman set off on foot,

...so as to teach these people a lesson of punctuality. We met them about a quarter-of-an-hour's ride from the Station. The Bishop confirmed 14 candidates, and then we returned on foot, over a steep hill and a winding path, into Beaufort to an 11 o'clock breakfast. ¹³⁹

In February 1881, Merriman travelled from East London to St Luke's mission by train, a journey of fifteen miles which took an hour. His mind must have gone back to his journey, thirty years before, over similar territory, to visit the chief Mhala.¹⁴⁰ From 26 October to 24 December 1881, less than a year before his death, Merriman went on a long visitational tour visiting Tarkastad, Queenstown, the missions of St John the Baptist, Bolotwa, and St Peter-on-Indwe, Lady Frere, Dordrecht, Herschel, Aliwal North, Burghersdorp, Ventersdorp, Colesberg, Hanover, Richmond and Cradock. After this journey of more than a thousand miles, Merriman was again on the move at the end of January 1882. He visited St Matthew's at Keiskammahoek, King William's Town, East London, Kei Road, Burghersdorp, Dordrecht and Sidbury, and within ten days, confirmed on six separate occasions, consecrated two churches, opened a third which had been repaired and laid the foundation stone of a fourth.¹⁴¹

One of the areas Merriman visited most regularly was the Herschel mission. Cox was a young and inexperienced missionary and could not be left for long periods on his own. On his last visit to St Michael

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ See above, pp.110-112.

¹⁴¹ CC., January 1882, pp.17-23; CC., March 1882, pp.86-91.

and All Angels', when he was seventy-two, Merriman performed an adult baptism in a river near the mission. There is a description of the scene in the bishop's own words:

We started from the Mission, Mr Cox leading the way; then Mr Newton...then myself in my robes, Pastoral Staff in hand, and behind was a train of natives... nearly 200...the women first, very clean and tidy, then the men. We trudged along in procession, over a very rough veldt for the best part of a mile... my younger brethren rather outstepping me. I thought of old Latimer struggling up Broad Street to catch up Ridley, and "bidding him play the man." (Thank God the end in view was not the same.) When we got to the river I had to use my staff as an alpenstock to clamber down the defiles leading to the water, where some flat stones gave standing room for the clergy and the baptismal party with their witnesses, while the people...lined the ragged bank behind. 142

In the light of twentieth century interpretations, the missionary policy pursued in the diocese of Grahamstown had many shortcomings, but hindsight cannot obliterate the sincerity and strength of Merriman's episcopal guidance. When Merriman died, Cox paid tribute to the value of his visitations to isolated missions:

...we Missionaries will no more hear his voice urging and encouraging, but never flattering us.

We are hoping that we shall have another, who will possess the Missionary spirit in the same degree as he did, and always be ready to visit us who live in the remotest corner of the vast diocese of Grahams-town. 143

¹⁴²Net, April 1881.

¹⁴³MF, Dec. 1882.

CHAPTER SEVEN

BISHOP 1879 - 1882

"Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just."

Henry VI Part 2, III.iii.233.

The last three years of Merriman's life, punctuated by three major court cases, were spent in defence of the view of the church with which he had come to southern Africa, and which during his thirty years as archdeacon and bishop, had found institutional form. They were painful years for the bishop. Not only was the constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa scorned and spurned by the senior clergyman of his own diocese and apparently undermined by decisions of the Cape Supreme Court and the Privy Council, but Merriman found himself pressurised into action by the advice of his wife and friends, while the metropolitan and other clergy of the province questioned the wisdom of some of the measures he pursued in defence of the principle that the state could not and should not legislate for the church.

Of Merriman's reaction to events in St George's on 27 April, Julia Merriman reported to John X.:

Father went through the ordeal very calmly, and really felt a relief when the crisis was past...slept well afterwards, but as might be expected a reaction has set in, and he is very poorly, head bad, no appetite, much depressed, feels humiliated...¹

In declaring his resolve to preach in St George's at the end of April, Merriman had anticipated resistance from Williams, and had given thought to his course of action should this occur.² Once the disruption had taken place, Merriman set in motion the machinery to summon the

¹MP 111-79, JM to AM, 4 May 1879.

²UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, pp.143-145, WWJ to NJM, 26 Apr. 1879.

dean before the ecclesiastical court of the diocese of Grahamstown. John X. expressed some opposition to this, and suggested that the case be heard by a civil court,³ but his mother explained the bishop's attitude:

If he thought that "all authority takes its origin from the head of the church, i.e. the queen" he would shape his course differently, but he is a ruler in a body, a city, a household, of which Christ is the head, and he feels he must exercise the power entrusted to him by his Master - jurisdiction being an especial function belonging to his office. Yr. Father promised at his consecration to correct and punish according to such authority as he should have by God's Word, such as should be unquiet, disobedient, and criminous within his Diocese. He cannot believe this wd. be best accomplished by acting the bumbailiff and handing offenders over to the Civil Court.⁴

Merriman expected that Dean Williams would take no notice of the proceedings of the diocesan court.⁵ When Robert Mullins went to St George's to remove the bishop's pastoral staff, it had already been locked away by the churchwardens.⁶ Williams had also had the audacity to invite Merriman to preach in St George's during May, although he told the bishop that the last Sunday of the month was reserved for another preacher.⁷ The bishop replied very formally, informing Williams that he no longer recognised St George's as his cathedral church, and would not preach there again until the dean acknowledged his jurisdiction.⁸ Williams's attitude was also reflected by a campaign in the Eastern Star to discredit the diocesan court, which was variously described as "an amateur or packed Court," a "so-called Court," a "mockery," a "parody," "disreputable," and "a private ecclesiastical Star Chamber."⁹

³MP 64-80, JM to JXM, May-Jun. 1879.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶ES 29 Apr. 1879.

⁷ES 2 May 1879.

⁸GTJ 5 May 1879.

⁹ES 27 Apr. 1879, 27 Jun. 1879, 18 Jul. 1879, 22 Jul. 1879, 29 Jul. 1879.

Meanwhile, the bishop and his senior clergy made preparations for convening the ecclesiastical court of the diocese of Grahamstown according to the provisions of the canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa.¹⁰ Articles of presentment¹¹ were drawn up and submitted to Simeon Jacobs, former Attorney-General of the Cape, for advice, although the delay harassed Merriman¹² and the precaution ended in disappointment as Jacobs was too ill to undertake the work. Merriman did not err as Robert Gray had done in the cases of Long and Colenso by electing to act as judge in a case in which he had a personal interest.¹³ As he told the metropolitan:

It is...of great importance to have such a Tribunal as may to outsiders appear beyond the imputation of partiality so far as is possible, and to avoid the semblance of the Bishop being both accuser and judge in his own cause, though in truth the cause is not mine, but the cause of jurisdiction and order, belonging to the whole Colonial Episcopate and the whole Church.¹⁴

Merriman asked Hopkins Badnall, Archdeacon of the Cape, to preside over the court in his stead,¹⁵ and the metropolitan commended this choice : Badnall had a clear grasp of the legal position of the Church of the Province of South Africa, as well as wisdom, experience and impartiality.¹⁶ The Metropolitan was less certain of Merriman's wisdom in embarking on

¹⁰The Constitution and Canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa...as revised, amended, and confirmed by the Provincial Synod held at Capetown A.D. 1876, Canon 19, Of Judicial Proceedings.

¹¹MP 111-79, JM to AM, 4 May 1879; GDA 356, Articles of Presentment; S.G.A. Shippard (ed.), Proceedings in the Diocesan Court of Grahamstown in the matter of the Archdeacon of Grahamstown versus the Dean of Grahamstown, 30 July to 5 August and 12 - 13 November 1879, pp.3-16.

¹²MP 111-79, JM to AM, 4 May 1879.

¹³PBH/BD, pp. 81, 142.

¹⁴GDA 234, NJM to WWJ, 3 May 1879.

¹⁵GDA 355, Copy of Badnall's appointment as commissary by Merriman; GDA 268, NJM to WWJ, 17 May 1879; UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, p.212, WWJ to NJM, 16 Aug. 1879.

¹⁶UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, p.158, WWJ to NJM, 10 May 1879.

the trial at all, confiding to Badnall:

The position is certainly most embarrassing, through the vehemency and unwisdom, I am compelled to say, of the Bishop and his advisers. He has now gone so far that it is most difficult to withdraw without loss of honour, and without injuring the prestige of the Episcopal Office. But if he had only had the patience to wait, till Dean W. was out of the way...patience and time would have solved the whole matter. ¹⁷

West Jones was convinced that the question would ultimately be heard in a civil court, and whatever the moral justification for Merriman's action, he saw little prospect of its legal vindication as Williams had not signed the declaration in the eleventh canon of the Church of the Province of South Africa which bound clergy to the rules and regulations of diocesan and provincial synods.¹⁸ A legal triumph on Williams's part would be a great blow to the province¹⁹ and West Jones clearly preferred that the matter should not be put to the test. Badnall agreed, but thought that argument would be futile as Merriman was "thoroughly roused."²⁰ The metropolitan nevertheless felt bound to share his doubts with Merriman,²¹ who was deeply distressed, especially as a previous letter from West Jones had led him to believe that the metropolitan endorsed his action.²² Merriman was also upset by a rebuke from West Jones for describing Williams as the "reputed dean."²³ West Jones argued that if Williams was not Dean of Grahamstown, the gathering which chose Merriman as Bishop of Grahamstown was not a formal assembly and

¹⁷UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, p.157, WWJ to H. Badnall, 9 May 1879.

¹⁸Ibid.; The Constitution and Canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa...A.D. 1876, Canon 11, Of Declarations and Subscriptions to be made by Bishops and Clergy.

¹⁹UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, p.157, WWJ to H. Badnall, 9 May 1879.

²⁰GDA 176, H. Badnall to WWJ, 16 May 1879.

²¹UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, p.158, WWJ to NJM, 10 May 1879.

²²GDA 234, NJM to WWJ, 3 May 1879; UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, pp.143-145, WWJ to NJM, 26 Apr. 1879.

²³UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, p.158, WWJ to NJM, 10 May 1879.

his election was open to question.²⁴ Archdeacon White wrote at once to point out that according to the canons, no objection to the validity of an episcopal election on the grounds of informality could be considered unless raised within three days of the election.²⁵ The metropolitan accepted White's correction on this point, but despite assurances from Merriman and White, he confessed that his larger doubts persisted.²⁶

Merriman was so shaken by this, and so unwilling to act without West Jones's "full countenance and concurrence,"²⁷ that he offered to resign his see. This created a difficult situation for West Jones, and some of the awkwardness he felt is reflected in the fulsomeness of his reply. Merriman was twenty-five years older than West Jones, and had twenty-five years more experience in southern Africa. The metropolitan apologised for any pain he may have caused Merriman, explaining that he was anxious about the implications for the church should the case come before a civil court. He told Merriman that even under ordinary circumstances he would regret his resignation:

...we cannot afford so soon to lose the help and the counsel, in so young a Province, superintended by comparatively junior Bishops, of a veteran like yourself, who has gone through it all, has borne the burden and heat of the day, and who can advise out of the fullness of his own experience.²⁸

Conditions prevailing in the diocese of Grahamstown made resignation even more undesirable. Many would argue that Merriman was motivated by fear that he would be unable to maintain his position and that the dean would gain the upper hand. The metropolitan ended his letter with warm expressions of affection and a strong plea:

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵GDA 174, H.M. White to WWJ, 17 May 1879; The Constitution and Canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa...A.D. 1876, Canon 4, Of the Confirmation of Bishops, section iv.

²⁶UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, pp.187-188, WWJ to H.M. White, 30 May 1879.

²⁷GDA 268, NJM to WWJ, 17 May 1879.

²⁸UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, p.188, WWJ to NJM, 30 May 1879.

I do implore you for the good of the Province not to think any more at least for some time to come of resigning...²⁹

Nevertheless, Merriman's confidence in the metropolitan was considerably shaken. Mrs Merriman described West Jones as a "broken reed."³⁰ Her husband, comparing the support he had received from West Jones with that he would have expected from Robert Gray, must have found the former wanting. Merriman's sole consideration, like West Jones's, was the good of the church. To continue to ignore the scandal caused by Williams seemed to him as dangerous as the prospect of an adverse judgment in a civil court, but the action had not been lightly undertaken. He told West Jones:

If I am destined to be a troubler of our Israel, I can only say it is with the most unfeigned reluctance that I find myself placed in this position which robs me of peace of mind and rest at night, and inflicts much suffering on my head and spirits.³¹

Perhaps in deference to the reservations expressed by West Jones and Badnall, in mid-July Archdeacon White attempted to persuade Williams to settle the dispute by arbitration,³² although with no very lively hope of success. At the end of June, the dean had notified St George's congregation that he would not recognise the ecclesiastical tribunal of the diocese of Grahamstown, which he described as the "private Committee...which will sit...at West Hill." He considered that to take any part in its proceedings would mean recognition of an attempt to separate the colonial church from the Church of England.³³ This attitude was hardly surprising, as the Star had been arguing along these lines for several weeks.³⁴ Williams's stance made the prospects of successful arbitration very slim. The dean stated his willingness to discuss the question at a "friendly Conference" attended by both

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰MP 107-79, JM to JXM and AM, Aug. 1879. See also MP 53-79, JM to AM, 27 May 1879; MP 38-80, JM to AM, 8 Jul. 1880.

³¹GDA 269, NJM to WWJ, 5 Jun. 1879.

³²Correspondence published in GTJ 6 Feb. 1880.

³³ES 1 July. 1879.

³⁴ES 29 Apr. 1879.

parties, or to discuss his views with the Bishop of Cape Town, as he pointedly called William West Jones, whom White had named as arbitrator. However, his "views of public duty" prevented him from regarding a judgment on a question of law and ecclesiastical procedure by the Bishop of Cape Town as binding. Williams was willing, however, to submit the dispute to the Archbishop of Canterbury. White could not accede to this proposal. In the first place, he regarded it as a delaying tactic: no reply could be obtained from the Archbishop before the end of the month, when the diocesan court was due to assemble. Secondly, arbitration by the Archbishop of Canterbury would ignore the provincial status and structure of the south African church. Thirdly, the Archbishop of Canterbury had made it clear in 1852 that he had "no jurisdiction or right of interference" in a south African diocese "except in the case of a formal appeal from a judicial sentence."³⁵

With all other avenues apparently closed, the diocesan court assembled in Grahamstown on 30 July, 1879.³⁶ William Llewellyn, rector of Uitenhage, and William Meaden, rector of Bathurst, sat as clerical assessors, and John Blades Currey³⁷ as the lay assessor, with Hopkins Badnall as president.

Soon after his arrival in Grahamstown, Badnall had realised that there was "much strong feeling" on both sides, and that the court

³⁵GTJ 6 Feb. 1880. See also above, p.74.

³⁶For reports of the trial, see ES 1 Aug., 5 Aug. 1879; GTJ 30 Jul., 1 Aug., 4 Aug., 6 Aug. 1879. For the full record, see S.G.A. Shippard (ed.), Proceedings in the Diocesan Court of Grahamstown in the matter of the Archdeacon of Grahamstown versus the Dean of Grahamstown, 30 July to 5 August and 12 - 13 November 1879.

³⁷John Blades Currey (1829-1904), educated at Merchant Taylors' and Brasenose College, Oxford, came to the Cape in 1850 to join his two brothers who were farming near Knysna. Unsuccessful as a farmer and as manager of a copper company, he joined the Cape civil service in 1857. In 1872 Currey was appointed secretary to the government of the crown colony of Griqualand West. His role at the diamond fields is the subject of controversy and he retired on pension in 1875. His conduct was investigated, but Currey was never censured. A genial host, Currey's friends included Cecil Rhodes and John X. Merriman. (D.S.A.B., vol.II, pp.152-153.)

proceedings would need "patient watching from first to last,"³⁸ but he was determined to be "rigidly impartial."³⁹ This task was not facilitated by the absence from proceedings of Dean Williams or any legal representative for the dean, although the Star remarked that the "whole proceedings of the trial are of more than ordinary or passing interest"⁴⁰ and gave the trial extensive coverage.

After three-and-a-half days of hearing evidence and learned argument, the court assembled on 5 August to hear the judgment of the president.⁴¹ Badnall began his address with an important definition of the status of Williams and Merriman, on which the rest of his judgment was based. He accepted that Williams was Colonial Chaplain and Dean of Grahamstown, and that as such he had presided over the assembly at which Merriman was elected Bishop of Grahamstown. On 20 October 1865, Williams had taken an oath of canonical obedience to the Bishop of Grahamstown and declared his submission to the rules and regulations of the synod of the diocese of Grahamstown in all things not contrary to the laws of the then United Church of England and Ireland. Badnall was also satisfied that Williams had "assented and consented and subjected himself" to the rules for enforcing discipline within the Church of the Province of South Africa, expressly by his oath of canonical obedience and submission to the rules of synod, and by implication by his participation in the 1870 Provincial Synod, by attending diocesan synods before and after 1870, by convening and presiding over the 1871 electoral assembly, and by becoming a member of a committee appointed in March 1877 to draft statutes for the diocesan chapter.⁴² Badnall stated also that Merriman's election, confirmation, consecration and enthronement as Bishop of Grahamstown in accordance with Canon 4 of 1870, had invested him with

³⁸GDA 177; H. Badnall to WWJ, 29 Jul. 1879.

³⁹GDA 179, H. Badnall to WWJ, 2 Aug. 1879.

⁴⁰ES 1 Aug. 1879.

⁴¹S.G.A. Shippard (ed.), Proceedings in the Diocesan Court of Grahamstown in the matter of the Archdeacon of Grahamstown versus the Dean of Grahamstown, 30 July to 5 August and 12 - 13 November 1879, pp.17-94.

⁴²For the text of the judgment, see ibid., pp.95-102.

...visitional and other powers over all spiritual persons, Dean and Chapter as well as others, in his diocese, properly belonging to a Bishop... ⁴³

The preliminaries over, the president then considered the charges against the dean. Of these there were nine, and the text of the judgment reveals Badnall's scrupulous respect for the evidence given in the court. The first group of charges dealt with the dean's conduct at the time of Merriman's visitation of St George's on 18 December 1878.⁴⁴ It was alleged that Williams had "contumaciously and contemptuously" refused to show his letters of orders, institution and induction to the bishop, and that equally "contumaciously and contemptuously" he had denied his duty and obligation to do so. Archdeacon White gave evidence that the dean had told Merriman that he had no letters of institution to produce, and Kitton said that the dean's manner was "wanting in respect." Neither White nor Kitton affirmed that Williams had denied his duty to produce these documents, and Espin said expressly that Williams had not denied this obligation. Badnall therefore found no proof of contumacious acts and Williams was acquitted on the first count. Giving evidence on the second charge, that Williams had contumaciously refused to receive letters of institution, White said in evidence that the dean had declined to accept them, Kitton reported that Williams had stated his objection to fresh letters which would injuriously affect his position, and Espin offered no information on the subject. The dean was therefore absolved. On the third charge, that the dean had "contumaciously and contemptuously" refused to answer certain articles of enquiry from Merriman, had denied his obligation to do so and had answered other questions evasively, Archdeacon White gave evidence that Williams had refused to answer some questions and had referred others to the churchwardens. As the churchwardens attended to the matters in question, Badnall accepted Williams's attitude as legitimate. In his evidence, Kitton said that Williams could have been more explicit, but he did not state that the dean refused to answer or was evasive. Espin did not refer to the issue at all in his evidence. As Badnall could find no evidence in the minutes of the meeting on 18 December 1878 to substantiate this charge, Williams was

⁴³ Ibid., p.96.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp.96-97. See above, pp.317-319.

once again absolved. Two other counts in the Articles of Presentment, which depended on the first three charges being proved, were also dismissed.⁴⁵ Williams was also accused of contravention of the statutes of the cathedral chapter. The fact that Williams had been in a minority in framing them did not in itself absolve him from obedience, but as provisions in the statutes affected the dean's position, Badnall considered that there was justification for Williams's disobedience. The president therefore felt bound to give Williams the benefit of the doubt and to acquit him on these two charges.⁴⁶

On two counts only was there evidence to sustain the charges against Williams. The dean was

...guilty of contumacious disobedience of a lawful injunction duly conveyed to him not to hinder, interrupt, or prevent the Right Reverend Nathaniel James Merriman, Lord Bishop of Grahamstown, from preaching in the Cathedral on the 27th day of April last, and of there and then wrongfully and unlawfully preventing the Bishop from preaching, in violation of his law of canonical obedience, and of the canon law generally.⁴⁷

On the final charge also Badnall had no doubt:

Looking to the time when, and the place where it was committed, to the high spiritual dignity and the sacredness of the office of him against whom it was committed, and also to the exalted and responsible position of the person committing it, taking into account, moreover, the publicity which it was certain to obtain, the pleasure which such a spectacle would afford to the ungodly and malicious, the pain and grief it would cause to all good men, and the widespread and manifold moral mischief that would ensue from it...I also find the Very Reverend the Dean of Grahamstown, guilty of conduct giving just cause of offence or scandal to the Church by so preventing the preaching...⁴⁸

Badnall "endeavoured to take into account everything which suggested itself on the Dean's behalf."⁴⁹ He found an extenuating circumstance

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.101.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp.100-101.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.101.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.102.

in the fact that the injunction forbidding Williams to hinder Merriman's ministrations in St George's on 27 April 1879 was addressed to him as colonial chaplain and not as Dean of Grahamstown. This was a "provocation" and unnecessary irritation, which did not excuse, but had to be considered in measuring Williams's culpability. Williams was sentenced to suspension from his ministerial functions with total loss of income attached to the office he held as priest or dignitary in the Grahamstown diocese for one calendar month and until he undertook not to repeat the offences of which he had been found guilty.⁵⁰

Badnall had succeeded in securing an impartial trial. In 1880, the Chief Justice of the Cape remarked of the proceedings of the diocesan court:

...it is impossible not to admire the ability and candour with which the prosecution was conducted, or the judicial impartiality displayed by the tribunal itself.⁵¹

In 1882, the judges of the Privy Council also commended the "judicial method and impartiality"⁵² of the Grahamstown ecclesiastical court. On a more parochial level, the Journal described proceedings as "grave, patient and impartial," while the sentence was "as light as could be inflicted."⁵³ Another measure of Badnall's impartiality is the fact that both Merriman and Williams were intensely critical of the outcome of the trial. The Eastern Star editorial on 8 August once more criticised the constitution of the court and argued that the judgment was

⁵⁰ Ibid. Sentence was given in accordance with The Constitution and Canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa... A.D. 1876, Canon 23, Of Judicial Sentences, section i, clause 6.

⁵¹ N.J. Merriman, Appellant, Record of Proceedings in the Privy Council on Appeal from the Supreme Court of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope between the Right Reverend Nathaniel James Merriman, Appellant, and the Very Reverend Frederick Henry Williams, Respondent, Judge's Reasons, p.172.

⁵² Judgment of the Lords of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on the Appeal of Merriman (Bishop of Graham's Town) v. Williams from the Supreme Court of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, delivered 28th June 1882, p.4.

⁵³ GTJ 6 Aug. 1879.

...in the teeth of the facts of the case brought out in evidence, in the teeth of the common law of the Church of England, and equally in the teeth of the Statute law of the Cape Colony. ⁵⁴

The Star also linked the trial to political affairs in the Cape:

The trial...looks very much like a political skit. The famous Eastern Star-contrary-to-good-morals Resolution levelled against the Dean in the Grahams-town Synod of 1876, which was intended to help the Molteno-Merriman party was the same... ⁵⁵

Julia Merriman was very indignant about Badnall's judgment, and made no secret of her views. She told Badnall that she "began to think ecclesiastical Courts were no good, after such a decision upon such evidence." The judgment as a whole was a "pretty hash" and she was "riled" by the extenuating circumstances found by Badnall "when Father has been patient as Job for years under the insults of the vilest of men." ⁵⁶ Julia appeared to thrive on indignation, but the bishop was "very much cast down as to the present and bewildered as to the future." ⁵⁷

Merriman himself told the metropolitan:

If I do not express myself as thoroughly satisfied and pleased with the judgment...it is not from any want of care and close attention given to it by the Archdeacon... If my hands should be weakened by the result of this trial I am quite sure that it will be the reverse of what the court intended and wished. ⁵⁸

Archdeacon Badnall's judgment was impartial, but as far as Merriman was concerned, it had not clarified the next step to be taken against Williams. Merriman found it impossible to ask his son-in-law, Jacob Barry, for advice. Julia Merriman told John X.:

⁵⁴ ES 8 Aug. 1879.

⁵⁵ Ibid.; ES 5 Aug. 1879. See also ch. 5, p. 283.

⁵⁶ MP 107-79, JM to JXM and AM, Aug. 1879.

⁵⁷ MP 78-79, JM to JXM, 12 Aug. 1879.

⁵⁸ GDA 272, NJM to WWJ, 9 Aug. 1879.

...you have no idea how unsympathizing Jac is...We know he is a thorough Erastian, but he might be a feeling son-in-law. He is stiff as buckram, and when even the subject is mentioned, he grates, rather than soothes. Even Charlotte never speaks to him abt it - she is sadly distressed - she is such a loving, tender-hearted daughter... 59

Badnall, who did not allow his personal feelings to cloud his judgment, was quite clear about the next stage in the proceedings against Dean Williams. He was satisfied that the Grahamstown diocesan court had been "rigidly fair" and that Williams's conviction would never be "successfully impugned in any Civil Court." Merriman should therefore request the government to carry out the sentence, and if this measure failed, or if Williams ignored the sentence, the bishop should appeal to the Cape Supreme Court. Badnall felt that the real difficulty lay with Merriman, and told West Jones:

The Bishop of Grahamstown, I am sorry to say, was far from content with the findings of the Court, and not inclined...to proceed to the next necessary steps in a regular and business like manner...he was...too much out of temper, and too excited, to care to see matters in the right light, or to do anything as it ought to be done. 60

Badnall's complaint bore fruit in the form of a letter from the metropolitan to Merriman, encouraging him to see the judgment in a more positive light. West Jones wrote:

I see from your letter that the judgment does not satisfy you. Well - I suppose no plaintiff is ever altogether satisfied unless every count in his indictment is proved to the satisfaction of the judge,... But certainly, the grave offence of which you had to complain, far beyond any other, was his refusal to allow you to preach in the Cathedral - and probably if he had not refused, the action would not have been taken of summoning him before the Diocesan Court. On the counts connected with this charge, the court has condemned him, and he is sentenced accordingly. You can, I think, well afford to remain contented, although on the other and minor charges he is not declared guilty. 61

⁵⁹MP 78-79, JM to JXM, 12 Aug. 1879.

⁶⁰GDA 180, H. Badnall to WWJ, 11 Aug. 1879.

⁶¹UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, pp.212-213, WWJ to NJM, 16 Aug. 1879.

The metropolitan then reiterated Badnall's view that there should be an appeal to the civil courts. Failure to take this step would mean that any clergyman at variance with his bishop would treat the findings of ecclesiastical courts with impunity.

In his own diocese, Archdeacon White and Canon Espin, whom Merriman called "The Sons of ^{Zeruah} Jeremiah," added their voices to those of the metropolitan and Archdeacon Badnall, and Merriman, describing himself as "an ox to the slaughter"⁶² followed their advice, though with many hesitations.

Merriman's chief reservation related to that part of the sentence of the diocesan court which involved deprivation of income. The stipend of a colonial chaplain was not under a bishop's control, and Merriman was afraid that the rest of the sentence would be set aside by a civil court on this ground.⁶³ Badnall had no such qualms. The provincial canons required that part of every sentence of suspension should affect income, and Williams's income included fees quite apart from his pay as colonial chaplain. He also pointed out that should the church apply to the government to suspend Williams from his duties, the church could be accused of endeavouring to inflict a second sentence, namely deprivation of income, in addition to the sentence of the court and independently of it.⁶⁴

Merriman set his personal doubts aside, and on 9 August 1879, wrote to inform the governor of the sentence of the diocesan court, adding that Canon Espin would take Williams's place during the period of the dean's suspension.⁶⁵ Williams was also informed of this arrangement.⁶⁶ On Sunday, 10 August, Espin went to St George's to conduct the service of Holy Communion. There he met Dean Williams who told him, "I shall not require your services this morning." Williams and Espin,

⁶² MP 86-79, JM to AM, 6 Oct. 1879. The 'sons of Zeruah' were King David's closest and at times overzealous and overbearing lieutenants. See 2 Sam 3: 39, 16: 10, 19: 28.

⁶³ GDA 273, NJM to WWJ, 21 Aug. 1879.

⁶⁴ GDA 180, H. Badnall to WWJ, 11 Aug. 1879.

⁶⁵ LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to Sir H.B.E. Frere, 9 Aug. 1879.

⁶⁶ GDA 359, Notice of Suspension, NJM to FHW, 6 Aug. 1879.

who was accompanied by Impey, took their places in the chancel, but when the dean commenced the service, the bishop's emissaries retired.⁶⁷ Williams's action was endorsed by a meeting of St George's congregation which the Journal described as "well-attended"⁶⁸ and which the Eastern Star said was attended by between two hundred-and-fifty and three hundred parishioners. They recorded their "unabated confidence in, and esteem for" Dean Williams, and requested him to continue his ministrations.⁶⁹ Consequently, on 14 ~~May~~^{August} 1879, Merriman wrote to Cape Town to enquire whether the governor, on his own authority, could give effect to the sentence of the diocesan court, or whether an appeal to the Cape Supreme Court would be necessary.⁷⁰ In reply, the attorney-general made it clear that the case could only be dealt with by the courts of law.⁷¹

Merriman had hoped that the diocesan court would end his difficulties with Williams, and had resisted suggestions from Badnall, West Jones and his own clergy that appeal to the civil courts would be necessary. The letter from the attorney-general left him with no other alternative but prolonged litigation and an uncertain outcome,⁷² but before an appeal to the civil court was instituted, Merriman carried out certain disciplinary measures against Williams, which were within his power as bishop and in accordance with the constitution and canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa.

Williams's refusal to submit to the sentence of the diocesan court meant that Merriman could no longer recognise St George's as his cathedral church, and Christ Church became the procathedral of the diocese.⁷³ Impey, curate at St George's, had taken an oath of canonical

⁶⁷GDA 362, Account of events in St George's cathedral on 10 August 1879, signed by J. Espin; GTJ 11 Aug. 1879.

⁶⁸GTJ 13 Aug. 1879.

⁶⁹ES 15 Aug. 1879.

⁷⁰LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to Sir H.B.E. Frere, 14 Aug. 1879.

⁷¹GDA 376, Sir H.B.E. Frere to NJM, 19 Sep. 1879.

⁷²GDA 273, NJM to WWJ, 21 Aug. 1879.

⁷³GDA 1465, Official document proclaiming Christ Church as the cathedral church of the diocese of Grahamstown, 6 Sept. 1879.

obedience to Merriman, and after Williams had ignored the sentence of the diocesan court and ministered in St George's on 10 August, the bishop forbade Impey to minister there.⁷⁴ In spite of a resolution from the cathedral congregation expressing sympathy with Impey at the bishop's "cruel and unjust"⁷⁵ action, the curate declined, politely but firmly, to resume duties in St George's:

I most deeply lament the unhappy circumstances which have led to a severance of our brief connection, and trust that happier and more peaceful days for the Church may soon arrive.⁷⁶

Merriman appointed Impey to the curacy of Christ Church, which one of Merriman's daughters described as a "bitter pill" for Williams.⁷⁷

It certainly was a blow to the dean to be deprived of clerical assistance. At the end of September 1879, he suffered a severe attack of "rheumatic gout" and could only walk with difficulty and with the aid of two sticks. His voice was weak, but he was forced to struggle through the Sunday services,⁷⁸ because Merriman forbade Packman of St Bartholomew's, whose loyalty to the bishop was at best equivocal, to assist at St George's.⁷⁹ The Eastern Star described this action as "tyrannical,"⁸⁰ but Packman was obviously not prepared to disobey his diocesan as his position in law was not as secure as Williams's. Merriman made it clear that he would provide for cathedral services when Williams submitted to the sentence of the diocesan court.⁸¹

There was a more serious measure that could be taken against Williams. Canon 19, section xv, provided for prompt excommunication

⁷⁴GDA 361, NJM to W. Impey, 6 Aug. 1879.

⁷⁵GDA 1451, D.H. Kennelly to NJM, 13 Aug. 1879.

⁷⁶CVMB, vol.II, p.228, W. Impey to St George's vestry, 27 Sep.1879.

⁷⁷MP 91-79, E.L. Merriman to AM, 16 Nov. 1879.

⁷⁸ES 30 Sep. 1879.

⁷⁹LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to C.H.L. Packman, 28 Sep. 1879.

⁸⁰ES 30 Sep. 1879.

⁸¹LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to C.H.L. Packman, 28 Sep. 1879.

of clergy who failed to obey the sentence of an ecclesiastical court.⁸² West Jones and Merriman discussed the advisability of applying this measure. The metropolitan pointed out that the sentence of excommunication could intensify the animosity of Williams's supporters, and the court might hold that by proceeding to fresh action, Merriman had endeavoured to enforce his own sentence and precluded himself from claiming the court's protection. On the other hand, if the civil court pronounced in Merriman's favour, Williams would yield and there would be no ground for excommunication. If the court gave judgment in favour of Williams, the dean could not be excommunicated without Merriman exposing himself to an action for libel or defamation of character. The court might also point out that if Merriman had excommunicated Williams, the dean might have yielded. It could also be argued that the church was bound to exhaust all the procedures connected with the trial of clergy which were laid down in the canons, before applying to the civil courts to enforce an ecclesiastical sentence. On the whole, the metropolitan favoured excommunication before an appeal to the civil courts,⁸³ a view in which Merriman concurred.⁸⁴

On 10 October 1879, Williams was cited once more to appear in the court of the diocese for ignoring the sentence of the August tribunal.⁸⁵ As the canons required, there was a delay of thirty days before the court sat.⁸⁶ Merriman presided over this tribunal on 12 and 13 November

⁸²The clause reads:

XV Any person against whom judgment has been given, who shall refuse to obey the sentence of any Tribunal of this Church, shall be...if sentenced to suspension or deprivation, ipso facto excommunicated : And it shall be the duty of the Bishop...after notice given, to pronounce sentence.

⁸³UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, pp.215-216, WWJ to NJM, 18 Aug. 1879.

⁸⁴GDA 273, NJM to WWJ, 21 Aug. 1879.

⁸⁵For the articles of presentment, and proceedings of this court, see S.G.A. Shippard (ed.), Proceedings in the Diocesan Court of Grahamstown in the matter of the Archdeacon of Grahamstown versus the Dean of Grahamstown, 30 July to 5 August and 12 - 13 November 1879, pp.103-112; GTJ 12 Nov. 1879.

⁸⁶GDA 274, NJM to WWJ, 9 Sep. 1879.

1879, with Canons Henchman and Steabler as clerical assessors and Thomas Holland as a lay assessor.⁸⁷ Once again, Williams did not appear, nor was he represented. Merriman found that in ignoring the sentence of suspension, Williams had become amenable to Canon 19.⁸⁸ Consequently, on 3 December 1879 in Christ Church, Archdeacon White read Bishop Merriman's declaration that Frederick Henry Williams was excommunicated and "put out of the Unity and Communion of the Church."⁸⁹ Julia Merriman called it a "sad and shocking" day for the church, but as was usual with Merriman, once the Rubicon was crossed, he was "wonderfully relieved" in health and spirits.⁹⁰ The bishop refused to allow the criticism from Williams's supporters which followed the act of excommunication to depress him. The Eastern Star suggested that Dean Williams could aspire to canonisation for his defence of the church⁹¹ and his office, called the instrument of excommunication "a malicious published libel," and commented on

...the grotesque spectacle of the Minister of the latest and feeblest amongst the broken fragments of Christendom attitudinising as the High Priest of an undivided Catholic Church. ⁹²

Dr Atherstone, not only the dean's medical adviser but his warm supporter, a fact which rather surprised the Merrimans,⁹³ corresponded with the bishop on the subject of the excommunication, insisting that the Church

⁸⁷ Thomas Holland (1826-1893), formerly a clerk of the Eastern Province Bank, was by 1867 manager of the Standard Bank in Grahams-town. He was also a Justice of the Peace for Albany, and at the time of his death, a sheriff of the Eastern Districts Court. Thomas Holland was one of the lay representatives of the Diocese of Grahams-town at the 1870 Provincial Synod.

⁸⁸ The Constitution and Canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa...A.D. 1876, Canon 19, section xv, Of Judicial Proceedings, made excommunication inevitable. See above, note 82.

⁸⁹ GDA 1452, Declaration of Excommunication of F.H. Williams signed by N.J. Merriman, 3 Dec. 1879.

⁹⁰ MP 77-79, JM to AM, Dec. 1879.

⁹¹ ES 18 Nov. 1879.

⁹² ES 12 Dec. 1879.

⁹³ MP 77-79, JM to AM, Dec. 1879; MP 68-80, JM to AM, 16 Oct. 1880.

of the Province of South Africa was schismatical.⁹⁴ Merriman brusquely replied that he had "neither leisure nor inclination" to prolong the correspondence,⁹⁵ and suggested that Atherstone address his letters to the Eastern Star, which he did.⁹⁶ The metropolitan regretted the peremptory tone of Merriman's letter,⁹⁷ but it had become clear to the Bishop of Grahamstown that the church had exhausted her resources for dealing with Williams, and he accepted the necessity of settling the question in a civil court.

The months between the excommunication of Dean Williams in December 1879 and the hearing of Merriman's appeal to the Supreme Court in August 1880 were anxious ones for Merriman, and his wife would have been glad if the case had come on in December 1879.⁹⁸ In addition to concern about the judges who would hear the case,⁹⁹ the bishop was apprehensive lest his counsel, Sidney Shippard, be appointed to the bench,¹⁰⁰ and

⁹⁴ LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to W.G. Atherstone, 13 Nov. 1879, 27 Nov. 1879.

⁹⁵ Ibid., Nov. 1879.

⁹⁶ ES 12, 19, 28 Dec. 1879.

⁹⁷ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, p.247, WWJ to NJM, 22 Nov. 1879.

⁹⁸ MP 95-79, JM and NJM to JXM, 26 Nov. 1879; MP 17-80, JM to AM, 12 Mar. 1880; MP 30-80, JM to AM, 25 May 1880; MP 90-79, JM to AM, Nov. 1879.

⁹⁹ MP 30-80, JM to AM, 25 May 1880; MP 17-80, JM to AM, 12 Mar. 1880.

¹⁰⁰ MP 17-80, JM to AM, 12 Mar. 1880. Sidney Godolphin Alexander Shippard (1837-1901), was educated at King's College School, and London, and was called to the Inner Temple in 1867, but came to south Africa and was admitted to the Cape bar in 1868. He acted as Attorney-General of Griqualand West from 1873 and was formally appointed in 1875. In 1877 he became recorder of the High Court of Griqualand West, but a clash with the High Commissioner, Sir Bartle Frere, and the Administrator, Godfrey Lanyon, led to his resignation. On 20 April 1880, he was elevated to the bench and served in the Eastern Districts Court. From 1885 to 1895, he was Administrator of British Bechuanaland. From 1898, he was a

there were delaying tactics by the Williams party¹⁰¹ and the usual insults to be endured from the Eastern Star.¹⁰²

Throughout these worries, Merriman continued his practice of visitation, no longer on foot, and often not on horseback, but in a carriage, and with travelling chaplains who were, he wrote,

...very good to me or I would not manage so much life in the Veld by night as well as by Day. I am in my 72nd year. ¹⁰³

As always, these long journeys were invigorating¹⁰⁴ and offered escape and relief from troubled Grahamstown.

Despite the shadow of the Supreme Court case, routine diocesan administration went on. The wrangle between Merriman and Williams prevented the summoning of a synod in 1879, but Merriman summoned the clergy and lay delegates to a meeting in Port Elizabeth in January 1880.¹⁰⁵ The bishop looked forward to a synod free from "the baleful influence of the great disturber and agitator,"¹⁰⁶ and the refusal of the St Bartholomew's congregation to elect a lay delegate¹⁰⁷ did not mar his hopes. In his charge to the synod, Merriman returned with relief from the unwanted role of controversialist to that of pastor and spiritual adviser, though his exhortation was a simple one:

director of the British South Africa Company. Shippard possessed strong imperialist sympathies and admired Rhodes. (D.S.A.B., vol.II, pp.662-663.)

¹⁰¹ ES 28 Nov. 1879; MP 17-80, JM to AM, 12 Mar. 1880; MP 30-80, JM to AM, 25 May 1880.

¹⁰² ES 28 Nov. 1879.

¹⁰³ LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to G.A. Denison, 27 May 1880.

¹⁰⁴ MP 30-80, JM to AM, 25 May 1880.

¹⁰⁵ LV 108, Diocesan Synod 1880.

¹⁰⁶ GDA 275, NJM to WWJ, 10 Jan. 1880.

¹⁰⁷ MP 94-79, JM to AM, 25 Nov. 1879; GDA 1450, G. Wood to NJM, 21 Nov. 1879.

I have always considered that an increased amount of devotional reverence was the main point...aimed at in any more variation from the more common, more slack, and often slovenly usages of days gone by. And I never can too often repeat my conviction that the fundamental point in which improvement in this direction is required, is in encouraging our fellow worshippers to express their reverence and promote their devotion by the bodily act of meekly kneeling on their knees during the time that public prayer is being offered in the church...And I again exhort you, my Brethren, not only to inculcate this duty steadily but to call your Church Wardens to your aid to see that facilities are at all events afforded...for this very simple but very need-ful increase of Ritual amongst us. ¹⁰⁸

Bishop Cotterill had laid good foundations in the synods of the 1860s. The 1880 synod dealt largely with routine administrative matters, and brought the rules and regulations of the Grahamstown synod into conformity with the provincial constitution and canons. The only major change was the decision that two-thirds of the clergy present and voting at an elective assembly for a bishop, should agree before the candidate's name was submitted to the lay representatives. ¹⁰⁹

One unusual measure was debated by the synod. Merriman asked the assembly to consider the appointment of a coadjutor bishop, ¹¹⁰ a "younger, abler, stronger and wealthier" man, who would supervise the diocese better than he felt able to do. ¹¹¹ Merriman pointed out that the 1873 episcopal synod had sanctioned the measure. ¹¹² The Eastern Star scoffed at the idea of a coadjutor in a diocese with only forty clergy, contrasting this with the Church of England, where a coadjutor bishop was allowed only when there were several hundred parishes and even more clergy in the diocese. ¹¹³ It is possible that in 1880, West Jones ¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ GDA 206, Bishop Merriman's charge to the 1880 synod of the diocese of Grahamstown.

¹⁰⁹ CC., May 1880, p.6.

¹¹⁰ See above, ch. 5, n.230.

¹¹¹ GDA 275, NJM to WWJ, 10 Jan. 1880; GDA 206, Bishop Merriman's charge to the 1880 synod of the diocese of Grahamstown.

¹¹² GDA 275, NJM to WWJ, 10 Jan. 1880.

¹¹³ ES 20 Jan. 1880.

¹¹⁴ UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, p.320, 22 Jan. 1880. The metropolitan promised Merriman his support in the search for a coadjutor.

and Merriman feared a succession controversy when the latter died and sought to forestall it, but it was the unanimous opinion of the Grahamstown clergy that the appointment of a coadjutor was not necessary for the good of the church in the diocese. It was argued that a man of the "highest standing" might not wish to accept the office of coadjutor where he would accept a vacant see, that there were no funds available for the income of another bishop, and that while it was essential that Merriman have a say in the choice of his coadjutor, the canons did not provide for this.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the clergy of the diocese assured Merriman of their love and esteem for himself, and their confidence in his administration.¹¹⁶

Merriman was pleased with the quiet and businesslike proceedings of synod. He told John X.:

...in vain has the Eastern Star endeavoured either to diminish and depreciate the Synod, or to make us take up any case in which his [i.e. Williams's] name and conduct are mixed up. Sheffield the Editor was sent down from Grahamstown to report - but with all his Malevolence I don't think he will be able to make any case against us.¹¹⁷

Bishop and Mrs Merriman and Dean Williams travelled to Cape Town for the Supreme Court case at the end of July 1880. When the dean left Grahamstown on 29 July, Robert Godlonton made a point of wishing him success and the Star confidently stated that he left with the "best wishes of the City,"¹¹⁸ but the Journal argued that the dean's aim was not maintenance of union with the Church of England but mastery at St George's.¹¹⁹ While Williams was away, Archdeacon Colley, who had been installed as Archdeacon of Pietermaritzburg and canon of St Peter's cathedral by Bishop Colenso in 1879, conducted services at St George's.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ GDA 73, H.M. White to WWJ, 10 Feb. 1880.

¹¹⁶ CC., May 1880, pp.3-7; GTJ 30 Jan. 1880.

¹¹⁷ ES 16, 20 Jan. 1880; MP 8-80, NJM to JXM, 24 Jan. 1880.

¹¹⁸ ES 30 Jul. 1880.

¹¹⁹ GTJ 6 Aug. 1880.

¹²⁰ GTJ 30 Jul. 1880.

Judgment was given in the Supreme Court of the Cape colony in the case of Merriman versus Williams on 26 August 1880. The Grahamstown diocesan court had dealt with the question of discipline but it had been the deliberate intention of the men who framed the constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa to exclude questions of doctrine and discipline from the jurisdiction of a civil tribunal.¹²¹ It was the function of the secular court to judge whether Williams was amenable to the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical tribunal and whether the rules of the Church of the Province of South Africa as a voluntary association had been correctly applied in the constitution and conduct of the Grahamstown court. In this case, the Cape Supreme Court was asked to endorse and enforce the decisions of the diocesan court, to confirm Merriman's right, "in his episcopal capacity" to officiate and perform all ecclesiastical functions in St George's, and to have

...free and uninterrupted access to the land and premises...of the site of the said cathedral church of Saint George, and to the said church or cathedral or other buildings erected thereon, for the purpose of enjoying and exercising all rights, privileges, and immunities which have heretofore been enjoyed and exercised, or ought to be enjoyed and exercised by the Bishop of Graham's Town...¹²²

The Chief Justice, Sir J.H. de Villiers, Mr Justice Dwyer and Mr Justice Smith¹²³ gave judgment against Merriman.¹²⁴ The chief justice argued

¹²¹ See above, ch. 3.

¹²² For a complete text of proceedings, see N.J. Merriman, Appellant, Record of Proceedings in the Privy Council on Appeal from the Supreme Court of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope between the Right Reverend Nathaniel James Merriman, Appellant, and the Very Reverend Frederick Henry Williams, Respondent.

¹²³ Johan Hendrik (John Henry) de Villiers (1842-1914), of Huguenot descent, went to Utrecht to train for the ministry, found he had no call, and studied law at Berlin. In 1865 he was called to the English bar, and in 1866 to the Cape bar. In 1867, he was elected to the Legislative Assembly, and supported moves to secure responsible government for the Cape. In 1872 he was appointed attorney-general in Molteno's cabinet, and in 1873 he became the first colonial-born chief justice. In 1888, he declined the presidency of the Orange Free State, and in 1893 Rhodes suggested he take over the premiership of the Cape. De Villiers was knighted in 1877, made a Privy Councillor in 1897, and in 1910 was awarded a peerage on becoming first Chief Justice of the Union of South Africa. Although de Villiers over-imported English law at the expense of Roman-Dutch, he enhanced the reputation of the

firstly that St George's church, originally vested in the Bishop of Cape Town, had been transferred to the Bishop of Grahamstown and his successors in office under Act 30 of 1860, but the court found that Merriman's title as Bishop of Grahamstown was defective. There was nothing to prevent the crown from appointing another Bishop of Grahamstown under letters patent, who would in law be the successor to Armstrong and Cotterill, and whose claim to St George's church would thus be complete. Secondly, the chief justice found that the Church of the Province of South Africa was "separated root and branch"¹²⁵ from the Church of England. The constitution of the south African province excluded the jurisdiction of the Privy Council, and the Province was not bound to adopt any changes made by the Church of England in the standards of faith. These provisions excluded the possibility of uniformity of faith between the Church of England and the Church of the Province of South Africa. In addition, the province had excommunicated John William Colenso, who was in law a bishop of the Church of England.¹²⁶ As the site on which St George's was built had been granted for ecclesiastical purposes in connection with the Church of England, the Church of the Province of South Africa could not claim to exercise any authority over the church.

Thirty years before, Gray and Merriman had objected to provisions in the church ordinances which were contrary to practice in the Church

bench for impartiality, soundness and justice. (D.S.A.B., vol. I, pp.224-230.)

Charles Thomas Smith (1823-1901), graduated from Caius College, Cambridge, in 1847, and became a tutor at Caius. He was called to the bar in 1857, and practised in England until 1869, when he was appointed judge of the Eastern Districts Court. He moved to Cape Town in 1880. In 1889, he became Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, and Chancellor in 1898. (D.S.A.B., vol.II, pp.672-673.)

See above, ch. 5, n. 7, on Edward Dwyer.

¹²⁴ PBH/BD, pp.143-144. For the text of the judgment, see N.J. Merriman, Appellant, Record of Proceedings in the Privy Council on Appeal from the Supreme Court of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope..., pp.148-176.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p.163.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

of England.¹²⁷ Ironically, in the 1880 Supreme Court judgment, the chief justice found that regulations in the constitution and canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa which were contrary to the provisions of the church ordinances constituted another divisive factor between the Church of the Province of South Africa and the Church of England, as the wording of the ordinances actually bound the ordinance churches to the Church of England,¹²⁸ however much the pattern of governments laid down in the ordinances diverged from that of the Church of England.

Although the court found for Dean Williams, several aspects of the judgment indicate the sympathy the chief justice felt for the position of Merriman and the Church of the Province of South Africa. He congratulated the church for the laudable impartiality of the diocesan court,¹²⁹ and although the circumstances of the case before the court compelled a verdict in favour of Williams, de Villiers was by no means impressed with the claims of that gentleman to unwavering devotion to the Church of England:

It is idle for the Defendent to deny that he joined the Church of South Africa, and became personally subject to its constitutions and canons in the face of the part which he took in the discussions of the Provincial Synod of 1870, and in the absence of any protest against the separatist canons adopted by that Synod. It is still more idle for him to deny that he has subjected himself personally to the episcopal jurisdiction of the Plaintiff, according to the laws of the Church of South Africa, in the face of documentary proof which exists of his active participation in the election of the Plaintiff.¹³⁰

The chief justice also displayed sympathy for Merriman's treatment at Williams's hands:

We are not now concerned with the question whether the Right Reverend Plaintiff has been treated in this matter with that consideration, respect, and good

¹²⁷ See above, ch. 1, pp.65-67.

¹²⁸ N.J. Merriman, Appellant, Record of Proceedings in the Privy Council on Appeal from the Supreme Court of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope..., p.164.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p.172.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.167.

feeling to which his years, if not his position as a chief pastor of the Church of South Africa, and his labours as a missionary Bishop, have fairly entitled him. This is a Court for the enforcement of the laws of the land, and not for the inculcation of Christian charity. 131

Although the chief justice pointed out that the Church of the Province could not expect to profit from endowments of the Church of England if it adopted the status of a voluntary association, that choice of status seemed to him "intelligible" and "reasonable":

...I can quite appreciate the unwillingness of the Church of South Africa to be bound by the laws of the Imperial Parliament, in the election of the members of which they have no part... 132

To prevent repetition of the case before the court, the chief justice felt bound

...to express my individual opinion as to the necessity of legislation, whether imperial or colonial, to regulate the relative rights of the Church of South Africa and the Church of England in respect of their endowments under private deeds of trust, and to legalize the transfer to the Church of the Province of South Africa of Property secured by law for the uses of the Church of England in those areas in which there has been acquiescence for a certain length of time, or where a majority of the congregation consent to a transfer. 133

Unless this was done, or unless the south African province was prepared to part with the property of which it enjoyed the use, "there will never be peace within its own household."¹³⁴ This conclusion is ironical, in the light of the fact that de Villiers himself, with Archdeacon Badnall, had been responsible for excluding specific provision for securing church property from Lord Blachford's act of 1874, on the grounds that such special provision was unnecessary.¹³⁵

Both Mr Justice Smith and Mr Justice Dwyer concurred in the judgment of the chief justice, but they gave different reasons for this,

¹³¹ Ibid., p.168.

¹³² Ibid., pp.161-162.

¹³³ Ibid., p.173.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p.174.

¹³⁵ PBH/BD, pp.143-144.

which indicated a wide divergence in their sympathies.

Mr Justice Smith echoed the chief justice's approbation of the procedure of the Grahamstown diocesan court, and agreed that Williams had

...by his acts precluded himself from denying that he was subsequently to 1870, a member of the Church of the Province of South Africa, and that the Plaintiff was his lawful Bishop. It seemed to me also that the Defendant had precluded himself from questioning the legality of the Plaintiff's claim to officiate as a Bishop of the Church of the Province of South Africa in St George's, Graham's Town, as his cathedral church, after having sanctioned it himself for so many years. ¹³⁶

On these grounds, Smith considered that Merriman was entitled to an interdict restraining Williams from interfering with his lawful episcopal functions, but recognising the predominance of the property question, the judge did not press this point. He agreed with the chief justice that only an Act of Parliament could settle the property issue.

Mr Justice Dwyer was a friend of Dean Williams, and there is evidence that he ought to have recused himself from the case. In his reasons for concurring in de Villiers's judgment, he argued that as the Church of the Province was a voluntary organisation, a member could withdraw from the association at any point. In 1875, Williams had, according to Dwyer, signified his resignation from the Church of the Province of South Africa, by protesting against the 1876 Provincial Synod, and was therefore not amenable to the jurisdiction of the 1879 diocesan court. As a second string to his bow, Mr Justice Dwyer also argued that the Grahamstown ecclesiastical tribunal was not properly constituted. In a literal sense, Dwyer was correct, but the canon regulating the constitution of diocesan courts had been contravened solely in the interests of securing an impartial trial for Dean Williams, and neither de Villiers nor Smith nor the judges of the Privy Council took exception to the irregularity. Nevertheless, Dwyer argued that the improperly constituted tribunal had no jurisdiction

¹³⁶ N.J. Merriman, Appellant, Record of Proceedings in the Privy Council on Appeal from the Supreme Court of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope..., p.176.

and that the sentence pronounced was utterly void.¹³⁷

The Cape Town judgment was received with jubilation by the Williams party in Grahamstown. The bells of St George's rang out across the city, and the Eastern Star recorded that they rang out the old, rang in the new, rang out the false, rang in the true.¹³⁸

In the wake of the judgment, Merriman received numerous letters of sympathy. His own state of mind is reflected in his reply to one of these correspondents:

I assure you that I feel far from upset by the present seemingly adverse judgment. To my own personal acts and doings in the matter it is a most triumphant decision of approval. That which belongs to the general question in which the whole Province is concerned as much as myself, and in which a large portion of the Colonial Church is concerned...remains yet to be decided on appeal, when if the Chief Justice's verdict is borne out, it behoves the powers that be (the Civil powers I mean) to find a road out of the difficulty or else to make Martyrs on so large a scale that the results must I think appear alarming to themselves. At all events I do not wish to anticipate and am content to let the principles now at issue work themselves out fairly. I am very confident that the Divine Head of the Church will after steering his Bark through the troubled waters land her safely in haven at last.¹³⁹

The judgment had profound implications for the colonial church. Other south African bishops, realising this, showed interest in the way the case was argued in the Privy Council.¹⁴⁰ Henry Callaway, Bishop of St John's, was in favour of legislation to regulate the position of the colonial church:

¹³⁷ Ibid., pp.174-175. See Ch. 5, n.7. MP 28-76, JM to AM, 1876; MP 82-78, JM to AM, 8 Jun. 1878; MP 109-79, JM to JXM, 1879. UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, p.320, WWJ to NJM, 22 Jan. 1880.

¹³⁸ ES 31 Aug. 1880, paraphrasing A. Tennyson, In Memoriam, cvi.

¹³⁹ Kimberley Public Library, NJM to Mr Campbell, 8 Sep. 1880. The recipient of this letter is possibly C.T. Campbell, who left Grahamstown in 1871 and died in Kimberley in 1897. See above, ch. 4, n.293. I am grateful to Mr and Mrs P. van Blommestein for this reference.

¹⁴⁰ UWL, AB867: Ab5.2, Diocese of Bloemfontein 1875-1883, A.B. Webb to WWJ, 6 Sep. 1880.

...it behoves us to get the relations of the Church of the Province of South Africa to the English Church, and to the members of the Church in South Africa, so settled, that they shall not rest on mere Judgments given by Judges, whether in England or the Colony,... but upon an Act of the Legislative Assembly of Cape Town, and upon those of other Colonies which have Legislative Assemblies,...But for Dean Williams, it could all have been settled simply by the course of events. But it is perhaps all the better, that it should be now pushed towards a final undoubted settlement. ¹⁴¹

The metropolitan did not accept that the judgment made a material difference to the relationship between the Church of England and the Church of the Province of South Africa, and received an assurance to that effect from the Archbishop of Canterbury. West Jones himself wrote:

Nothing will ever persuade me that I, because I have joined the Church of the Province of S. Africa, have ceased to be a member of the Church of England. Because one Society is not another Society, it does not follow that a member of one cannot also be a member of the other. My action towards the Church of this Province has not weakened my loyalty to the Church of England in the slightest degree, and I maintain that neither the Dean of Grahamstown, nor any one else, is a more attached member of the Church of England than I am. ¹⁴²

The judgment of the court also provoked much learned debate. ¹⁴³ The most notable production was a pamphlet by Hopkins Badnall. ¹⁴⁴ The bulk of this document was devoted to the learned legal argument characteristic of Badnall, that de Villiers's judgment was based on misunderstanding. Badnall cited evidence to show that Merriman was the successor of Armstrong and Cotterill, that the Church of the Province

¹⁴¹ UWL, AB867: Ab2.1, Diocese of St John's 1872-1887, H. Callaway to WWJ, 9 Oct. 1880. See also *ibid.*, 8 Sep. 1880, 23 Nov. 1880, 6 Jan. 1881.

¹⁴² UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A14, WWJ to Rev. C. Hole, 9 Sep. 1880.

¹⁴³ See for example the Church Times, 29 Oct. 1880; CC., September-November 1880.

¹⁴⁴ H. Badnall, Remarks on the Judgment delivered in the Supreme Court, 26 August 1880.

of South Africa was in communion with the Church of England and that every step in the process of constitutional development of the Church of the Province had been taken with painstaking care not to sever that union. Badnall's aim was to allay the "pain and alarm"¹⁴⁵ caused among Anglicans by the judgment, and he concluded with the assertion that the link between the Church of the Province of South Africa and the Church of England was not ultimately to be sought in law. He quoted Bishop Selwyn's answer to accusations in 1867 that the colonial church had cut the painter which bound her to the Church of England:

"No," said the great Bishop,..."we have not cut the painter; it has parted of itself, and we are occupied now in forging a better cable; - like that invisible ...bond by which the planets are anchored to the sun; We are declaring, one and all, that we have not any wish to change or alter the Articles and Formularies of our Mother Church." 146

Merriman thought this pamphlet "capital," and told Badnall, "You have done the Church good service."¹⁴⁷

The Cape Supreme Court had given leave for an appeal to the Privy Council.¹⁴⁸ This was a lengthy process, but anxiety about events six thousand miles away was only one of the trials Merriman had to bear during the next two years.

The bishop and his wife returned from Cape Town by sea early in September 1880 after an absence of seven weeks. The Port Elizabeth clergy gave them a warm welcome, and the jetty shook with the cheers of the grammar school boys. After the next stage of their journey, their family, the clergy of the town (except Williams and Packman), and many laymen were at the Grahamstown station to meet them. Julia

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p.3.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p.61.

¹⁴⁷ UWL, AB723, Badnall Papers 1845-1894, NJM to H. Badnall, 29 Dec. 1880.

¹⁴⁸ GTJ 6 Sep. 1880. Leave to appeal was given on 31 Jul. 1880.

Merriman told her daughter-in-law Agnes:

Thank God for blessings too many to count.
The house looks so clean and nice - the dear
children so loving and everyone kind and wish-
ing to show sympathy. ¹⁴⁹

Almost in the same breath, Julia reported that Dean Williams had announced that Bishop Colenso would conduct a confirmation in St George's in October. She was inclined to disbelieve this announcement, which she described as "an emanation" and "a sensational lie"¹⁵⁰ from Dean Williams. Nevertheless, her husband could not ignore the report, nor could he allow Colenso to minister in his diocese without resistance.¹⁵¹ As Williams alleged that the see of Grahamstown was vacant and that jurisdiction had reverted to the Bishop of London,¹⁵² Merriman issued a formal inhibition in his own name and in that of the Bishop of London:

...we do now therefore in our own name and in the name of the Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of London, to whose jurisdiction certain persons in this Diocese profess to belong, solemnly protest against such invasion of our Episcopal rights and privileges do hereby accordingly inhibit the said Dr Colenso from officiating... ¹⁵³

Merriman wrote to inform John Jackson, Bishop of London, of his action,¹⁵⁴ and received a gratifying reply:

Mr Williams can hardly have been serious in asserting himself to be under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London...Whether a Bishop is appointed

¹⁴⁹MP 44-80, E.L. Merriman, 5 Sep. 1880; MP 45-80, JM to AM, Sep. 1880.

¹⁵⁰MP 46-80, JM to AM, 25 Sep. 1880.

¹⁵¹ODCC, p.702. See note on inhibition.

¹⁵²See GTJ 4 Oct. 1880, 25 Oct. 1880; ES 19 Oct. 1880, for correspondence on the subject.

¹⁵³GDA 1449, Document signed by D'Urban Dyason on 14 October 1880, certifying that he had served Merriman's inhibition on Bishop Colenso, together with a copy of the inhibition, dated 27 September 1880.

¹⁵⁴LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to John Jackson, 8 Sep. 1880.

by Patent or an Act of Parliament or by the Church Synods is immaterial provided that it is recognized by the Church of England...Most of the West Indian Dioceses and those in Canada have ceased to be established and appoint their own Bishops; but no one dreams of the absurdity of supposing that these dioceses have reverted to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London. ¹⁵⁵

John Jackson gave the Dean of Grahamstown short shrift:

If however Mr Williams is under my jurisdiction he cannot legally officiate or hold any ecclesiastical Benefice or Office without my licence, which I certainly have not given, and which I am not aware that he has applied for. ¹⁵⁶

Williams's report that Colenso would visit St George's proved true. On 14 October 1880, D'Urban Dyason, notary public, served the Bishop of Grahamstown's inhibition on Bishop Colenso in Port Elizabeth. ¹⁵⁷ This did not deter Colenso from ministering in St George's on several occasions in October 1880. In a letter to the press, the metropolitan expressed his sympathy for Merriman in this "unwarrantable invasion" of his diocese, and he pointed out that the letters patent which made Colenso Bishop of Natal gave him no rights outside his own diocese. ¹⁵⁸ This argument did not daunt Williams. Anticipating the dean's rejection by the Bishop of London, Colenso announced in St George's on 17 October that the congregation was to be attached to the diocese of Natal. ¹⁵⁹

Two disputes arose out of the visit of Colenso to Grahamstown. The Bishop of Natal himself apparently took great care not to arouse controversy. In his sermons, he avoided allusion to current events, or exposition of doctrines for which he had been condemned. The

¹⁵⁵ GDA 377, John Jackson to NJM, 9 Nov. 1880.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ GDA 1449, Document signed by D'Urban Dyason on 14 October 1880, certifying that he had served Merriman's inhibition on Bishop Colenso, together with a copy of the inhibition, dated 27 Sep. 1880.

¹⁵⁸ GTJ 27 Oct. 1880; GDA 277, NJM to WWJ, 14 Oct. 1880.

¹⁵⁹ GTJ 18 Oct. 1880.

content of his sermons was practical, and the bishop's "venerable... appearance and meek...demeanour" made a favourable impression on his hearers.¹⁶⁰ The first controversy in which Colenso found himself embroiled was over the age of the confirmands. The confirmation service was held on 21 October 1880, and was attended by a crowd which spilled out into the street. The Eastern Star was at pains to record that the average age of males confirmed was eighteen, and of females, eighteen years and six months.¹⁶¹ The Journal noted that some of the candidates were over sixty years of age, but also remarked on "the extreme youth of a large number of the children thus presented."¹⁶² This controversy soon abated, but the origin and consequences of the second were more serious.

Originally, Williams had been a vehement opponent of Colenso's theology, and had preached several condemnatory sermons in St George's on the subject.¹⁶³ Their common churchmanship had apparently bridged this gulf, but a more profound difference remained. Williams was a supporter of the Sprigg government's policy of "vigour."¹⁶⁴ When Merriman had written to the Aborigines Protection Society declaring that Colenso was winning the "grace of repentance" by his championship of Cetshwayo and the Zulu,¹⁶⁵ the Eastern Star had stated: "We cannot approve the politics prevalent at Bishopstowe,"¹⁶⁶ sourly remarking of Merriman's attitude:

...if we will only bless the niggers...we shall be right in the end.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ ES 22 Oct. 1880.

¹⁶² GTJ 22 Oct. 1880, 1 Nov. 1880; GDA 63, A.T. Wirgman to WWJ, 26 Oct. 1880.

¹⁶³ See above, p.200.

¹⁶⁴ P. Lewsen, John X. Merriman, p.92.

¹⁶⁵ LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to F.W. Chesson, 24 May 1880.

¹⁶⁶ ES 3 Aug. 1880.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

Colenso and his daughter Harriette visited Grahamstown on their way from Natal to visit Cetshwayo in Cape Town,¹⁶⁸ where they could be expected to visit Agnes and John X. Julia Merriman summed up the complexity of the situation for Agnes while Colenso was still in Grahamstown:

I can't imagine how Dr C[olenso] and Dr W[illiams] will get on abt. native affairs! and Miss C. too. I am sure she would enjoy a chat with me better than one with Mrs W. It will be awkward for you and John to meet these people, for really the intrusion into this Diocese is most unwarrantable. Father inhibited his ministrations thro' a lawyer when he landed at Pt. E. and Dr C. had the decency to forbid bell ringing, or public demonstration - but he is abetting the insolent rebellion of Dr W. and insulting the Ch[urch] at large, in the person of its Bishop. However Dr C. can consort with the Editor of the E[astern] S[tar], I can't imagine, even though he may not know his character as we do.¹⁶⁹

Bishop Colenso and Dean Williams also considered a scheme to translate Colenso from Natal to Grahamstown after Merriman's death, a scheme abandoned as Williams alone of the clergy of the diocese would have recognised Colenso as his diocesan. Colenso also offered to consecrate a bishop for Grahamstown, an act which would have been valid, but illegal in terms of English ecclesiastical law.¹⁷⁰

Merriman also had a dispute with the rector of St Bartholomew's about the bishop's right to preach in the church. Merriman's announcement that he would preach in St Bartholomew's on 26 September 1880 threatened to lead to a repetition of events in St George's on 27 April 1879,¹⁷¹ but Packman was reluctant to make the breach with Merriman as final as had Williams, and he allowed the bishop to preach.¹⁷² Nevertheless, Merriman found the hostile attitude of the rector of St Bartholomew's, of which he himself was builder, endower, and patron,

¹⁶⁸ GTJ 29 Oct. 1880; Wyn Rees, Colenso Letters from Natal, pp.351-354.

¹⁶⁹ MP 68-80, JM to AM, 16 Oct. 1880. The Journal, 29 Oct. 1880, similarly remarked that Williams's attitude to Colenso lacked "sincerity and consistency."

¹⁷⁰ PBH/BD, p.159.

¹⁷¹ LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to C.H.L. Packman, 22 Sep. 1880, 24 Sep. 1880.

¹⁷² GDA 1446, C.H.L. Packman to NJM, 23 Sep. 1880.

extremely painful.¹⁷³ A meeting of St Bartholomew's parishioners was held after Merriman had preached in the church. Dean Williams and several members of St George's congregation attended as observers, and the meeting insisted that St Bartholomew's was in communion with Bishop Colenso and the Church of England, and not with the Church of the Province of South Africa.¹⁷⁴ Mr Hawken, who lived in the parish, spoke in defence of Bishop Merriman, and suggested a new stanza for the hymn, The Church's One Foundation:

The Church's one foundation
Is based upon the throne;
Its best, its new creation,
None other may we own.
Our virtues must be latent,
Till like some holy fire
The Royal Letters Patent
Our hearts and souls inspire. 175

Julia Merriman attributed the attitude of those who supported Dean Williams to a defective view of the church. She told Agnes:

...it is amazing how ignorant and indifferent people are as to what the Church is - for the most part it is looked upon as a building into wh. folks stroll once a week and think they bestow a favour by so doing, and are only excited, by the desire that its railings, or some such belonging, shd. be handsomer than their neighbour's Church. 176

These distressing occurrences in Grahamstown since his return in September, as well as a pressing need to save money, prompted Merriman to let Bishopsbourne and to move his household to Uitenhage at the end of October.¹⁷⁷ The family made a timely exit from Grahamstown. Towards the end of October, the Star published what the Journal described as an "inflammatory article."¹⁷⁸ The Eastern Star alleged that John X. Merriman, by opposing the issue of swords to Cape yeomanry,

¹⁷³MP 46-80, JM to AM, 25 Sep. 1880.

¹⁷⁴ES 1 Oct. 1880; MP 48-80, JM to AM, 5 Oct. 1880.

¹⁷⁵GTJ 4 Oct. 1880.

¹⁷⁶MP 68-80, JM to AM, 16 Oct. 1880.

¹⁷⁷MP 48-80, JM to AM, 5 Oct. 1880.

¹⁷⁸GTJ 29 Oct. 1880.

was responsible for the death of thirty-one of these yeomen at Mafikeng,¹⁷⁹ a high proportion of whom came from Grahamstown.¹⁸⁰ The Journal reported that on 27 October at about 8.30 p.m., a large crowd assembled on the Market Square, summoned by howls and bugle calls. It was their aim, according to the Journal, to "declare open and perpetual hostility to all lovers of black skins and so-called philanthropists."¹⁸¹ To the accompaniment of jeering and hooting, an effigy of John X. Merriman was hoisted and carried along Bathurst Street, through Church Square and up High Street at the head of a crowd which the Journal estimated at 1 200. The procession paused at the Deanery to show the effigy to the occupants, and accompanied by a band, and with its way illuminated with torches, marched up Somerset Street to Bishopsbourne, where they were disappointed to find Mr Justice Buchanan in residence.¹⁸² The Kafir Institute was then situated on West Hill near Bishopsbourne. Jennie Mullins recorded the events of the evening. Thwarted of its Merriman target,

...the mob turned and had passed our house again when someone shouted - "BURN OUT THE NIGGERS,..." and they all came surging back, shouting and making a dreadful noise. They made a large fire in front of the house... and began to throw stones through the dormitory windows ...Robert ran up to the dormitories and ordered every boy to lie flat on the floor which they did...Then he opened every window to try to save some glass...The crowd attempted to throw paraffin fire balls over the fence but one man threw them back again, and after about an hour they dispersed - who could fancy such a thing happening in quiet Grahamstown?...We have had much sympathy from many of the town folk and they

¹⁷⁹ John X. Merriman was in opposition when the Cape Parliament discussed what arms would be carried by the Cape yeomanry. On 19 October 1880, during the Sotho war of resistance to disarmament by the Cape government, a column of 1 600 men marching to the relief of Mafikeng were attacked by a strong band of Sotho horsemen armed with assegais, and thirty-seven soldiers, including thirty-one yeomen, were killed. P. Lewsen, John X. Merriman, pp.84-88; G.M. Theal, History of South Africa from 1873-1884, vol.II, p.63.

¹⁸⁰ G. Mullins, "The Kaffir Institution," in Grahamstown Historical Society Annals, vol. 3, no. 2, 1980, pp.50-53.

¹⁸¹ GTJ 29 Oct. 1880.

¹⁸² Ibid.

think it wonderful the natives did not retaliate. 183

The Journal recorded that the attempt to burn the Institute was "happily frustrated."¹⁸⁴ The crowd marched back with the band playing "See the conquering hero," paused at the Deanery to give three cheers for the dean, and eventually dispersed at Church Square.¹⁸⁵ Contemporary reports indicate that the demonstration was directed against the Merrimans, father and son. The bishop saw it as the product of the "inflammatory lies" of the Eastern Star,

And all this professedly because I subscribed to the Aborigines Protectⁿ Soc^ty and my son resisted in Parl^t the Basuto disarmament which is now making such trouble to the Colony. 186

In this volatile atmosphere, the Merrimans' absence in Uitenhage was probably fortunate. The incumbent of St Mary's, Port Elizabeth, the talkative and opinionated A.T. Wirgman, remarked to the metropolitan:

...the poor Bishop lost ground with his foolish and illjudged letter to Ab. Protect. Society. The country farmers are furious about it. And besides this, his wife and daughters complicate matters and hamper the loyal clergy with their heedless and impatient tongues, so much so that I am thankful the good Bp. has decided to remove his family to Uitenhage, which will lessen the personal element of friction at Grahamstown, which has become almost unsupportable. 187

The observation was cruel, and it should be noted that although fiercely loyal to the principles of synodical government, Wirgman was no admirer of John X. Merriman.¹⁸⁸ Nevertheless, his observation undoubtedly contains an element of truth.

¹⁸³ Account written by Harriet Jane Mullins, quoted in G. Mullins, "The Kaffir Institution," in Grahamstown Historical Society Annals, Vol. 3, no. 2, 1980. Robert Mullins decided not to take legal action. GTJ 1 Nov. 1880, 2 Nov. 1880.

¹⁸⁴ GTJ 29 Oct. 1880.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to the Editor, Guardian, 2 Nov. 1880.

¹⁸⁷ GDA 63, A.T. Wirgman to WWJ, 26 Oct. 1880.

¹⁸⁸ A.T. Wirgman, Storm and Sunshine in South Africa, pp. 42, 71, 74.

The Merrimans' six months in Uitenhage were not eventful. Merriman attended an episcopal synod in Cape Town early in December,¹⁸⁹ and continued his visits to remote parishes of his diocese.¹⁹⁰ Despite the freedom from controversy which they found in Uitenhage, the bishop and his wife were not tempted to extend their stay. The house they had taken was unsatisfactory, and it was not easy to find tenants for Bishopsbourne once the Buchanans had left.¹⁹¹ It was Julia Merriman who suggested they return to Grahamstown, but once they were back she regretted it as Merriman was "unsettled and unhappy" there.¹⁹² One bright spot, particularly for his mother, was John X.'s return to office in the Scanlen ministry, after the resignation of the Sprigg government.¹⁹³

Bishop Merriman's work throughout 1881 was overshadowed by concern about his appeal to the Privy Council. In May, he was depressed by news from Archdeacon White, who was in England to watch over the progress of the case, that the trial would only come on after Christmas.¹⁹⁴ On the whole, the year was relatively free from controversy in the press.¹⁹⁵ Clearly, the dispute between Merriman and Williams had lost its news value, and newspaper readers found the sensationalism which had attended reporting merely sickening. Nevertheless, there were two unpleasant issues for the bishop to deal with : the first concerned a clergyman who came from England to assist Williams at St George's, and the second concerned St Andrew's College.

¹⁸⁹GDA 276, NJM to WWJ, 27 Sep. 1880.

¹⁹⁰GDA 278, NJM to WWJ, 9 Dec. 1880; MP 30-81, JM to AM, May 1881.

¹⁹¹MP 6-81, JM to AM, 7 Mar. 1881.

¹⁹²MP 26-81, JM to AM, 18 May 1881.

¹⁹³P. Lewsen, John X. Merriman, pp.90-92.

¹⁹⁴MP 26-81, JM to AM, 18 May 1881.

¹⁹⁵GTJ 30 Jun. 1882.

Dean Williams's health deteriorated after 1880, and he made it clear at the St George's annual general meeting in March 1881, that he needed assistance. The assembled parishioners agreed to collect funds towards an additional stipend,¹⁹⁶ and at the end of April it was announced that Charles Maurice Davies, D.D., the new curate, would sail from England at the end of May.¹⁹⁷ It was also announced that the Cathedral Grammar School would reopen with Davies as head.¹⁹⁸ The dubious standing of the curate he was able to secure is a measure of Williams's isolation from the Church of England. The fact that the dean found it necessary to falsify Davies's testimonials¹⁹⁹ to make the curate acceptable to St George's congregation is a sad reflection on the effect of the schism on Williams himself. Born in about 1828, Davies had a bachelor's degree from Durham University. He was ordained at Exeter in 1851, and held two curacies in succession, the first in Somerset and the other in London. From 1855, Davies claimed to have possessed blanket permission to officiate in London, but offered no proof of this. In 1861 he opened an institution called the West London College, in Bayswater, which he ran for seven years. He also wrote for a newspaper called the Daily News.²⁰⁰ Such testimonials as Davies was able to produce were only signed by one clergyman and not the required three, nor did it bear the countersignature of the Bishop of London.²⁰¹ West Jones did not think that Davies would be a powerful influence:

His recent appearances in English Law Courts in "Causes célèbres" of doubtful morality will not I shd. think add to his influence, or reputation. He has always been of late a "free lance," and has not had, I think, for years a Bishop's licence.

¹⁹⁶ CVMB, vol.III, 1 Mar. 1881, p.13.

¹⁹⁷ CVMB, vol.III, 28 Apr. 1881, p.20; ES 1 May 1881.

¹⁹⁸ CVMB, vol.III, 12 May 1881, p.21; ES 18 May 1881, 31 May 1881.

¹⁹⁹ J.P.G. Eksteen, "Some Grahamstown Litigants of the 1880s," Grahamstown Historical Society Annals, vol.III, no.2, 1980, p.11.

²⁰⁰ GDA 1510, Court cases in which Dean Williams was concerned directly or indirectly.

²⁰¹ GDA 386, Testimonial for C.M. Davies, signed by John Robbins, Vicar of St Peter's Bayswater, 14 May 1881. GTJ 5 Aug. 1882, quoting C.M. Davies to NJM, 4 Aug. 1882; GTJ 8 Aug. 1882, quoting NJM to C.M. Davies, 5 Aug. 1882.

I do not imagine he brings with him any Ecclesiastical credentials. ²⁰²

The metropolitan supported Merriman's intention to inhibit Davies from officiating in the diocese of Grahamstown, and to warn him against "abetting the Sin of Schism" by countenancing "those who have separated themselves from the English Church already planted...in this land."²⁰³ Davies's reply to this inhibition was impertinent,²⁰⁴ and Merriman's injunction was, not unexpectedly, ignored. Nevertheless, the arrival of Dr Davies seemed temporarily to produce something like ecclesiastical calm in Grahamstown. As Julia Merriman remarked to Agnes in May 1881:

Dr Davies makes small stir as yet, and judging from the E. Star, Dr W. is somewhat Piano at present - is feeling his way with Dr D. and daren't show himself in his true colours. ²⁰⁵

The lull was shortlived. Williams conferred the title of canon on his new curate, an investiture quite beyond his authority. Later that year, Canon Davies applied for an ad eundem gradum degree from the University of the Cape of Good Hope, and on the grounds that if the university awarded the degree to Davies it would be giving legitimacy to the appellation of canon, the application was opposed, but unsuccessfully, by Archdeacon Badnall and Canon Ogilvie. The Eastern Star made much of this incident, citing it as yet another example of the clerical tyranny of the Church of the Province of South Africa.²⁰⁶ While Merriman was alive, C.M. Davies committed no enormity, but Williams was yet to regret the acquisition of this curate.²⁰⁷

²⁰²UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A15, WWJ to NJM, p.77, 14 Jun. 1881.

²⁰³GDA 279, NJM to WWJ, 8 Jun. 1881; GDA 385, NJM to C.M. Davies, 8 Jun. 1881.

²⁰⁴GDA 383, C.M. Davies to NJM, 25 Jun. 1881.

²⁰⁵MP 30-81, JM to AM, May 1881.

²⁰⁶ES 27 Jan. 1882, 17 Feb. 1882.

²⁰⁷See below, conclusion, pp.418-419.

Irritating though the Davies affair was, St George's was an institution from which Merriman expected trouble to emanate. The reverse applied to St Andrew's College,²⁰⁸ and Merriman therefore found the difficulties which arose at the school doubly difficult to handle.

There had been little love lost between Dean Williams and Langford Browne, head of the college from 1865 to 1875. As early as 1868, Browne had taken Williams to task for the contents of a sermon he had preached to the boys.²⁰⁹ Browne had also been responsible for a pamphlet emphasising Williams's disruptive conduct at the 1876 diocesan synod.²¹⁰ In 1874, Merriman had offered a prize for a poem on David Livingstone. After the prize had been awarded, it was discovered that the victor had copied his poem from a recently published anthology. The Eastern Star made much of the incident, exonerating the plagiarist, and using the incident to illustrate the moral turpitude prevalent at St Andrew's.²¹¹ In 1875, Langford Browne was succeeded as headmaster by Dr G. Gould Ross, who like all heads of St Andrew's until 1938, was in priest's orders. Ross's relationship with Williams was no more cordial than Browne's had been : Ross was the first clergyman to officiate in Christ Church,²¹² which certainly did not endear him to the dean.

Soon after his appointment, Ross introduced an important administrative reform at St Andrew's. Instead of assuming direct responsibility for school finances as his predecessors had done, he set up a committee of management. As far as Ross was concerned, the powers and responsibilities of this lay committee were restricted to business and financial matters.²¹³

²⁰⁸ For a history, see R.F. Currey, St Andrew's College, Grahamstown, 1855-1955.

²⁰⁹ See above, pp.226-227. R.F. Currey, op.cit., p.36.

²¹⁰ L.S. Browne, Abstract of the Proceedings of the Grahamstown Diocesan Synod 1876.

²¹¹ R.F. Currey, op.cit., p.30.

²¹² H.M. Matthew, Grahamstown Diocese Historical Notes, vol.IV, p.154.

²¹³ R.F. Currey, op.cit., p.33.

For five years, Ross ran the school to Merriman's entire satisfaction.²¹⁴ However, at the end of 1880, as a result of the withdrawal of a special government grant, the committee of management set up by Ross requested him to accept a salary adjustment, which the headmaster was reluctant to do.²¹⁵ Merriman was asked to mediate, and found his task very difficult, especially when he was in Uitenhage, as Ross was a tardy correspondent.²¹⁶ As the debate dragged on, it became apparent that teachers at St Andrew's were dissatisfied with Ross as headmaster. When two senior masters resigned in protest at his administration, the committee, with Merriman's support, terminated Ross's engagement at the end of June 1881.²¹⁷

Ross had acquired a reputation as an outspoken and controversial character,²¹⁸ and he demonstrated the truth of this by his response to his dismissal. He refused to leave the college, and only vacated the premises when paid a sum of money to do so.²¹⁹ Already troubled by Williams, Packman and Davies, Merriman was clearly reluctant to have another turbulent priest in Grahamstown. He therefore made it plain to Ross that he could not offer him another living in his diocese and advised him to return to England.²²⁰ Ross was a man of fifty, with a young wife and child, and Merriman's action perhaps displays lack of humanity, although the bishop made it clear that he would do nothing to prevent Ross finding work in another diocese of the south African province. The wisdom of Merriman's action is also open to question. Ross, insulted by his dismissal at the hands of a lay committee and by Merriman's want of confidence in him, and without any means of support,²²¹ accepted an engage-

²¹⁴ LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to G.G. Ross, 23 Oct. 1880.

²¹⁵ R.F. Currey, *op.cit.*, pp.37-38.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*; LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to G.G. Ross, 23 Oct. 1880, 18 Dec. 1880, 2 Mar. 1881, 22 Mar. 1881.

²¹⁷ R.F. Currey, *op.cit.*, p.38; LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to G.G. Ross, 26 Jul. 1881, 29 Jul. 1881, and letters to J. Espin and S. Cron Wright, Mar.-Apr. 1881.

²¹⁸ R.F. Currey, *op.cit.*, p.37.

²¹⁹ GDA 58, J. Espin to WWJ, 15 Nov. 1881.

²²⁰ GDA 59, A.T. Wirgman to WWJ, 2 Dec. 1881.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

ment with the Church of England in Natal,²²² and on 13 August 1882 was installed as Dean of Maritzburg in St Peter's cathedral.²²³ Ross had sought employment from the metropolitan, who requested John Espin for information about Ross's work in the diocese of Grahamstown.²²⁴ West Jones apparently accepted Espin's report that Merriman had treated Ross with every consideration, especially "after the disgraceful mess he made at St Andrew's."²²⁵ Ross found one defender in the diocese of Grahamstown, A.T. Wirgman. Wirgman's claim to have had "personal experience of our Bishop's hardness,"²²⁶ and his allegations that Merriman was "surrounded by a clique" and that "authority does nothing but blunder and disturb,"²²⁷ came from a man intemperate in his views. Moreover, Merriman had recently given a clergyman who had previously been curate of St Mary's, charge of a parish, and Wirgman had disapproved of this step.²²⁸ This disagreement with Merriman clearly played a role in Wirgman's defence of Ross. The Merrimans themselves found Wirgman faintly ridiculous, and were gently amused by his self importance:

Mrs Wirgy's as fainty-fied as ever poor thing,
and Wirgy quite as talkative!²²⁹

Wirgman, however, was not tempted to abjure Merriman's authority. He wrote:

...I admire and like our Bishop much, and this
makes me the more grieved that the closing days

²²²GDA 56, G.G. Ross to NJM, Dec. 1881.

²²³ES 14 Aug. 1882.

²²⁴GDA 55, G.G. Ross to WWJ, Nov. 1881.

²²⁵GDA 61, J. Espin to WWJ, 9 Jan. 1882.

²²⁶GDA 59, A.T. Wirgman to WWJ, 2 Dec. 1881.

²²⁷GDA 60, A.T. Wirgman to WWJ, 15 Dec. 1881.

²²⁸LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to A.T. Wirgman, 13 Nov. 1878, 14 Nov. 1878, 10 Jan. 1879.

²²⁹MP 94-79, JM to AM, 25 Nov. 1879. On another occasion, Merriman rebuked Wirgman for appearing in the Main Street of Port Elizabeth wearing a straw hat with his clerical dress. A.T. Wirgman, Storm and Sunshine in South Africa, p.43.

of such a life as his has been should end with clouds and shadows. ²³⁰

With this last sentiment at least, even Julia Merriman would have agreed. Merriman himself seems to have been aware of some inadequacy in his handling of the troubles at St Andrew's, and of the subsequent career of Dr Ross, for he expressed regret that he was deprived of the counsel of Archdeacon White. ²³¹ He suggested to the metropolitan that White return and that Badnall assume responsibility for the Privy Council appeal. West Jones agreed that Badnall should go to England but considered it advisable that White remain there and see the case through to the end, a proposal to which Merriman agreed. ²³²

The appeal to the Privy Council took longer than was originally intended. News of yet another delay in August 1881 depressed Merriman. ²³³ Nor was his temper improved by a suggestion in the Eastern Star that the delay was deliberately engineered by the leaders of the Church of the Province of South Africa. ²³⁴ Although Merriman continued with his round of visitations, ²³⁵ and dealt with details of diocesan administration, ²³⁶ it is clear that the outcome of the Privy Council case weighed more and more upon his mind. How he was to meet the legal expenses was a major worry. ²³⁷ His daughter Charlotte, with her husband's permission, offered to sell her diamond jewellery, and to give

²³⁰GDA 60, A.T. Wirgman to WWJ, 15 Dec. 1881.

²³¹GDA 280, NJM to WWJ, 3 Aug. 1881.

²³²Ibid.; UWL, AB 1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A15, p.97, WWJ to NJM, 18 Aug. 1881; Ibid., p.95, WWJ to H. Badnall, 18 Aug. 1881. Cape Archives, CO 1151, NJM to Colonial Secretary, 15 Sep. 1881; CO 1192, NJM to Colonial Secretary, 20 Feb. 1882, 6 Mar. 1882.

²³³GDA 74, H.M. White to NJM, 7 Jul. 1881; GDA 280, NJM to WWJ, 3 Aug. 1881.

²³⁴ES 24 Aug. 1881.

²³⁵GTJ 23 Jan. 1882, 9 Jun. 1882.

²³⁶LV 227, Merriman Letterbook 1878-1881, NJM to E.C. Baldwin, 17 Nov. 1880, NJM to M. Onions, 24 Dec. 1880; MP 134-82, NJM to JXM, 17 Jan. 1882.

²³⁷GTJ 2 Jun. 1881; GDA 281, NJM to WWJ, 5 Oct. 1881.

the proceeds to the trial fund.²³⁸ On the subject of financing the case, there was some abrasive correspondence between Merriman and the metropolitan,²³⁹ until West Jones assured him that the appeal was a matter of "vital consequence" and "must be accomplished by the united and energetic efforts"²⁴⁰ of the diocese of Cape Town and Grahamstown, and with the help of other dioceses of the province.²⁴¹

The Privy Council judgment was delivered on 28 June 1882. Archdeacon White sent a cablegram at once to inform the bishop of the result: "Proviso caused adverse judgment. Several important points gained."²⁴²

There was a delay before the full text of the judgment arrived.²⁴³ In this interval, Merriman wrote to John X. On the surface, his letter suggests that he was neither disappointed nor distressed by the outcome of the case in the Privy Council. He told his son that he was "in no great consternation at the tidings" and that he had no doubt it would "all eventuate to the good of the church."²⁴⁴ Yet these brave statements do not reveal the whole state of his mind. The judgment, he wrote, verified

...Cole's dictum that day on the Platform at Mowbray,
"You have a bad Call Solomon! The court always gives
it against Bishops."

²³⁸MP 13-82, JM to AM, 28 Jan. 1882.

²³⁹UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A15, pp.161-162, WWJ to H. Badnall, 14 Feb. 1882.

²⁴⁰UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A15, pp.109-110, WWJ to NJM, 12 Oct. 1881.

²⁴¹UWL, AB867: Ab5.2, A.B. Webb to WWJ, 9 Feb. 1882.

²⁴²MP 130-82, JM to AM, Jun.-Jul. 1882.

²⁴³ES 30 Jun. 1882.

²⁴⁴MP 72-82, NJM to JXM, 12 Jul. 1882.

Certainly, as a rule Bishops should never go as appellants or Plaintiffs - to a Civil Court - even in temporalities. ²⁴⁵

The allusion is obscure, but the meaning is clear. The depressed Merriman implied that victory in the court case had never been possible. Moreover, White's cable had referred to the gain of several important points, yet Merriman's letter dwelt only on the negative aspects of the judgment: "The loss is evident enough."²⁴⁶ Julia Merriman was aware of her husband's disappointment, and of the strain under which he laboured. The family spent the end of June and part of July at the Kowie, but on one occasion Merriman had to go to Grahamstown. His wife knew that the city would be alive with talk of the judgment and that the bishop would not escape cross-questioning and commiseration from even the well-meaning.²⁴⁷ There was cause for gratitude in the fact that both the Eastern Star and the Journal had urged reconciliation in Anglican affairs in Grahamstown.²⁴⁸ Julia Merriman herself took comfort from Archdeacon White's intimation that the loss was not total,²⁴⁹ but realising that Merriman did not share her buoyant optimism, she regretted that he had to face the curiosity of Grahamstown without full details of the judgment. The bishop, she told John X.,

...knows he has done right, and is right, but he is a shy man, and can't put a bold face on, and assert himself... ²⁵⁰

Despite anxieties which could not be entirely banished, the holiday at the sea was not a gloomy one. Julia recorded:

The days pass very quietly though very happily. One day we went to Salt Vley en masse - father and I on Tubby and Suto but I was so much out of place on horseback that [illegible name] of his own accord most kindly brought the buggy to bring me back. The next expedition I begged to be left at home...all

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ MP 130-82, JM to AM, Jun.-Jul. 1882.

²⁴⁸ GTJ 30 Jun. 1882; ES 30 Jun. 1882.

²⁴⁹ MP 130-82, JM to AM, Jun.-Jul. 1882.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

the party crossed the river and had a long day on the opposite beach, wh. was so sufficing an outing for Narney [Charlotte] and Father that they kept me company with the 2 baby children when the rest joined Mrs Espin and her tribe to go to the Horseshoe in the steam launch. 251

By a happy chance, the end of the holiday coincided with a visit from John X. and Agnes,²⁵² which eased the return to Grahamstown.

By July 1882, the public were weary of the ecclesiastical dispute,²⁵³ and the Journal and the Eastern Star showed great restraint in their editorial discussion. The Star preached "forgiveness and toleration,"²⁵⁴ and published a letter from Dean Williams asking the paper to refrain from "angry expressions, ...no matter what the provocation."²⁵⁵ Nevertheless, especially after this position had been vindicated by the Privy Council, the Star insisted on a charge to the constitution and canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa, to bring that body into line with the Church of England as by law established.²⁵⁶ The Journal warned Williams against vindictiveness, attributed the position in which the Church of the Province of South Africa found itself to bungling by the crown, and pointed out that St George's too needed to compromise. When Williams died, the new incumbent would not receive government income as a colonial chaplain and would require a bishop's licence to officiate.²⁵⁷

The full text of the Privy Council judgment became available in Grahamstown at the end of July 1882.²⁵⁸ In reaching their decision, the Lords of the Judicial Committee had considered the major court

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² MP 72-82, NJM to JXM, 12 Jul. 1882; GTJ 17 Jul. 1882; ES 2 Aug. 1882.

²⁵³ GTJ 30 Jun. 1882, 4 Jul. 1882.

²⁵⁴ ES 21 Jul. 1882.

²⁵⁵ ES 12 Jul. 1882.

²⁵⁶ ES 5 Jul. 1882.

²⁵⁷ GTJ 3 Jul., 4 Jul., 3 Aug. 1882.

²⁵⁸ ES 21 Jul., 24 Jul., 8 Aug. 1882.

cases which shaped the constitutional development of the Church of the Province of South Africa, from Gorham to Long and Colenso.²⁵⁹

Although, as in the Cape Supreme Court, Merriman's appeal was dismissed with costs, there were several significant points of difference between the judgments of the colonial court and of the Privy Council.

The Privy Council judges differed from de Villiers in the Cape Supreme Court in arguing that the crown would not again appoint a letters patent Bishop of Grahamstown, whose right to the title would be stronger than Merriman's, and whose claim to property vested in the Bishop of Grahamstown for use by the Church of England would thereby be complete. Like de Villiers, the law lords confirmed that St George's was reserved for the use of members of the united Church of England and Ireland as by law established. The court therefore had to decide whether Merriman as Bishop of Grahamstown and as a Bishop of the Church of the Province of South Africa could claim jurisdiction over St George's.

It had been argued in the Cape Supreme Court judgment that the provisions of Canon 27, which referred to a possible alteration of the creeds and formularies by a general council, and the provisions of Canon 3, which provided for the election of bishops without the consent of the crown and for the constitution of separate ecclesiastical courts, broke the connection between the Church of the Province of South Africa and the Church of England. The judges of the Privy Council disagreed. These canons, they argued, were

...the necessary results of the legal and political situation as laid down by Her Majesty in Council, not the expression of any separatist intention.²⁶⁰

To establish the connection with the Church of England, the Province of South Africa needed to show "a substantial identity in their standards

²⁵⁹ See above, ch. 3.

²⁶⁰ For discussion of the judgment, see PBH, pp.125-126. PBH/BD, pp.145-146. Extracts from the judgment quoted in the text are taken from GDA 371, Judgment of the Lords of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on the Appeal of Merriman (Bishop of Grahams Town) v. Williams from the Supreme Court of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, delivered 28th June 1882. See above, pp.383-388 for the Cape Supreme Court judgment.

of faith and doctrine." The Privy Council judges went on to argue that the standards of faith and doctrine of the Church of England were found not only in the texts, but also

...in the interpretation which those texts have from time to time received at the hands of the tribunals by Law appointed to declare and administer the Law of the Church.

The law lords found that the Third Proviso in the constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa, which excluded the judgments of the Privy Council in questions of faith and doctrine, divided the South African Province from the Church of England as by law established. By including the Third Proviso in its constitution, the Church of the Province,

...far from having done all in its power to maintain the connection, has taken occasion to declare emphatically that at this point the connection is not maintained.

The judges conceded that

...it was perfectly competent to the Church of South Africa to take up its own independent position with reference to the decisions of the tribunals of the Church of England.

Once the South African Church had done so, however, her leaders could not also

...claim as of right the benefit of endowments settled to uses in connection with the Church of England as by Law established.

In one sense, the judgment undermined the work of the pioneers of the Church of the Province of South Africa, who had sought to maintain union and full communion with the Church of England, but in another sense, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council had reached precisely the conclusion against which the Third Proviso had been designed to protect the Church of the Province of South Africa, and the work of Robert Gray, Henry Cotterill and Nathaniel James Merriman was thus vindicated.

Although the Privy Council judgment threatened the Church of the Province of South Africa with considerable loss of property, assurance that her bonds with the mother Church of England were not subject to the decrees of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, came from

the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Erastian Archibald Campbell Tait, who told William West Jones on 5 August 1882,

No changes which have taken place in the Church over which you preside have in any way separated it from the Mother Church of England. The spiritual union of our members has been in no way touched by these questions. ²⁶¹

On the position and claims of Frederick Henry Williams, the judges of the Privy Council were scarcely complimentary. They agreed, with de Villiers, that Williams's claim to be a champion of the Church of England was "wholly inconsistent with his past conduct," and they made it plain that their judgment was not a vindication of his position, but was based on the conditions under which St George's was vested. The Privy Council judges also pointed out that although Williams was a "titular Dean," in point of law he was only the "Officiating Minister of a Church governed by the Ordinance of 1839." Williams's title as dean derived from the organisation of the Church of the Province of South Africa, and by insisting on his rights as dean, he could not be said to have resigned from that association. Moreover, the judges made it plain that Williams's assertion that under English law, as dean, he could exclude the bishop from the cathedral, was "quite erroneous."²⁶²

Once the full text of the judgment was received, Williams, completely unabashed, was unable to restrict himself to moderate statements from the pulpit and in the press. On 2 August 1882, he wrote to Merriman,²⁶³ assuring the bishop that he had never entertained "any hostile personal feeling" towards him. The dean's ostensible aim was

...to lose no more time in seeking for a settlement acceptable and fair to both parties...

Williams told Merriman that he reserved the right to publish the contents of the letter. This made his purpose plain. Should Merriman reject his

²⁶¹ Quoted in A.T. Wirgman, Storm and Sunshine in South Africa, p.142; M.H.M. Wood, A Father in God, p.159.

²⁶² GDA 371, Judgment of the Lords of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on the Appeal of Merriman (Bishop of Graham's Town) v. Williams..., pp.13-16.

²⁶³ GDA 1444, FHW to NJM, 2 Aug. 1882; GTJ 4 Aug. 1882; ES 4 Aug. 1882.

offer, presented with sweet reasonableness and apparent magnanimity, the bishop could be depicted as an obstinate and unrelenting disturber of the church's peace. And yet both contents and tone of the letter made it inevitable that Merriman would spurn the approach. Although on the one hand Williams wrote that he would be "rejoiced to see a joint effort of all parties to pay the expenses already incurred," there was a veiled threat in his reference to "the risks in respect of settled property." But these were mere feints. The dean's proposal was that each party in the dispute,

...conceding to the other that what was done for years past was done under a sense of duty, both parties may now leave bygones to be bygones, and come together on the old footing, namely, that which existed previous to 1876 and earlier, as members of the Church of England, and subject jointly to the laws which govern that Church, attempting nothing beyond them, and attributing no coercive legislature or penal power to voluntary local associations...

I for one should deem it a high privilege to be in the smallest measure instrumental towards the re-establishment of friendly relations...and if this can only be done by reverting to the old basis of union which was deemed sufficient previous to the commencement of our religious controversies, surely the sacrifice cannot be thought so material as to justify the crippling of Church progress and the prolongation of strife, by its refusal. Those who entertain strong hopes as to the usefulness of Synods might use them still as consultative bodies, as they are used in England, without attempting to invest them with independent coercive... powers.

Williams had painted a dazzling picture of ecclesiastical amity in Grahamstown, and had made the solution seem simple, but Merriman was not deceived by fair words, nor was he prepared to see his life's work undone to accommodate Williams. Merriman wrote:

In spite of every sincere wish to heal past breaches and to remove the obstructions to the present well being and advancement of the Church of this Province, I grieve to say I am unable to perceive that your note...suggests any proper basis on which this may be effected. ²⁶⁴

²⁶⁴ GDA 1445, NJM to FHW, 3 Aug. 1882; GTJ 4 Aug. 1882; ES 4 Aug. 1882.

The bishop pointed out that the key to resolution of the conflict did not rest with him. The Privy Council had not pronounced the decisions of the diocesan tribunal, which had condemned Williams in 1879, to be in error, and only the Provincial Synod could set Badnall's judgment aside. Merriman's loyalty to the constitution and canons remained absolute, and he wished Williams would

...subscribe the declaration framed with your concurrence in the Provincial Synod, by which the rest of the Clergy consider themselves tied...

Williams had stated glibly that "any past informalities might be entirely and easily cured..." Merriman was not satisfied with this:

It is painful to me to have to remind you that as an excommunicate Priest you have called in an Excommunicated Bishop...to assist you in defying and supplanting the lawful Bishop of this See.

Such a wrong may surely be deemed to require... Confession and absolution rather than an invitation on your part to the whole Church of this Province to forgo its status and place itself on the same level which you claim for yourself.

I thank you for your expressions of personal politeness but it is loyalty to the Constitution and Canons which you yourself helped to frame that I desiderate. Till this is yielded, I can only subscribe myself

Yours very sorrowfully
N.J. Grahamstown.

This characteristically blunt and yet pointed letter was Bishop Merriman's last word to Dean Williams on the subject. Merriman was to the last loyal to the principles of the Church of the Province of South Africa, defending the freedom of the church to define her own doctrine and govern herself without state interference, but after August 1882, active defence of the principle passed to other hands.

On Monday, 7 August 1882, Robert Mullins saw Merriman walking from Bishopsbourne towards the town with his usual vigorous step. Julia Merriman, Sarah Agnes, the Ashburnhams and the Barrys, had gone on an outing to Woest Hill, and Merriman was to join them later with Nessie and one of his grandsons. Near the picnic spot, the horse bolted, the carriage which Merriman was driving overturned, and though the passengers were safe, the bishop fell on his head and neck. He was carried to a nearby house. At first it seemed that

he would recover, but his injuries gradually overcame his faded strength.²⁶⁵ Nathaniel James Merriman, faithful priest and bishop, died on 16 August 1882, in the seventy-fourth year of his age, and of his consecration the eleventh.

²⁶⁵MF, 2 Oct. 1882, pp.329-331. The Grahamstown press carried detailed reports of the progress of the bishop's illness : ES 8, 14 Aug. 1882; GTJ 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 16 Aug. 1882.

CONCLUSION

When I read the book, the biography famous,
 And is this then (said I) what the author calls a man's life?
 And so will some one when I am dead and gone write my life?
 (As if any man really knew aught of my life,
 Why even I myself I often think know little or nothing of
 my real life,
 Only a few hints, a few diffused faint clews and indirections
 I seek for my own use to trace out here).

Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass, 1871.

Merriman was greatly mourned in the city he had loved. Every column of the Journal had a black border,¹ the Wesleyan chapel was draped in black,² and on the day of his funeral, flags flew at half-mast and shops in the city were closed as his body was carried from Bishopsbourne to Christ Church and from Christ Church to the cemetery by students of the Kafir Institute.³ It even seemed that his death might effect a reconciliation, for Dean Williams was among the congregation at Christ Church,⁴ and the bell of St George's tolled⁵ to mark the passing of the Bishop of Grahamstown. But the ecclesiastical conflict in the city, on levels both of principle and personality, had gone deep, and the final resolution of the conflicts which had disturbed Merriman's last years was not so simply achieved.

Much would depend on the character of Merriman's successor. On 7 March 1883, the clergy and lay representatives of the diocese assembled in the cathedral city and chose Allan Becher Webb as the fourth Bishop of Grahamstown. He had brought peace and order to the

¹ GTJ 17 Aug. 1882.

² MP 82-82, AM to JXM, Aug. 1882.

³ GTJ 19 Aug. 1882.

⁴ Cory Library, MS 16 288, Copy of newspaper report of the funeral of Bishop Merriman.

⁵ Ibid.

Free State, and it was hoped that he would repeat the achievement in this other troubled diocese. Webb was aware that to ignore this unanimous election would be to undermine the constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa at a time when it most needed support, and though sad to leave Bloemfontein, he therefore accepted translation to Grahamstown.⁶

At first there were encouraging signs that enough good will existed between the new bishop and the clergy and congregation of St George's to warrant hope of an agreement. Webb himself made it clear from the first that he could not afford recourse to law,⁷ and Archdeacon White recognised that it would be provocative to raise a diocesan fund to guarantee the bishop against legal expenses.⁸ Moreover, the St George's vestry showed signs of wanting to settle the question, a desire stimulated no doubt by the death of Colenso in 1883,⁹ which deprived the congregation of hope of his ministrations. At the end of August, the vestry resolved to present an address stating their anxiety and willingness "to acknowledge and accept the Episcopal function"¹⁰ of Bishop Webb. In reply, Webb offered to treat St George's under the "Special Trusts" resolution passed at the Provincial Synod in February 1883,¹¹ which provided machinery whereby buildings reserved for use of the Church of England could be drawn into the Church of the Province of South Africa.¹² He made it plain however that this was not possible until he received apologies from the St George's authorities for allowing Bishop Colenso to officiate in the church and for refusing

⁶CC, March 1883, pp.94-95, 116-131, 206-207; GDA 75, H.M. White to WWJ, 9 Mar. 1883; GDA 82, A.B. Webb to H.M. White, 24 Apr. 1883; Cory Library, MS 16 614/1, Grahamstown Diocese, Synod Minute Book 1876-1888, Proceedings of Elective Assembly 7 Mar. 1883.

⁷GDA 82, A.B. Webb to H.M. White, 24 Apr. 1883.

⁸GDA 81, H.M. White to WWJ, 25 May 1883.

⁹Bishop Colenso died on 20 June 1883.

¹⁰CVMB, vol.III, 29 Aug. 1883, p.62.

¹¹M.H.M. Wood, A Father in God, p.180.

¹²PBH/BD, p.148.

obedience to the cathedral statutes promulgated by Merriman. Webb also suggested that the statutes of Truro cathedral, a recent foundation, should form the model for those of St George's, when it was once more recognised as the cathedral church of the diocese.¹³ Clearly, Webb was not prepared to abandon the issues for which Merriman had contended. Nor was he prepared to wait endlessly for a reply, or to enter into negotiations. In November 1883, after "careful consideration and consultation," Webb opened St Michael's procathedral in a converted skating rink in High Street. He made it clear that the arrangement was provisional, but that there was no other course open to him "as the appointed guardian of the due order and discipline of the Church." Christ Church had always been an affront to Williams, more so since Merriman had made it his cathedral, and Webb had no wish to perpetuate this particular grievance. To do so would be stalemate. Moreover, Webb was a high churchman, who must have regarded the terms of the Christ Church trust with suspicion and found the evangelical forms of worship enjoined there unappealing. Thirdly, Christ Church served the district of Oatlands, and by placing his procathedral within a stone's throw of St George's and encouraging an Anglo-Catholic pattern of worship there, Webb was carrying the challenge into Williams's camp. Stipends of clergy at St Michael's, and running expenses of the church would be dependent on the free will offerings of the congregation, and church wardens would be elected at Easter "in accordance with our English usage." By the time the procathedral opened for worship, half the cost of purchase and restoration had been found and gifts of an altar, a bishop's chair, four hundred chairs for the congregation, an altar cross, vases, candlesticks, and altar linen had already been made.¹⁴ By January 1884, Archdeacon White reported that the procathedral was "gaining influence."¹⁵ From a survey of the registers of St George's, Christ Church and St Michael's, it appears that while Christ Church was the procathedral, the congregation at St George's remained fairly stable, perhaps because Christ Church served a different

¹³ CVMB, vol.III, 18 Mar. 1884, p.67.

¹⁴ Cory Library, MS 14 865, St Michael's Procathedral Record Book 1883-1889. The procathedral was on the site where the Post Office now stands.

¹⁵ GDA 88, H.M. White to WWJ, 24 Jan. 1884.

area of town, and when St Michael's opened, the number of baptisms, marriages and funerals conducted in St George's dropped.¹⁶ The opening of St Michael's clearly infuriated Dean Williams and the vestry of St George's. In terms of Ordinance 2 of 1839, the vestry controlled the Anglican section of the cemetery. In April 1884, Williams informed Webb that all clergy wishing to officiate at burials in this ground were to apply to the authorities at St George's for permission and to enter a record in the cathedral registers.¹⁷ To this Webb replied with the utmost politeness and detachment:

The Bishop will impress upon all clergy holding his licence and officiating at funerals the duty of being careful to observe all due legal and ecclesiastical formalities.¹⁸

Hope of a quick and easy solution to the quarrel between the Bishop of Grahamstown and Dean Williams was clearly at an end. What made the

¹⁶For the period 1879-1882, during which Christ Church was Merriman's procathedral, the Christ Church baptismal, marriage and burial registers show no appreciable increase in the number of services performed. Similarly, St George's registers do not show any major decrease in the numbers of individuals baptised, married or buried in the church in the years before and after the excommunication of Dean Williams. There is a marked decrease in the numbers of baptisms, marriages and funerals conducted in St George's when the procathedral opened in November 1883. During the previous six years, 308 baptisms, 85 marriages and 113 funerals had been performed. During the two-year period 1883-1885, 31 baptisms, 5 weddings and 8 burials are recorded in St George's registers, while 91 baptisms, 17 marriages and 17 funerals were performed in St Michael's. Examination of the registers of St Michael's and St George's also shows that fifteen couples who had either been married in St George's or who had previously taken children to be baptised there preferred to have their youngest infant baptised in St Michael's. Obviously these figures are not definitive, but they suggest a distinct turning away from St George's by the general public, if not by Dean Williams's loyal and influential friends. Christ Church registers are housed in the vestry of the church. I am grateful to Canon J.E.V. Wakely and Mr Barry Piers for allowing me access to these. The parish registers of St George's and St Michael's are deposited in Cory Library, MS 14 877 St Michael's Pro-Cathedral entries, MS 14 878 baptismal registers, MS 14 879 marriage registers, MS 14 880 burial registers.

¹⁷CVMB, vol.III, 25 Apr. 1884, pp.69-70.

¹⁸Ibid., p.69.

prospect of peace even more remote was a series of distracting disputes within the St George's congregation itself. Once again, Frederick Henry Williams was not far from the centre of these wrangles.

By March 1882, Julia Merriman was aware of a developing power struggle between Williams and his curate. Davies's aim, according to Julia, was to "cuckoo Decanus out of his berth"¹⁹ by winning the support of the vestry and congregation. All this time she was inclined to think Davies "a more decent string to their bow"²⁰ than Williams, but she was soon undeceived. In 1883, Mrs Eliza Davies, a widow, alleged that Davies had behaved improperly towards her daughter Edith, who was one of his pupils. He acknowledged his misconduct and was dismissed,²¹ but so successfully had he ingratiated himself in the city that when news of his dismissal was received, popular feeling blazed up in his favour, and Williams was burnt in effigy.²² To justify their action, the vestry allowed evidence of Davies's misbehaviour to be published in the press. In consequence, at the end of May 1883, Davies sued Williams and the Sheffield brothers for criminal libel. In June, Davies sued St George's vestry for four pounds and ten shillings, the value of books and tables belonging to him stored in the Cathedral Grammar School. The churchwardens refused to hand over the property and counter-claimed for ten pounds, but when the case was heard in court, Davies won.²³ By this time, feelings between Davies and Williams were running high. On 28 June 1883, the dean's former protégé alleged before a magistrate that Williams had falsified his testimonials.²⁴ Williams countercharged that Davies's accusation was part of a plot to ruin him by "secret and cunning slander."²⁵

¹⁹MP 27-82, JM to JXM, 14 Mar. 1882.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹CVMB, vol.III, 31 Mar. 1883, pp.41-53.

²²GDA 76, H.M. White to WWJ, 13 Apr. 1883.

²³GDA 1510, Notes on court cases in which Dean Williams was concerned directly or indirectly.

²⁴Cape Archives, CO 1223, C.H. Huntley to Colonial Secretary, 30 Jun. 1883.

²⁵Cape Archives, CO 1223, FHW to Hampden Willis, 29 Aug. 1883.

Clearly the dispute would not be permitted to die down as neither party was yet weary of this bickering. Davies owed Sheffield a sum of money and when sale of Davies's property failed to meet the debt, Sheffield sued for civil imprisonment, but accepted a monthly payment of two pounds and ten shillings. Davies sued the Widow Davies for twenty shillings on the grounds that her statements were slanderous, and was awarded damages of one shilling. Mrs Davies appealed and the judge allowed the appeal with costs, calling Davies "a wicked, immoral, profligate priest." Unabashed, Davies continued to run a school in the Oddfellows Hall, and wrote to the Journal requesting subscriptions for a fund to enable him to leave Grahamstown. He did leave soon afterwards, and his case of criminal libel against the Sheffields and Williams seems to have lapsed,²⁶ but peace was not restored.

Rumours began to circulate in the early 1880s that Williams was drinking heavily.²⁷ In September 1881, Mrs Jane Susanna Williams deserted her husband. The dean divorced her and she married a man called Robert Daniels.²⁸ Murmuring against Williams's moral character grew louder and it was alleged that he was living with his housekeeper. Rumours of this kind were brought into the open in July 1883, when St George and the Dragon commenced publication. Frankly scurrilous, the aim of this newspaper was to put a stop to Williams's "wretched conduct" by paying him in his own coin.²⁹ In November 1883, a charge

²⁶ GDA 1510, Notes on court cases in which Dean Williams was concerned directly or indirectly.

²⁷ MP 27-77, JM to AM, 7 Jul. 1877; MP 68-80, JM to AM, 16 Oct. 1880.

²⁸ GDA 1510, Notes on court cases in which Dean Williams was concerned directly or indirectly.

²⁹ Many allusions in St George and the Dragon are now obscure, but there are numerous references in all editions to the rumour that Dean Williams was drinking heavily and living with his housekeeper. One of the more innocuous entries in the newspaper is the rhyme entitled Rival Churches:

St Venus Victrix! Dear how droll's
That name, a Church to fix!
Our "Divine Williams" and his dolls
Prefer St Merry Tricks.

St George and the Dragon ceased publication in March 1884. The

of criminal libel was brought against the editor, W.B. Shaw, for accusing Williams of theft, fraud, forgery, immorality, perjury and drunkenness. The case was heard in January 1884, but the jury failed to agree, and the attorney-general decided not to pursue the issue. Dean Williams himself then claimed damages of £1 000 from Shaw in a civil libel suit. More than ninety witnesses were called as the case dragged on from the end of February to early August 1884. In the course of proceedings it emerged that Williams received £200 a year for writing articles for the Star. On 5 August, three judges agreed that the allegations of lying, misappropriation of funds, drunkenness and immorality had been proved, but as Shaw had been unable to justify his other accusations, Williams was awarded damages of one shilling.³⁰

Still the vestry clung to Williams. There are two possible explanations for this. Firstly, long-serving vestry men like W.G. Atherstone, R.W. Nelson, Lindsay Eddie and Thomas Sheffield³¹ were Williams's close friends. In addition, they regarded the Church

editor, W.B. Shaw, claimed that it had achieved its purpose in exposing the dean, and when Shaw went bankrupt in 1885, he claimed among his assets an amount of £1 250, a moral debt due to him by the citizens of Grahamstown for persecuting Williams. Such a liability was naturally repudiated by the citizens. See J.P.G. Eksteen, "Some Grahamstown Litigants of the 1880s," in Grahamstown Historical Society Annals, vol.III, no.2, 1980, pp. 2-13; GDA 1510, Court cases in which Dean Williams was concerned directly or indirectly; A. Gordon-Brown, The Settlers' Press; St George and the Dragon, vol.I, no.1 - vol.II, no.26.

³⁰ GDA 1510, Notes on court cases in which Dean Williams was concerned directly or indirectly.

³¹ St George's vestry had virtually become a closed corporation of influential Grahamstown men. W.G. Atherstone served on the vestry from 1871 to 1890, and was churchwarden from 1883 to 1887. Lindsay Eddie was vestryman from 1874 to 1877 and from 1881 to 1885, serving as churchwarden in 1882, 1883, 1884 and 1885. D.H. Kennelly was first elected to the vestry in 1850, was a regular member throughout the 1850s and 1860s, and served continuously between 1871 and 1880. He was churchwarden in 1851 and 1852, and from 1871 to 1874. A.E. Nelson's vestry service paralleled the years he served on the town council. A Town Councillor from 1884 to 1901, he was vestryman from 1883 to 1888, and churchwarden 1889 to 1892. His brother, R.W. Nelson, was a member of the vestry from 1870 to 1880, and churchwarden from 1875 to 1880. Thomas Sheffield was a vestryman from 1878 until his departure from Grahamstown in 1887. (CVMB, vols. I, II and III, passim.) See also above, chapter five, note 7.

of the Province of South Africa as a separatist body, and Williams as the representative of the Church of England. This loyalty to the Church of England and to Williams is evident in a pamphlet written by Atherstone and Eddie to refute charges against the dean made by Shaw and accepted as proved by the Eastern Districts Court.³² The authors' argument that Williams was the victim of a miscarriage of justice is ironical. In all his disputes with Merriman, Williams had consistently claimed that he put his trust in the civil courts. The vestry as a whole requested Williams to remain in office, placing on record

...its unabated confidence in his integrity, his honour,
and his character as a gentleman and as a Clergyman...³³

Webb however felt that the outcome of the libel case warranted a request to the government to prevent Williams from holding services with official sanction, "to the scandal of religion, and to the injury of morality and justice."³⁴ The civil authorities declined to take any action, as Williams had not been deposed by "any competent ecclesiastical authority," and carried out his duties with the acceptance of "a considerable body of the members of the Church of England in Graham's Town."³⁵ Webb, having made his protest, was content to let the matter rest.³⁶

Williams did not remain colonial chaplain of Grahamstown much longer. On 19 August in failing health, he went to the Kowie for a rest,³⁷ and returned to Grahamstown in an enfeebled condition. He

³²W.G. Atherstone and L.A. Eddie (comp.), The Libel Case: Dean Williams vs. W.B. Shaw. In 1980, Mr Justice Eksteen commented that the judges' conclusions were "more than justified on the evidence." J.P.G. Eksteen, "Some Grahamstown Litigants of the 1880s," in Grahamstown Historical Society Annals, vol.III, no.2, 1980, p.13.

³³CVMB, vol.III, 2 Sep. 1884, p.75.

³⁴GDA 348, A.B. Webb to Colonial Secretary, 7 May 1885.

³⁵GDA 348, Hampden Willis to A.B. Webb, 23 May 1885.

³⁶GDA 348, A.B. Webb to Colonial Secretary, 25 May 1885.

³⁷ES 19 Aug. 1885.

died on 22 August 1885,³⁸ and his passing paved the way for the second stage of reconciliation between St George's and the rest of the diocese.

From August to December 1885, Webb was engaged in delicate negotiations with the leaders of the congregation at St George's. The vestry's first step was to find a suitable successor for Williams. They offered the post to C.F. Overton, a clergyman living in Grahams-town. He was willing to accept, but there was one obstacle to this arrangement. The vestry would not allow Overton to seek or accept a licence from "any Bishop of the Church of South Africa," and Overton would not officiate without Webb's sanction. Wisely, Webb assured Overton that he sanctioned his acceptance of the vestry's offer,³⁹ thus forestalling any charges of episcopal tyranny from the congregation, and preventing the importation of a clergyman like C.M. Davies into his diocese. Furthermore, through Overton, Webb had established an important link with the congregation.

The stability and quality of the congregation at the procathedral and the work done by the incumbent clergyman, Wharton B. Smith, "in creating a better feeling in the Town and so preparing the way for reconciliation"⁴⁰ was a source of strength to Webb. Overton officiated in St George's for the first time on 30 August 1885. Wharton Smith's address to the congregation at St Michael's demonstrates his determination to avoid controversy and inculcate right thinking:

Let us hope that this may be a movement in the direction of peace and order, which all alike desire to obtain, not by concession of the truth, but by agreement in the truth. ⁴¹

³⁸ GTJ 22 Aug. 1885; ES 24 Aug. 1885. Bishop Webb offered to see Dean Williams a week before he died, but Williams refused, and Webb reported: "I am afraid he was breathing out threatenings to the last." GDA 37, A.B. Webb to WWJ, 30 Aug. 1885.

³⁹ GDA 37, A.B. Webb to WWJ, 30 Aug. 1885; GDA 97, H.M. White to WWJ, 26 Dec. 1885; GDA 1471, C.F. Overton to St George's vestry, 27 Aug. 1885; ES 28 Aug. 1885; CVMB, vol.III, 24 Aug. 1885, p.104.

⁴⁰ GDA 97, H.M. White to WWJ, 26 Dec. 1885.

⁴¹ GTJ 31 Aug. 1885.

From 30 August 1885, Anglicans who wished to attend services in St George's were free to do so without fear of alienating themselves from the bishop or the rest of the diocese.

Webb realised the need for patience. He made his next move on 8 October 1885, choosing as his emissary one who had played no part in the quarrel between Merriman and Williams.⁴² Rev. P.B. Simeon wrote to the vestry on behalf of the bishop, suggesting a friendly discussion of the question at issue, "not at Bishopsbourne, but on more common ground."⁴³ The vestry as a whole, and Dr Atherstone in particular, were very cautious,⁴⁴ but on 8 December they finally asked Webb to set out his views in writing.⁴⁵ They had delayed negotiations for two months to accommodate Trinity Church, Cape Town, another Church of England congregation, who intended to bring an action against West Jones, and who argued that a settlement in Grahamstown would weaken their case. By November, it was clear that the Trinity congregation had no ground for proceeding against the metropolitan.⁴⁶ St George's vestry was also by this time anxious to come to terms with Webb because they had experienced difficulty in raising Overton's stipend and were in debt.⁴⁷ Webb's proposals were discussed at a vestry meeting on 15 December. Afterwards, at a quarter to ten in the evening, the vestry met Webb at Bishopsbourne, and the draft of an agreement was accepted,⁴⁸

⁴²GDA 97, H.M. White to WWJ, 26 Dec. 1885.

⁴³GDA 470, P.B. Simeon to T.L. Pryce, 8 Oct. 1885.

⁴⁴GDA 39, A.B. Webb to WWJ, 9 Oct. 1885.

⁴⁵CVMB, vol.III, 8 Dec. 1885, p.118.

⁴⁶GDA 97, H.M. White to WWJ, 26 Dec. 1885.

⁴⁷Ibid.; CVMB, vol.III, 8 Dec. 1885, p.117, 15 Dec. 1885, p.119. There was no corresponding financial pressure on Bishop Webb, although in June 1885, the Cape Supreme Court had given judgment ~~in favour of~~ ^{for} St George's Vestry in the case of St George's Vestry vs. the Diocesan Trustees. (GDA 1466.) Webb did not contest the case, because the application was not for St George's property to be transferred from the diocesan trustees to the vestry, but to the Bishop of Grahamstown and his successors in office, as laid down in the original grant. (GDA 30, A.B. Webb to WWJ, 15 Apr. 1885.)

⁴⁸CVMB, vol.III, 15 Dec. 1885, pp.119-127.

but only, as Webb told West Jones, "after the most anxious negotiations, which up to the last moment, I was afraid would fall through."⁴⁹ Overton resigned as officiating minister of St George's on 16 December.⁵⁰ The agreement was formally signed on the following day, and Webb received the key of St George's.⁵¹

Bishop Webb took three factors into consideration in drawing up the agreement. Firstly, he had to uphold the authority of the constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa and the integrity of his position as a bishop of that church. Secondly, he had to work within the provisions of Ordinance 2 of 1839, and thirdly he had to take into account the unhappy quarrel of the past in which preference for familiar customs and traditions had played a strong part. There was no reference to the dispute between Merriman and Williams in the text of the agreement, but a simple statement that the bishop and vestry wished to heal "the present unhappy divisions."⁵² It was agreed that St George's would fall under the "Special Trusts" resolution passed at the Provincial Synod in 1883.⁵³ The "rights and liberties" of St George's under the ordinance were respected, and Webb guaranteed that the standards of doctrine, discipline and worship of the Church of England as by law established, would govern his administration of cathedral services. Webb made it clear that the effectiveness of the agreement depended on recognition of his episcopal authority. In terms of the settlement, Webb became the "officiating minister" named in the ordinance, and C.F. Overton of St George's, and W.B. Smith and E.M. Burney of St Michael's, his executive staff, with the titles of priest-vicar.⁵⁴ In St George's, the position of the pulpit was altered, and six rows of pews were reserved as free seats. Until the first joint

⁴⁹GDA 43, A.B. Webb to WWJ, 18 Dec. 1885.

⁵⁰GDA 1472, C.F. Overton to St George's vestry, 16 Dec. 1885.

⁵¹CVMB, vol.III, 22 Dec. 1885, pp.131-132.

⁵²GDA 1100, Agreement between the Lord Bishop of Grahamstown and the Vestry of St George's Church.

⁵³See above, p. 415

⁵⁴GDA 1100, Agreement between the Lord Bishop of Grahamstown and the Vestry of St George's Church.

election for vestrymen, the vestry of St George's and the churchwardens and sidesmen of St Michael's form^{ed} a Church Council of Laymen, and the funds of the two congregations were merged.⁵⁵

There was one other important clause in the pact between Bishop Webb and St George's vestry. The principle behind the secession of St George's from the Grahamstown diocesan structure had been that the Church of the Province of South Africa had seceded from the Church of England. Their view was endorsed by the Cape Supreme Court and the Privy Council, both of which had found that the Third Proviso in the constitution of the Church of the Province was the obstacle to union between the Church of England and the south African province. To reassure the congregation of St George's, Webb undertook, at the next Provincial Synod,

...to move and advocate...the repeal or recasting of that proviso in such a way as may be best calculated to satisfy those who believe that it contains a hindrance to full union and communion with the Church of England, and at the same time secure all the vital principles which those who framed the Constitution had at heart.⁵⁶

The agreement paved the way for joint Christmas services for the congregations of the procathedral and the cathedral. Allan Webb, Bishop of Grahamstown, preached in St George's on Christmas day, the most powerful possible sign that the Grahamstown schism had been healed.⁵⁷

Perhaps inevitably, there was some opposition to the circumstances of Webb's agreement with the vestry from two of the clergymen who had been closest to Merriman, Robert Mullins and John Espin, although Archdeacon White warmly supported Webb. Their main grievance was that

⁵⁵ Ibid.; CVMB, vol.III, 22 Dec. 1885, pp.129-130.

⁵⁶ GDA 1100, Agreement between the Lord Bishop of Grahamstown and the Vestry of St George's Church.

⁵⁷ GTJ 23 Dec. 1885; GDA 44, A.B. Webb to WWJ, 28 Dec. 1885. Grahamstown cathedral continued to be called St George's until the repeal of Ordinance 2 of 1839, when the dual dedication to St Michael and St George was adopted. (CVMB, vol.II, 3 Mar. 1891, p.303, 6 Oct. 1891, p.312.)

Webb had not insisted on an apology for the vestry's treatment of Merriman.⁵⁸ Webb pointed out that the man chiefly responsible for insulting Merriman was dead, that the vestry had virtually submitted by coming to Bishopsbourne, and that to have insisted on an apology might have meant losing the opportunity of healing the breach.⁵⁹ When Mullins and Espin nevertheless attempted to publish their objections to Webb's action, he remonstrated with them and forbade publication of their protest.⁶⁰ Some years later, the formidable Julia Merriman, Mullins Espin and White objected to the erection of a memorial tablet to Williams at the back of St George's.⁶¹ Webb reproved them,

...[Williams's] lonely, sad, death may be looked upon as an atonement for his misdoings, and it is more dignified as well as charitable to keep silence now, regarding him.⁶²

The metropolitan's advice to Mrs Merriman also reflected a determination not to be swayed by arguments ad hominem:

...your real happiness will be to bear your trial patiently, and to give credit to the responsible ruler, under God, of the Diocese, for not being actuated by any unworthy motive, and for acting from nothing but the real dictates of his conscience.⁶³

⁵⁸GDA 172, R.J. Mullins to WWJ, 17 Dec. 1885; GDA 43, A.B. Webb to WWJ, 18 Dec. 1885; GDA 102, J. Espin to WWJ, 25 Dec. 1885; GDA 97, H.M. White to WWJ, 26 Dec. 1885.

⁵⁹GDA 43, A.B. Webb to WWJ, 18 Dec. 1885.

⁶⁰GDA 106, Protest addressed to Bishop Webb, signed by J.Espin, R.J. Mullins, H.R. Woodrooffe, 19 Jan. 1886; GDA 107, J. Espin to WWJ, 20 Jan. 1886.

⁶¹This monument is on the south wall of the cathedral, at the west end. The inscription reads: "In loving memory of the Very Rev. Frederick Henry Williams D.D. of Trinity College, Dublin, twenty years Dean of this Cathedral and Colonial Chaplain. + Born at Skea House, Co. Fermanagh, Ireland, 6 March 1826, died at the Deanery, Grahamstown, 22 August 1885. + No worthier monument of his untiring zeal could be raised than this tower, its clock, window and bells, for which the city is mainly indebted to his exertions. + "I will lay me down in peace and take my rest, for it is Thou, LORD, only, that makest me dwell in safety." Psalm IV.9. + Erected by his friends and admirers in token of their affection and esteem."

⁶²GDA 1091, JM to WWJ, 16 Apr. 1886, with West Jones's reply.

⁶³UWL, AB1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A16, p.99. WWJ to JM, 6 Apr. 1887.

This was wise advice. The structural division between St George's and the rest of the diocese of Grahamstown had been bridged by Webb's agreement with the vestry. Healing of the personalities torn by the schism would take longer, and could not be achieved by recrimination and bitterness, but by practical application of Merriman's favourite text,⁶⁴ "Forgetting what lies behind, and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal..."⁶⁵

In 1851, Robert Gray had attempted to secure repeal of Ordinance 2 of 1839.⁶⁶ The terms of that ordinance and the understanding of church order it represented underlay many of the trials Merriman had endured as Archdeacon and as Bishop of Grahamstown. In 1891, the Parliament of the Cape of Good Hope passed a permissive act providing for the repeal of the church ordinances,⁶⁷ and the same year the congregation of St George's, Grahamstown, requested the repeal of Ordinance 2 of 1839.⁶⁸ Once it was repealed, Bishop Webb promulgated statutes for the cathedral which, notably in the stipulations that the dean was an episcopal appointee and that the bishop would preach in St George's once a month and at the great feasts,⁶⁹ closely resembled those drawn up by Bishop Merriman in 1878.

Anomalies within the diocese of Grahamstown were now removed, but the Merriman case had raised issues beyond the diocesan. The debate on the Third Proviso lasted for more than twenty years after Merriman's death.

⁶⁴MP 110-82, JM to JXM and AM, 1882.

⁶⁵Philippians 3. 13-14.

⁶⁶See above, pp.65-69.

⁶⁷Act 10 of 1891, To authorise the repeal of certain ordinances hereinafter mentioned.

⁶⁸CVMB, vol.II, Jul.-Oct. 1891, pp.307-312.

⁶⁹CVMB, vol.II, 6 Oct. 1891, p.312, Order for the Government of the Cathedral Church of St George and St Michael, Grahamstown; GDA 1062, Draft Constitution for the Cathedral Church of St George's, Grahamstown, 1886; Deed of Constitution and Statutes of the Chapter of the Cathedral Church of St Michael and St George, Grahamstown.

By the time Webb negotiated an agreement with St George's vestry in 1885, there had already been two major debates on the Third Proviso. After the Privy Council judgment, Hopkins Badnall assumed that no legislation to give the Church of the Province of South Africa access to property at the Cape vested in the Church of England would be passed without prior removal of this clause, and he gave notice that he intended to move for its rescission from the constitution at the next Provincial Synod.⁷⁰ Bishop Merriman would have been grieved by such a step.⁷¹ When the 1880 Supreme Court judgment had presented legislation as a solution to the dilemma of the Church of the Province of South Africa, and when Merriman felt that clarity would not be achieved in his own lifetime, he had spoken against any alteration in the church's position, telling Badnall that if he was dead when the question was debated,

...let my post mortem cry be what Robert Gray's is to me, "Courage, Courage." ⁷²

Badnall carried most of the clergy of the Cape Town diocese with him in his campaign to rescind the proviso, but the Bishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan stood firm. At the 1883 Provincial Synod, Badnall spoke for three hours in favour of repeal, explaining that he had no desire to make the judgments of the Privy Council binding on the south African province, but arguing that the same effect could be achieved without specifically excluding them, with the additional advantage of

⁷⁰PBH/BD, pp.146-148. Pamphlet literature on the question of the Third Proviso is vast. e.g. A Few Helps to the understanding of the Proviso Question, nd.; H. Badnall, The "Proviso" and the approaching Diocesan Synod, 1884; C.J. Cooper, The South African Church Question, 1884; W.W. Jones, A Statement respecting a Proposed Change in the Constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa, 1883; On the Proposed Court of Final Appeal, A Letter by the Bishop of Lincoln, 1884; The Position of the Church of England in South Africa, Report of the Proceedings at a Special Vestry Meeting of Trinity Church, Capetown, held August 10th, 1882; T.E. Usherwood, Report of the Debate on a motion to expunge the Third Proviso, 1883; H.R. Woodrooffe, The Recent Judgment of the Judicial Committee of H.M.'s Privy Council, 1882.

⁷¹MP 106-82, JM to AM, 7 Oct. 1882; MP 109-82, JM to JXM, 12 Oct. 1882.

⁷²UWL, AB 723, Badnall Papers 1845-1894, NJM to Hopkins Badnall, 29 Dec. 1880.

preparing the way for legislation to secure property vested in the Church of England.⁷³ Bishop Webb and Archdeacon White were among those who defended the Third Proviso, but it was the metropolitan's three-hour speech which secured the rejection of Badnall's measure in the house of the laity, and which made a vote by clergy and bishops unnecessary.⁷⁴

Badnall tried again to secure acceptance of his proposal at the 1884 synod of the diocese of Cape Town. Again, the metropolitan spoke against repeal, and Badnall's measure was rejected by the laity.⁷⁵ These two debates had done nothing to weaken West Jones's conviction that the proviso should be retained, and he expressed reservations about Webb's wisdom in reopening the question in his agreement with St George's vestry in 1885.⁷⁶ Webb took his promise to the vestry seriously, and explored various means of recasting the proviso.⁷⁷ Although by 1891, the vestry had freed him from his undertaking to move for this change in the constitution, he put his proposal to Provincial Synod, but as they involved complex changes to many clauses of the constitution, synod resolved to move to the next order of the day.⁷⁸ In 1904, repeal of the Third Proviso was mooted as a solution to the Church of England controversy in Natal, and once again the metropolitan opposed any such change.⁷⁹

Still the Third Proviso, born of the Colenso case, and defended by Merriman against the onslaughts of Dean Williams, enshrines in

⁷³ PBH/BD, p.148.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp.146-148; M.H.M. Wood, op.cit., pp.166-178.

⁷⁵ PBH/BD, p.149; M.H.M. Wood, op.cit., pp.182-194.

⁷⁶ UWL, AB 1162, Letterbooks of the Metropolitans, A25, p.768, WWJ to A.B. Webb, 23 Dec. 1885.

⁷⁷ GDA 98 - GDA 119, Documents relating to Webb's attempt to rescind or rephrase the Third Proviso.

⁷⁸ PBH/BD, p.161.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p.157.

legal language the principle that the Church of the Province of Southern Africa is not bound by the decisions of any civil authority in matters of faith and doctrine.

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There is a description of Merriman dating back to the early years of his life in southern Africa, which captures the vitality of the man:

Archdeacon Merriman bears his enthusiasm stamped on every feature and oozing out in every gesture. He is excessively eccentric and thoroughly free from every conventionality. His bearing, his rapidly ardent manner, his recklessness with which he lets the religion that is uppermost in his mind show itself in every sentence he utters - all tempered by a manliness and heartiness and freedom from all cant... ⁸⁰

Qualities of steadfastness, vigour, dedication and humility characterised Merriman's work as archdeacon and bishop, but times of crisis demonstrated the weaknesses of his strengths. He was outspoken, but without tact, his commitment to a cause deprived him of dispassionate judgment, his single-mindedness made him impatient, he was too honest to be politic, and his diffidence and self-effacement made him prey to conflicting counsel. Merriman was a man of warmth, affection and humour, but when those closest to him gave him wrong advice, he had not the capacity to discern or resist it. He also had the misfortune to encounter a formidable opponent in circumstances which demanded diplomacy, rather than his own forthright sincerity. The result was schism and scandal in the diocese of Grahamstown, and a bishop cast down by the outcome of his case in the courts of the civil authority. In the trials of his own episcopate, Merriman was able to draw strength from the history of the Catholic Church. In his charge to the 1880 synod of the diocese of Grahamstown, he told his clergy:

⁸⁰ LV 329, "Memoir of Bishop Merriman," in Republic of Cluny Annual Register and Miscellany for 1926, part I, vol.III, no.15, p.66.

In the age which historians have loved to designate as the golden age of the Ch[urch], the Century which gave us an Athanasius, a Gregory, a Basil, a Chrysostom in the East, an Ambrose, a Jerome, an Augustine in the West, we have our Ecclesiastical annals stained with the most terrible, the most widespread, the most heart-sickening scandals...The world groaned under conflicting forms of rapidly multiplied creeds. And yet it was then that the Nicene formula, which is our present great stay and bulwark, was consolidated...in spite of the apparent triumph of their fair spoken and seemingly very reasonable opponents...in spite of imperial and courtly favour against it. ⁸¹

William Temple once remarked that every man was the author of his own biography. ⁸² This is true of Merriman in the sense that he destroyed much material about his life. For this reason, the controversy with F.H. Williams dominates his story. Yet this is not necessarily a distortion. The principle at stake throughout Merriman's service as archdeacon and bishop was the understanding of the nature of the church which Merriman had brought with him to south Africa, and which he, with Henry Cotterill and Robert Gray, had seen fulfilled in the constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa. The encounter with Williams revealed Merriman's weaknesses, not least to himself, but he was never tempted to yield the principle of the freedom of the church to define and teach the truth without interference from the state. Merriman's greatest asset was not a gift for controversy, but his humanity, with its weaknesses and its strengths. He was no Athanasius, no Augustine, no Ambrose, and yet, (though Merriman would shake his head), it is perhaps not unfitting to apply the words of Possidius, biographer of Augustine of Hippo, to Nathaniel James Merriman:

Yet I think that those who gained most from him were those who had been able actually to see and hear him as he spoke in Church, and, most of all, those who had some contact with the quality of his life among men. ⁸³

⁸¹ GDA 206, Bishop Merriman's Charge to the 1880 Synod of the Diocese of Grahamstown.

⁸² F.A. Iremonger, William Temple, p.vii.

⁸³ Possidius, Vita, XVIII, quoted in P. Brown, Augustine of Hippo, p.433.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CHURCH ORDINANCES

Ordinance 4 of 1829, For authorizing a sum of money to be raised in shares for erecting an English Church at Capetown. Repealed in terms of Act 10 of 1891 on 18 November 1899.

Ordinance 5 of 1832, For authorizing a sum of money to be raised in shares for building a church at Bathurst. Repealed in terms of Act 10 of 1891 on 29 July 1895.

Ordinance 6 of 1833, For authorizing a sum of money to be raised in shares for building a church at Wynberg. Repealed by Act 9 of 1891.

Ordinance 2 of 1839, For authorizing the appointment of a vestry and churchwardens for St George's Church, Graham's Town. Repealed in terms of Act 10 of 1891 on 27 October 1891.

Ordinance 1 of 1842, For authorizing the appointment of a vestry and churchwardens for St Mary's Church at Port Elizabeth. Repealed in terms of Act 10 of 1891 on 23 December 1891.

Ordinance 2 of 1842, For authorizing the appointment of a vestry and churchwardens for Sidbury Church. Repealed in terms of Act 10 on 25 January 1892.

Ordinance 5 of 1845, For authorizing the appointment of a vestry and churchwardens for St Paul's Church, Rondebosch.

Ordinance 7 of 1845, For authorizing a sum of money to be raised in shares for building a church at Fort Beaufort.

Ordinance 8 of 1846, For authorizing the appointment of a vestry and churchwardens for the Episcopal Church about to be erected at Graaff-Reinet. Repealed in terms of Act 10 of 1891 on 25 January 1892.

APPENDIX B

ORDINANCE 2 OF 1839

No.2. - Sd. George Napier.

Ordinance for authorizing the appointment of a Vestry and Churchwardens for St. George's Church Graham's Town.

WHEREAS it is expedient that the inhabitants of Graham's Town and the parochial limits thereof being members of and holding communion with the United Church of England and Ireland as by law established should be invested with the right and privilege of choosing and appointing under certain regulations a vestry and churchwardens for the better and more effectual administration and management of all matters connected with the church of Graham's Town commonly called St. George's Church, and that the said vestry and churchwardens after having been duly appointed should possess, certain powers and perform certain duties as the same are usually possessed and exercised by such officers according to the customs and usages of the said United Church of England and Ireland : And whereas on the appointment of the said vestry and churchwardens it is expedient that the office of church committee as at present constituted should cease and determine:

1. Now, therefore, be it enacted by the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council thereof, that on the first Tuesday in March after the passing of this ordinance and annually afterwards on the same day a general meeting of the male inhabitants of Graham's Town aforesaid and of the parochial limits thereof being members of and holding communion with the United Church of England and Ireland as by law established shall be holden in Graham's Town, notice whereof shall be given by the minister of the said church for the time being by advertisement in one of the public papers of this colony at least fourteen days before the said meeting is to be holden, for the purpose of electing a vestry; and it shall and may be lawful for the inhabitants as aforesaid or the greater part assembled at such meeting to elect from among themselves any number of persons not exceeding eight in manner and subject to the provisions hereinafter mentioned, who together with the officiating minister for the time being shall form a vestry charged with the duties and invested with the powers hereinafter mentioned.

2. And be it further enacted that two other persons not being members of the said vestry shall likewise be elected to be auditors of the accounts of the said vestry.

3. And be it further enacted that every male inhabitant householder being a member of and holding communion with the church aforesaid and resident in Graham's Town or within the parochial

limits thereof shall be eligible to be a member of the said vestry.

4. And be it enacted that a list of all persons eligible according to the provisions of the foregoing section shall be prepared by the officiating minister so long as there are no churchwardens appointed, and when churchwardens shall have been appointed as is hereinafter provided then by the minister and churchwardens conjointly, and shall be open for the inspection of all persons entitled to vote at the election of the said vestry and auditors at least fourteen days before any election is to take place.

5. And be it further enacted that at every such general meeting as aforesaid the election shall be carried on by lists duly signed by such inhabitants as aforesaid respectively and containing the name of the persons for whom they vote to be elected as vestrymen and as auditors.

6. And be it further enacted that the officiating minister for the time being shall preside as chairman at the meetings of the said vestry, provided that in his absence from any such meeting one of the other members shall be chosen to act as chairman; and in case the votes of the said vestry be equally divided the chairman or acting chairman shall have a casting vote in addition to his own.

7. And be it enacted that five members of the said vestry or four members besides the chairman shall form a quorum and shall be competent to perform all matters and things which may be done by the vestry under and by virtue of any of the provisions of this ordinance.

8. And be it further enacted that it shall and may be lawful for the said vestry so from time to time constituted and appointed to frame, adopt, alter, or rescind such rules, orders, and by-laws as may to them appear expedient for their guidance in the discharge of their duties, and for more effectually executing the provisions of this ordinance, and also to take such order for the management of the said church as shall to them seem expedient, provided that the said rules, orders, or by-laws contain nothing repugnant to law or the tenor of this ordinance or to the customs and usages of the United Church of England and Ireland as by law established.

9. And be it enacted that the said church committee shall upon the appointment of the said vestry deliver over to the said vestry all deeds, books, and papers relating to the church in their custody or power and all sums of money in their possession or control, and the said church committee and the office and duties thereof shall thereupon cease and determine.

10. And be it enacted that the said vestry so from time to time constituted and elected by such members of the said church as aforesaid shall and may have and exercise all the same powers, and rights, and duties respecting the said church and the care and government thereof and the administration of the funds, rents, and revenues thereof and all other matters and things relating to the same as are now possessed and exercised by the church committee together with such other laws and rights and duties as are hereinafter specified.

11. And be it enacted that it shall and may be lawful for the said vestry for the time being to call in and compel payment of all

sums of money which are or shall be at any time hereafter due and payable to their order, and by virtue of any of the provisions of this ordinance and in their own names to make and enter into, perform and execute, or compel the performance and execution of all such contracts and agreements, matters and things as they shall from time to time deem necessary for the good of the church aforesaid.

12. And be it enacted that it shall and may be lawful for the said vestry as such from time to time to commence and maintain all such suits and actions in any competent court in this colony as they shall deem necessary in performance of the trust reposed in them against any person whatsoever, and all such suits and actions shall and may be brought by them in the name of the vestry of St. George's Church at Graham's Town, without specifying the christian or surnames of the members of the vestry, and no such action shall abate by reason of the death or removal or going out of office of any individual members thereof.

13. And be it enacted that all suits or actions the cause of which shall arise or accrue to any person whatsoever from or by reason of any contract or other matter or thing made or entered into or performed by the said vestry in the execution of the said trust, or shall arise or accrue to any person whatsoever against the said vestry, shall be brought by such person in manner and in name aforesaid, and not against any individual member of the said vestry.

14. And be it enacted that the said vestry shall keep an account wherein they shall enter money received and paid by them under and by virtue of the provisions of this ordinance, which account the auditors or either of them may inspect at all reasonable times; and the said account together with any report of the auditors or either of them thereon shall be laid before the members holding communion with the said church at the general annual meeting aforesaid and published if requisite for general information.

15. And be it enacted that the said vestry shall forthwith on their appointment or as soon after as conveniently may be choose out of their own number two persons to be churchwardens, who shall perform and execute all lawful acts and matters and things for the good order and decency of behaviour to be kept in the said church by the congregation thereof, and for preserving to all persons their rights in the pews and sittings thereof, and for providing the said church (by order and at the charges of the said vestry) with necessary and customary furniture for the performance of divine service, and for keeping the same clean and in proper repair, and for keeping the burial-ground attached to the said church in decent order and properly fenced, and for discharging all other duties which usually devolve on churchwardens in the United Church of England and Ireland so far as the same may be applicable to this colony.

16. And be it further enacted that the said churchwardens shall keep an exact account of all collections of money made from time to time in the said church for any charitable or religious purposes connected with the said church and congregation; and the said churchwardens together with the officiating minister for the time being shall faithfully administer the same or see that they be faithfully administered and appropriated in the manner and for the purposes contemplated and intended by the persons contributing to the same; and

the churchwardens' accounts of all such sums as shall be subscribed and collected for charitable purposes and received in trust by them in virtue of their office shall be subject to all the same regulations as the general church fund and accounts of the vestry.

17. And be it enacted that the churchwardens appointed as above shall continue in office until after the next general annual election of the vestry is completed, when they shall deliver up to the said vestry all accounts of such charities as aforesaid duly audited, together with all vouchers, sums of money, or securities held by them in virtue of their office; and the vestry shall then proceed to nominate other churchwardens for the ensuing year: Provided, always, that the churchwardens thus vacating office shall be re-eligible in case they are continued as members of the vestry.

18. And be it further enacted that in case any member of the vestry shall die, or desire to resign, or shall be removed, or for any other lawful cause shall vacate his office it shall and may be lawful for the surviving or other members of the said vestry to decide whether a special general meeting shall be called for the purpose of electing another member in the place of the one so dying, or desiring to resign, or being removed, or whether his place shall remain vacant until the next general annual meeting to be holden as aforesaid: Provided, always, that in case the members of the said vestry decide that a special general meeting shall be holden for the purpose aforesaid the same notice shall be given thereof and the same proceedings shall be observed thereat as in the case of the general annual meeting is provided.

19. And be it enacted that there shall be set apart in the said church and allotted to the chief civil and military authorities resident at Graham's Town and to the minister of the said church respectively a pew sufficient to contain eight persons, and likewise for the use of the officers of the garrison pews sufficient for sixteen persons; and there shall likewise be reserved in some convenient part of the church an adequate number of free sittings for the use of the troops and the accommodation of poor people.

20. And be it further enacted that all the pews and sittings in the said church, with the exception of those allotted and reserved as aforesaid, shall and may be let by the vestry by the year or for any shorter period to any person desiring to take the same at a rent to be affixed to them respectively by the vestry, and payable at such times and in such manner as shall be appointed by the vestry: and the holder of any pew so rented shall and may possess and occupy the same by himself or his assigns without hinderance or disturbance by any person whatsoever until the end of the said term, provided he shall continue to pay the rent affixed to the same at the times whereon and in the manner in which the same shall be made payable: Provided, always, that nothing in this section shall be construed to interfere with any persons at present holding free sittings on the ground of office.

21. And be it enacted that it shall and may be lawful for the vestry whenever it shall happen that the rent of any pew or sitting is in arrear and unpaid for the space of twenty-eight days after the same is due and payable to give notice to the possessor of such pew forthwith to quit and give up possession thereof; and thereupon it

shall and may be lawful for the said vestry to re-enter into the possession of the said pew for the purposes of this ordinance without any other form or proceeding whatever: Provided, however, that nothing herein contained shall extend or be construed to deprive from recovering the amount of such rent in arrear by action in any competent court.

22. And be it further enacted that no burial shall take place within or under the said church, but the burials of all persons according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England shall take place in the burial-ground unconsecrated and allotted or which may hereafter be consecrated and allotted to the said church for that purpose.

23. And be it enacted that it shall and may be lawful for the officiating minister and churchwardens for the time being to permit any monument to be erected or placed in such convenient parts of the said church or of the enclosed ground about the same or in the burial-ground belonging thereto or vaults to be dug and made in the said burial-ground, upon payment to the fund of the said church for such permission of such reasonable fee as shall be affixed by the said vestry for such permission according to the terms thereof.

24. And be it further enacted that it shall and may be lawful for any person or persons erecting or placing any monument in the said church or digging or making any vault in the said burial-ground by and with such permission as aforesaid to have, maintain, and keep up such monument or vault according to the terms of such permission to and for the sole and separate use of the said person or persons and his or their heirs for ever: Provided, always, that in case any such monument as aforesaid is suffered to fall into decay and the person or persons to whom the said monument appertains neglects to repair the same it shall and may be lawful after a general notice of such intention to remove the same.

25. And be it enacted that this ordinance shall be deemed and taken to be a public ordinance and shall be judicially taken notice of by all judges, magistrates, and others without being specially pleaded.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN !

Given at the Cape of Good Hope, 23rd January, 1839.

By command of His Excellency the Governor,

(Signed) JOHN BELL,
Secretary to Government.

By order of the Council,

(Signed) CHARLES BELL,
Acting Clerk of the Legislative Council.

APPENDIX C

Extract from The Constitution and Canons of the Church of the Province of South Africa and other acts of the Provincial Synod held at Capetown in the month of February, A.D. 1870, with the Third Proviso underlined.

1. PRELIMINARY RESOLUTIONS

passed by the
PROVINCIAL SYNOD

I. That inasmuch as the Dioceses of Capetown, of Grahamstown, of Maritzburg (embracing the Diocese of Natal), of St. Helena, and of the Orange Free State, which originally were comprehended in one Diocese of Capetown, have been constituted an Ecclesiastical Province, of which Capetown is the Metropolitan See; such constitution having been determined for them in accordance with the decision of authorities of the English Church, through the intention or the effect of Acts of the Crown, under which the said Diocese was subdivided, - and being further confirmed by the oaths of Canonical obedience taken by the other Bishops of those Diocese to the Bishop of Capetown as their Metropolitan, and by the express acceptance of these relations by all the aforesaid Dioceses, either in acts of their Synods, or in other action of their Clergy and Laity, as well as by the recognition of such Dioceses as a Province by the Archbishops, Primate, and other Bishops of the Anglican Communion; - We do therefore claim for this Province the Ecclesiastical status, rights, powers, and relations of a Province of the Anglican Communion.

II. That it is expedient that in all acts and documents the entire Church, which comprehends the five aforesaid Dioceses, should be called the Church of the Province of South Africa; this title not being intended to exclude other titles (such as English or Anglican Church) under which this Church, or any portion of it, may be known, but being used to express the fact that the whole Church thus entitled is united in this Provincial organization, through which it is connected with other Churches of the Anglican Communion and with the Church of England in particular.

III. That the Most Reverend Robert Gray, D.D., Bishop of Capetown, the Right Reverend Henry Cotterill, D.D., Bishop of Grahamstown, the Right Reverend Thomas Earle Welby, D.D., Bishop of St. Helena, and the Right Reverend William Kenneth Macrorie, M.A., Bishop of Maritzburg, are respectively the Bishops of the Dioceses of Capetown, Grahamstown, St. Helena, and Maritzburg (embracing the Diocese of Natal); the Bishopric of the Orange Free State being at present vacant.

IV. That inasmuch as the present Assembly has been convened by the Metropolitan Bishop of Capetown as a Provincial Synod, and

inasmuch as it is attended by all the aforesaid Bishops, and by Clergy and Laity chosen to represent in a Provincial Synod the several Dioceses by which they have been elected - all the Diocese of the Province having been invited to send such representatives - this Assembly therefore claims to be, and is entitled to be considered, a Provincial Synod and Representative Body of the beforementioned Church.

V. That, without questioning the right of the Bishops of any Ecclesiastical Province or of the Bishops and Clergy of a Province, to meet in Synod by themselves, or the rightful authority of the Episcopate in matters of Faith and Doctrine, and without affirming that the presence of others is essential to a Provincial Synod, yet, inasmuch as no Rules for the government of the entire Church should be enacted without the consent, express or implied, of the whole body of the Church, we judge it expedient that the Laity of every Diocese of this Church should be always invited to send representatives (being communicants of the said Church) to its Provincial Synods, in order that the counsel of Lay Members of the Church may be had with regard to all such Rules or Canons, and that the consent of the Laity of the Church may be obtained to the same through their representatives.

VI. That this Assembly, being the Church of this Province by representation, shall conduct its deliberations and proceedings in accordance with the principle affirmed in the preceding Resolution, and no Resolution, Rule, Canon or Constitution shall be regarded as a Law of the Church of this Province, but such as shall have received the concurrent assent of all orders of the Church here represented; and, whenever a vote by orders is demanded, then such assent shall be expressed in each order by a majority of votes.

VII. That although the failure or neglect of any Diocese to elect and send representatives to a Provincial Synod, or the non-attendance of representatives, cannot be allowed, as a general rule, to invalidate any proceedings of that Synod, yet, inasmuch as in Resolution IV of the Synod of Bishops of 1869, it was provided, that "No Rules affecting the internal government of any Diocese of this Province framed by this first Provincial Synod, should (unless the representation be full) have force in any Diocese until they be accepted by the Diocesan Synod, where such Synod exists;" and inasmuch as the Diocese of St. Helena has not sent either Clerical or Lay representatives to this Provincial Synod; and inasmuch, further, as St. Helena, being a Crown Colony, has most of its Ecclesiastical matters ordered by law, and is therefore differently situated from other Dioceses of the Province, - for these reasons the acts of this Provincial Synod shall not be considered as having force in the Diocese of St. Helena, except so far as they can be, and shall be hereafter, received through the voluntary action of the Bishop, Clergy, and Laity of the said Diocese.

VIII. All Rules and Regulations that shall be made during the present Session as to the proceedings and action of the Provincial Synod of the Church of this Province, shall be held to apply to the proceedings and action of this present Assembly, except it be otherwise declared.

2. DECLARATION
OF
FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

We, being by representation the Church of the Province of South Africa, do declare that we receive and maintain the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, as taught in the Holy Scriptures, held by the Primitive Church, summed up in the Creeds, and affirmed by the undisputed General Councils. And we do further declare, that we receive and maintain the Doctrine, Sacraments, and Discipline of Christ according as the Church of England has received and set forth the same in its Standards of Faith and Doctrine; and we receive the Book of Common Prayer; and of Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, to be used, according to the form therein prescribed, in Public Prayer and administration of the Sacraments and other Holy Offices; and we accept the English version of the Holy Scriptures as appointed to be read in Churches. And further, we disclaim for this Church the right of altering any of the Standards of Faith and Doctrine now in use in the Church of England.

Provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent this Church from accepting, if it shall so determine, any alterations in the Formularies of the Church (other than the Creeds), which may be adopted by the Church of England, or allowed by any General Synod, Council, Congress, or other Assembly of the Churches of the Anglican Communion; or from making at any time such adaptations and abridgments of, and additions to, the Services of the Church as may be required by the circumstances of this Province, and shall be consistent with the spirit and teaching of the Book of Common Prayer; Provided that all changes in or additions to the Services of the Church, made by the Church of this Province, shall be liable to revision by any Synod of the Anglican Communion to which the Province shall be invited to send representatives.

3. CONSTITUTION
OF THE
CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA

In the Name of God, the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Ghost. - Amen.

Whereas it is expedient that the members of a Church, not by Law established, should, for the purpose of its due government, as well as for the management of its property and the ordering of its affairs, formally set forth the terms of the compact under which it is associated; and whereas the Bishops of the Church of the Province of South Africa (otherwise known as the Church of England or the English Church or Church of the Anglican Communion in these parts), together with certain of the Clergy and Laity chosen as representatives of the said

Church, have assembled in a Synod, convened at Capetown, in the year of our Lord 1870, in order to consider measures for the complete organization of the Church of this Province, and to frame such rules as may be necessary for the due order and government of the said Church, and have accordingly considered what rules should be determined, for the purposes aforesaid, according to the Order and Constitution of the Church of Christ and to the Laws and Usages of the Church of England, so far as such Laws and Usages are applicable to an unestablished Church in South Africa:-

Now, therefore, the said Bishops, Clergy, and Laity, in Synod assembled, do agree to establish and put forth in their own behalf, and in behalf of all whom they do or may represent now and hereafter, and in behalf of all who may now or hereafter expressly or implicitly assent thereto, the following Rules as the Constitution or Deed of Association of the Church of the Province of South Africa - to wit:-

Articles of the Constitution

I. The Church of the Province of South Africa receives the Doctrine, Sacraments, and Discipline of Christ as the same are contained and commanded in Holy Scripture, according as the Church of England has received and set forth the same in its Standards of Faith and Doctrine; and it receives the Book of Common Prayer, and of Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, to be used, according to the form therein prescribed, in Public Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Holy Offices; and it accepts the English version of the Holy Scriptures as appointed to be read in Churches; and, further, it disclaims for itself the right of altering any of the aforesaid Standards of Faith and Doctrine.

Provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent the Church of this Province from accepting, if it shall so determine, any alterations in the Formularies of the Church (other than the Creeds) which may be adopted by the Church of England, or allowed by any General Synod, Council, Congress, or other Assembly of the Churches of the Anglican Communion; or from making at any time such adaptations and abridgments of, and additions to, the Services of the Church as may be required by the circumstances of this Province: Provided that all changes in, and additions to, the Services of the Church, made by the Church of this Province, shall be liable to revision by any Synod of the Anglican Communion to which this Province shall be invited to send representatives.

Provided, also, that in the interpretation of the aforesaid Standards and Formularies the Church of this Province be not held to be bound by decisions, in questions of Faith and Doctrine or in questions of Discipline relating to Faith and Doctrine, other than those of its own Ecclesiastical Tribunals, or of such other Tribunal as may be accepted by the Provincial Synod as a Tribunal of Appeal.

II. The Provincial Synod of this Church, which shall be constituted as hereinafter declared, shall be the Legislative body of the Church of this Province; and every enactment of the said Provincial Synod shall be a Law and Rule of the Church of this Province in those matters to which it may pertain.

Provided that the Provincial Synod of the Church of this Province shall be subordinate to the higher authority of a General

Synod of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, to which this Province shall be invited to send representatives, whenever such General Synod shall be convened.

III. The Provincial Synod shall hold ordinary meetings at such time and place as shall be determined in that behalf by the said Synod. But, in case there shall seem to be good cause for altering the time or place of such ordinary meeting as determined by the Synod, the Metropolitan (or, in the case of the incapacity of the Metropolitan to act in such behalf, the Bishop of the Province who is senior by consecration) shall have the power, with the consent of the majority of the Bishops of the Province, to appoint another time (not exceeding three months before or after the time fixed by the Synod itself), and another place, for the meeting of the said Synod.

IV. A special meeting of the Provincial Synod may be called by the Metropolitan, whenever the circumstances of the Church appear to him to require it. On the requisition of a majority of the Bishops it will always be the duty of the Metropolitan to convene the Provincial Synod. The time and place for the special meeting of the said Synod shall be appointed by the Metropolitan.

V. All Bishops of the Province of South Africa shall have seats in the Provincial Synod.

VI. Every Diocese in the Province shall be entitled to send both Clerical and Lay representatives to every meeting of the Provincial Synod, all such Lay representatives being Communicants of the Church of this Province, and of the full age of twenty-one years. The number of representatives from each Diocese, and rules for the election of representatives, shall be determined from time to time by the Provincial Synod.

Provided, however, that the failure or neglect on the part of any Diocese to send such representatives, or of such representatives to attend, shall not invalidate the proceedings or enactments of the Provincial Synod, which proceedings and enactments shall have the same force in that Diocese as if such representatives were present.

VII. Every enactment of the Provincial Synod must receive the assent of a majority of the members present at a duly constituted meeting of the said Synod; if voting by orders be required, then a majority of each order shall be necessary.

VIII. The Diocesan Synod in each Diocese of this Province shall resemble, as far as possible, the Provincial Synod in its constitution and mode of procedure.

IX. The Provincial Synod shall have full power and authority to make all such regulations as shall be required for the order, good government, and efficiency of the Church of this Province: and no regulation of any Diocesan Synod shall have force in any Diocese of this Province, if it be contrary to, or conflict with any enactment of the Provincial Synod.

Provided that the principle laid down in Report I of the Lambeth Committees of 1867 be accepted as ruling the relation between the Provincial Synod and the Diocesan Synods of this Province, viz.:-

"That the Provincial Synod should deal with questions of common interest to the whole Province, and with those that affect the communion of the Dioceses with one another, and with the rest of the Church; whilst the Diocesan Synod should be left free to dispose of matters of local interest, and to manage the affairs of the Diocese."

Provided, further, that any act of a Diocesan Synod shall be liable to be reviewed by the Provincial Synod.

X. The Provincial Synod shall have the power to make such adaptations and abridgments of, and additions to, the Services of the Church as may be required by the circumstances of this Province; but all such adaptations abridgments and additions shall be regarded as provisional, until they shall be confirmed at a subsequent meeting of the Provincial Synod as being consistent with the spirit and teaching of the Book of Common Prayer. All adaptations, abridgments, or additions, allowed or made by any Bishop of this Province for his own Diocese, whether in his Diocesan Synod or otherwise, shall be open to revision at the next meeting of the Provincial Synod.

XI. Rules for Ecclesiastical Discipline shall be framed by the Provincial Synod; but any rule which shall be made in that behalf by any Diocesan Synod shall have force in that Diocese until the next meeting of the Provincial Synod, unless it be contrary to any rule previously framed by the said Provincial Synod.

XII. The Provincial Synod shall determine the Constitution and Rules of procedure of the Diocesan Tribunals for the exercise of Ecclesiastical Discipline, and shall provide a Provincial Tribunal of Appeal. But, in default of Rules for Diocesan Tribunals being made by the Provincial Synod, the Diocesan Synod of any Diocese may establish provisional Rules.

XIII. Any Bishop of this Province, against whom a charge shall be brought, shall be tried by the other Bishops of the Province, according to Rules which shall be determined by the Provincial Synod.

XIV. The Provincial Synod shall have full power and authority to take all measures and establish all rules that may be necessary for the erection of a new Diocese within the bounds of any of the existing Dioceses of this Province, and for altering the bounds of any Diocese; and, further, for forming a new Diocese beyond the limits of the present Dioceses, or for associating with the Church of this Province any Missionary or other Dioceses in adjacent countries.

XV. In the case of the death, resignation, or removal from any cause, of a Bishop of any Diocese of this Province, the person who shall be appointed according to rules which shall be prescribed by the Provincial Synod shall, when consecrated, be recognized as the Bishop of that Diocese.

Provided that every one so appointed shall declare, in writing, his assent to the Laws of the Church of this Province, according to forms prescribed by the Provincial Synod.

Provided, however, that this Rule shall not apply to any Diocese in which a successor to the vacant See shall be appointed by the Crown under Letters Patent giving legal jurisdiction, but the person so appointed shall be entitled to exercise the rights of a

Bishop of this Province, on his declaring in writing his assent to the Laws of the Church of this Province, so far as they may be applicable in his own Diocese.

XVI. The Provincial Synod shall frame such regulations as may be necessary from time to time for the management of property held in Trust for the Church of this Province, and shall have full power and authority, except so far as the same shall be ordered by law, or prescribed by the terms of any special Trust, to determine in what manner, and upon what conditions, such property shall be used or occupied. It shall also have power, except such matters be otherwise ordered by law or by terms of any special Trust, to determine how and by whom Patronage shall be exercised, and what shall be the duties of Parochial Officers, and the rights and privileges of Parishioners in Church matters, and further, to frame rules as regards the division and boundaries of Parishes, and other such questions.

Provided, however, that all rules and regulations as to the tenure, management, and use of Church property, and the other matters aforesaid, which have been hitherto made and shall be made hereafter by any Diocesan Synod, shall have force in that Diocese until other rules be made by the Provincial Synod, and except they be contrary to any rules previously made in that behalf by the Provincial Synod.

XVII. The Provincial Synod may delegate to any Synod, Board, Committee, or other Body, either specifically, as the case may require, or under such general regulations as may from time to time be laid down by the Provincial Synod, any powers which may be required for the management of property.

XVIII. All property, of what nature or kind soever, whether moveable or immovable, real or personal, which is or may be given, obtained, or held for the benefit of the Church of this Province shall, whenever it be practicable, be transferred to a Trustee or Trustees acting on behalf of the Provincial Synod; and all such property thus transferred shall be in Trust, that such Trustee or Trustees shall and do hold the same, or otherwise shall and do transfer the same, upon and according to such Trusts, intents and purposes, whether Ecclesiastical, Missionary, Religious, Collegiate, Scholastic, or Charitable, as the Provincial Synod of the Church of this Province of South Africa shall from time to time direct or appoint, in writing, under the hand of any person or persons authorized by the Provincial Synod on that behalf, subject, however, to any special Trusts imposed by any Founder, Donor, Testator, or other benefactor. But no property subject to any such special Trusts shall be held by any Trustee or Trustees acting on behalf of the Provincial Synod, unless the same shall have been accepted, in the terms of such Trusts, by the Provincial Synod, or by some Synod, Board, Committee, or other Body authorized by the Provincial Synod in that behalf.

Provided that moveable property shall not, in any case, be vested in a sole Trustee, except it be so required by a particular Will or Deed of Gift.

XIX. Every Trustee in whom any property, whether moveable or immovable, real or personal, shall be vested, either solely or jointly with any other person or persons, for and on behalf of the Provincial Synod, shall hold the same with the powers and subject to the limitations, restrictions, declarations, and provisoes contained in the

several Clauses of the Schedule hereunto annexed, so far as the same may be consistent with any special Trust affecting such property; and any Synod, Board, Committee, or other Body, appointed by the Provincial Synod for that purpose, shall possess and may exercise any such of the powers belonging to the Provincial Synod as shall be by the Provincial Synod in that behalf prescribed.

XX. Every Trustee appointed in the manner and for the purposes herein specified shall be subject to all and singular the rules and directions which may from time to time be issued by or under the authority of the Provincial Synod, and shall be bound to obey and give effect to all decisions of the Tribunals for the exercise of Ecclesiastical Discipline, appointed by the said Provincial Synod.

XXI. No one shall be admitted to any office in the Church of this Province, or shall be entitled to receive any income, emolument, or benefit from or out of any property held under the authority of the Provincial Synod, unless he shall have signed a declaration, according to a form prescribed by the Provincial Synod, of submission to the Laws of the Church of this Province relating to such office.

XXII. The Provincial Synod shall have full power and authority to make, from time to time, such rules, regulations, and bye-laws for giving effect to the provisions of this Constitution as to the said Provincial Synod shall seem fit, and further, from time to time, to amend, alter, and add to such rules, regulations, and bye-laws.

XXIII. It shall not be lawful to alter, amend, or repeal any of the provisions of this Constitution (after they shall have been confirmed at the next meeting of the Provincial Synod), except such alteration shall have been first proposed in one Provincial Synod, and made known to the several Diocesan Synods, and finally agreed to in the meeting of the Provincial Synod next ensuing.

XXIV. In the construction and for the purposes of this Constitution, and in the construction and for the purposes of all Acts, Canons, Resolutions, and Proceedings of the Provincial Synod, the following words and expressions shall have the meanings hereby assigned to them respectively (unless there be something in the subject or context repugnant thereto), viz.:-

1. By "Church of the Province of South Africa," is meant the Community which is associated under the provisions herein set forth.

2. By "Province of South Africa," is meant a combination under Metropolitan and Synodical authority, as herein defined, of several Dioceses, or Districts called Dioceses, in South Africa and its dependencies; which Dioceses, until otherwise declared by the Provincial Synod, are, and shall be, the following, viz.:-

(1.) The Diocese of Capetown, being the Western Districts of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope.

(2.) The Diocese of Grahamstown, being the Eastern Districts of the said Colony.

(3.) The Diocese of Maritzburg or Natal, being the Colony of Natal.

(4.) The Diocese of St. Helena, being the Islands of St. Helena, Ascension, and Tristan D'Acunha.

(5.) The Diocese of Bloemfontein, hitherto known as the Diocese of the Orange Free State, being the territory of the Orange Free State with Basutoland and the Barolong Country.

3. By "the Bishops of the said Dioceses" are meant - the Most Reverend Robert Gray, D.D., Bishop of Capetown and Metropolitan; The Right Reverend Henry Cotterill, D.D., Bishop of Grahamstown; the Right Reverend William Kenneth Macrorie, M.A., Bishop of Maritzburg; and the Right Reverend Thomas Earle Welby, D.D., Bishop of St. Helena; (the Bishopric of Bloemfontein or the Orange Free State being at present vacant); or those persons who shall hereafter hold these Bishoprics, according to Rules prescribed by the Provincial Synod for determining the succession and appointment to Bishoprics in this Province: and by "Bishops of this Province" are meant the Bishops of the said Dioceses, and all others who are and shall be recognized as Bishops of the Province by the Provincial Synod.

4. By "Metropolitan of the said Province," shall be meant the Bishop of Capetown for the time being, unless it shall be otherwise determined by the Provincial Synod; and, during the vacancy of the Metropolitan See, it shall mean and include the Bishop of the Province who is senior by consecration.

5. By "Clergy of the Church of this Province," shall be meant all ordained persons who shall exercise spiritual functions in any Diocese in this Province, under the authority and spiritual jurisdiction of the Bishop of that Diocese, according to the Laws, Rules, and Usages of the said Church.

6. By "Communicant of the Church of this Province," is meant a male person who shall have received the Holy Communion three times at least during the preceding year, at the hands of some Clergyman, either of the Church of this Province, or of some other Church in communion with the same.

7. By "Provincial Synod," shall be and is meant this present assembly of Bishops, Clergy, and other members of the Church of the Province of South Africa (being Communicants), and every such assembly which shall be constituted, convened, and held according to rules laid down in this Constitution.

8. By "Diocesan Synod," shall be meant an assembly consisting of the Bishop, Clergy, and other members of the aforesaid Church in the Diocese (being Communicants), and constituted according to such rules as have been or shall be agreed upon in such Diocese and allowed by the Provincial Synod, or such as shall be framed by the Provincial Synod.

9. By "Constitution of this Church," is and shall be meant the Constitution or Deed of Association, as now agreed to and set forth, with and subject to such (if any) alterations or additions as may be made from time to time by the Provincial Synod of the Church of this Province, as therein provided.

APPENDIX D

Conditions governing the order of service to be used in Christ Church, Grahamstown, in terms of Rosa Wright's will.

We certify that during the time when Mrs. Rosa Wright was an habitual worshipper at St. Andrew's Chapel, Grahamstown including the time when she made and signed the Will dated the 19th day of June 1866 - the usual form and order of Worship in the aforesaid Chapel were as follows -

The Morning and Evening Prayers in use in the Church of England were read and not sung or intoned.

The Psalms or Hymns known as the Canticles in the Morning and Evening Service were chanted as were also occasionally the Psalms for the Day and the responses to the commandments.

The Surplice was always worn by the Clergyman in the pulpit and the offertory was used every Sunday in the Communion Service.

At Christmas and Easter there were the usual decorations of the Church common in English churches.

The Communion Table was covered with an ornamented velvet cloth. Upon it was placed nothing except the Service Books and Alms Dish and at the Communion time a linen cloth covering the top and the vessels required for the service.

The Hymns used in the Chapel were those known as "Hymns Ancient and Modern".

Generally the form and mode of worship in the aforesaid Chapel were those which are required by the Law of the English Church with no additional ceremonies or symbols.

signed

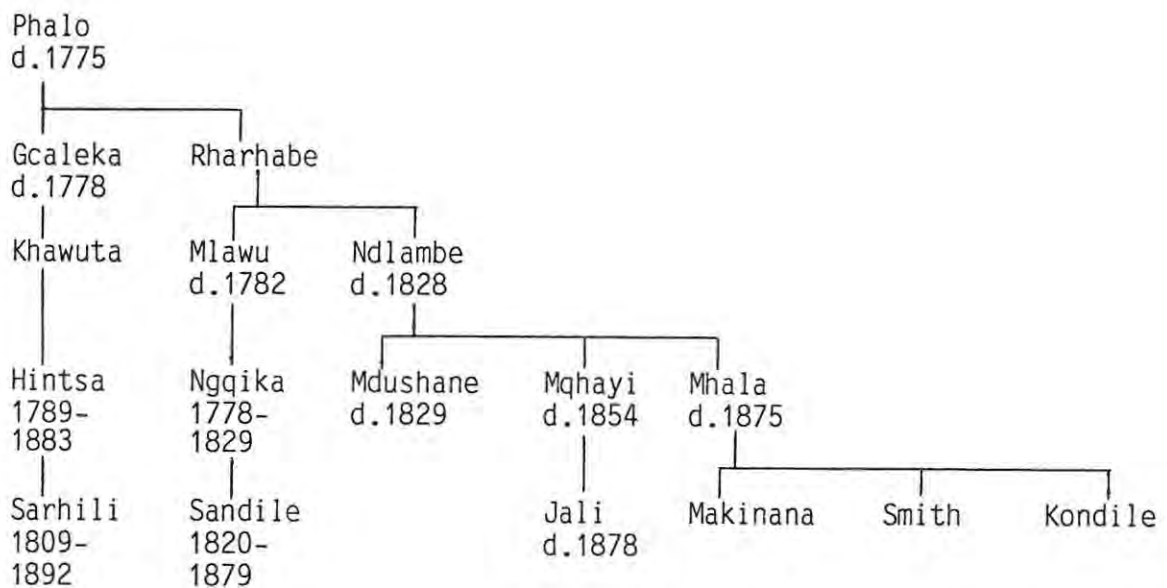
H. GRAHAMSTOWN

J.M. COTTERILL.

Curate of St. Andrew's Chapel in
the years 1865, 1866 & 1867.

APPENDIX E

XHOSA GENEALOGY AND NOTES ON THE MAIN XHOSA CHIEFS WHOSE
RULE COINCIDED WITH N.J. MERRIMAN'S LIFE IN SOUTH AFRICA

THE HOUSE OF PHALO¹

Mhala (1800-1875), succeeded his father Ndlambe as chief in 1828, in preference to Mqhayi and his other brothers. Mhala and his tribe fought in the sixth frontier war against the colony, and afterwards signed a treaty with Sir Andries Stockenström, and was settled on land between the Kei and Nxarune rivers. He also became involved in the seventh frontier war but did not lose his land. Mhala remained

¹Adapted from J. Peires, The House of Phalo, pp. 48-49, 83.

neutral during the war of 1850-1853, but looked after the cattle of his followers who took up arms. The Ndlambe chief played an active part in the cattle killing, in which he lost three-quarters of his people. He was imprisoned on Robben Island from 1858 to 1864, and afterwards returned to the Idutywa district where his people had been settled. There he lived, without power or influence, until his death.²

Sandile (1820-1878), was the son of Ngqika, who died when Sandile was eight years old, and of his great wife, Sutu. His mother acted as regent, with the assistance of his older half-brothers, until Sandile assumed power as Rharhabe chief in 1840. Sandile has been accused of both weakness and cruelty, but he was a popular ruler. Throughout his life he ruled over a people who were divided between those who sought accommodation with the whites and those who defended the traditional way of life. Sandile was involved in the seventh and eighth frontier wars, both of which saw a diminution of his power. After the eighth war, the Ngqika were expelled from the Amatole and resettled between Thomas and Rubisi rivers. Sandile was killed in the ninth frontier war.³

Sarhili (1814-1892), paramount chief of the Xhosa and Gcaleka chief, he succeeded his father Hintsa in 1835. He was involved in the seventh and eighth frontier wars, and at the time of the cattle killing, Sarhili was completely under the influence of Mhlahaza. The Cape government, which considered Sarhili a man of great cunning, regarded the cattle killing as a plot by Sarhili to get the starving Gcaleka to attack the colony, and Sir George Grey sent an expedition against the Xhosa paramount. Sarhili fled across the Mbashe, but was allowed to return to part of his former territory in 1864, with Thembu and Mfengu settled in the rest of former Gcaleka land. As the Gcaleka increased, pressure on the land grew and there was friction with the

²D.S.A.B., vol.III, pp.608-609.

³Ibid., vol.II, pp.614-616.

Mfengu. War broke out, the Gcaleka were defeated, and Sarhili was deposed by Frere. He fled across the Mbashe, but later returned to Bomvanaland and was pardoned in 1883, although he spent the rest of his life in fear of arrest.⁴

Note on the Mfengu

The Mfengu, derived mainly from the Hlubi, Zizi and Bhele of Natal, were refugees put to flight directly or indirectly by the rise of Dingiswayo and Shaka in Natal. They reached the area between the Kei and Mzimvubu in about 1820, and attached themselves as 'clients' to the Xhosa tribes already living there. In 1835, they were offered protection by the colonial government, and 17 000 Mfengu were settled in the area between the Fish and the Keiskamma rivers, which was included in the colonial boundary.⁵

⁴Ibid., vol.I, pp.686-688.

⁵OHSA, vol.I, pp. 244, 249.

APPENDIX F

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON CLERGY, 1849 - 1882

The following notes are based on entries in the Dictionary of National Biography, the Dictionary of South African Biography, the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, Crockford's Clerical Directory and "Hewitt's Crockford's," a register of clergy in the diocese of Grahamstown.

Bishops of the Church of England

Edward White Benson (1829-1896), educated at King Edward's School, Birmingham, and Trinity College, Cambridge, was first an assistant master at Rugby and then Master of Wellington. He was the first Bishop of Truro (1877), and in 1883 became Archbishop of Canterbury. A staunch Tory and an upholder of the establishment, he was also a friend of Gladstone. To deal with ritual charges against Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln, Benson revived the court of the Archbishop of Canterbury which based its decisions on the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer and traditional practice in the Church of England. His work on St Cyprian was published posthumously.

Charles James Blomfield (1786-1857), was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and was ordained in 1810. After holding a succession of benefices, he became Bishop of Chester in 1824, and did much to halt non-residence in the diocese. In 1828, he became Bishop of London. Two hundred new churches were built during his episcopate. He was also an active member of the Ecclesiastical Commission. A Whig, he voted for the Reform Bill, but opposed Catholic emancipation. Blomfield dissented from the Privy Council judgment in the Gorham case. He resigned his see in 1856.

William Howley (1766-1848), educated at Winchester and at New College, Oxford, was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford in 1809, Bishop of London in 1813 and Archbishop of Canterbury in 1828. An extreme Tory, he opposed Catholic emancipation. At his death, the revenues of the see of Canterbury came under the control of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

John Jackson (1811-1885), was educated at Pembroke, Oxford. In 1853, he became rector of St James's, Picadilly, and Bishop of Lincoln until 1868. He was Bishop of London from 1868 until his death.

Charles Thomas Longley (1794-1868), was educated at Christ Church, Oxford. He became headmaster of Harrow in 1829, Bishop of Ripon in 1836, of Durham in 1856, Archbishop of York in 1860, and Canterbury in 1862. At Canterbury he proceeded as far as he could against Colenso without precipitating a legal conflict. He summoned and presided over the first Lambeth Conference.

George Augustus Selwyn (1809-1878), was educated at Eton and St John's College, Cambridge. Ordained in 1833, he was made Bishop of New Zealand in 1841. Tractarian in his convictions, Selwyn was largely responsible for framing the constitution of the province of New Zealand. He was appointed Bishop of Lichfield in 1868. Selwyn College, Cambridge, was founded in his memory in 1881.

John Bird Sumner (1780-1862), was educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge. He was ordained in 1803 and held several benefices until he became Bishop of Chester in 1828. Though an Evangelical, he voted for Catholic emancipation, but later opposed the Oxford Movement. He was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1848, and at the time of the Gorham controversy, denied that baptismal regeneration was a fundamental doctrine of the Church of England. In 1852 he presided over the Upper House of Convocation when it met again for business for the first time in a hundred and thirty-five years.

Archibald Campbell Tait (1811-1882), was educated at Glasgow University and Balliol. Presbyterian in upbringing, he was confirmed in 1830 by the Bishop of Oxford. From 1834 to 1842, Tait was a Fellow of Balliol. He was one of four tutors who protested against Tract 90, and he remained a strong opponent of the movement. In 1842 he succeeded Arnold as headmaster of Rugby. From 1849 to 1856 he was Dean of Carlisle, and from 1856 to 1868, Bishop of London. In 1868, Tait became Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1871-1872, he sought without success to abolish recitation of the Athanasian Creed at services.

Bishops of the Church of the Province of South Africa

John Armstrong (1813-1856), was educated at Charterhouse and Lincoln College, Oxford, where he came under Tractarian influence. In England he established the Church Penitentiary Association which worked among prostitutes. He was consecrated Bishop of Grahamstown on 30 November 1853 and arrived in his diocese in October 1854. Armstrong laid the foundations of four missions named after the evangelists, and founded St Andrew's College before his early death on 16 May 1856.

Henry Brougham Bousfield (1832-1902), Bishop of Pretoria, was the son of a lawyer and was educated at Merchant Taylors' and Caius College, Cambridge. He refused the offer of the new diocese of Pretoria in 1876 because it was beyond British territory and the income was too small. He was consecrated in 1878. Bousfield's relationship with the Boer government was never easy, and although he promoted rural missions, he failed to meet the demands of urbanisation. The years 1892-1902 were clouded by controversy with a priest of his diocese, partly because of personal jealousy and partly because of the bishop's failure to recognise the significance of the goldfields. He was expelled from the Transvaal in 1899, and returned only briefly as a military chaplain.

Henry Callaway (1817-1890), first bishop of the diocese of St John's, was the son of a bootmaker. He was educated at a grammar school, and taught at a Quaker school. In 1837 he became a member of the Society of Friends, an association which ended in 1852. In the interim, he completed his medical training. Impressed by the teaching of F.D. Maurice, Callaway offered his services to Colenso and was ordained in 1854. He spent three years in Pietermaritzburg and in 1858 started the mission at Springvale where he remained until 1873. Callaway was interested in anthropology and comparative religion, and wrote a book on the religious system of the Zulu. He did not adopt Colenso's views on polygamy and remained aloof from the controversy surrounding the bishop. He was consecrated Bishop of St John's in 1873. His health failed and in 1883 a coadjutor bishop was appointed, who succeeded when Callaway resigned in 1886.

Henry Cotterill (1812-1886), son of a Norfolk parsonage, was educated at St John's College, Cambridge, where he obtained a double first in the classical and mathematical tripos. He was ordained priest in 1836,

and gave up a promising academic career to serve as chaplain to the East India Company at Madras from 1837 to 1846. He returned to head the newly formed Brighton College. He was consecrated Bishop of Grahamstown in 1856, and although the appointment of an Evangelical caused a stir, he was a firm advocate of synodical government and with Gray architect of the constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa. In 1871, Cotterill was elected coadjutor bishop of Edinburgh, and became bishop in 1872. In Scotland he worked to obtain a place for laymen in synod and he continued his interest in mission, in particular encouraging the link between the Church of Scotland and St John's diocese. Cotterill died of cancer in 1886. His son, George Edward Cotterill, was headmaster of St Andrew's College between 1862 and 1865.

Robert Gray (1809-1872), son of a bishop of Bristol, was educated at Eton and University College, Oxford. He entered the living of Whitworth, co. Durham in 1834, and in 1836 married Sophia Wharton Myddleton (1814-1871). In 1847, Gray was made honorary canon of Durham. He was consecrated Bishop of Cape Town on St Peter's day 1847; his history from this point becomes merged with that of the Church of the Province of South Africa.

William West Jones (1838-1908), was educated at Merchant Taylors' and St John's College, Oxford. He was made deacon by Samuel Wilberforce in 1861, and Robert Gray preached at the service at which he was ordained to the priesthood in 1862. West Jones turned down the offer of the diocese of Bloemfontein in 1869. In 1873 Samuel Wilberforce suggested that he accept the offer of the see of Cape Town. He was consecrated on 17 May 1874 and landed in Cape Town at the end of August. He died in England, where he had gone for the Lambeth Conference.

William Kenneth Macrorie (1831-1905), Bishop of Maritzburg, was educated at Winchester and Brasenose College, Oxford. He was a schoolmaster at Radley from 1855 to 1858, and held a succession of livings before his consecration in Cape Town in 1869. Church property in his diocese had been awarded to Colenso and only ten clergy accepted him, but by 1881, there were twenty churches, five schools and twenty-five clergy attached to the see. The bitterness engendered by the Colenso controversy did not end, and Macrorie resigned in 1891. He was made Canon of Ely.

Edward Twells (1828-1898), was educated at St Peter's College, Cambridge. He was ordained priest in 1854, and consecrated Bishop of the Orange

Free State in 1863, having been nominated by C.T. Longley, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had ordained Twells. Twells was one of the judges in Colenso's trial. He laid the foundations of the first Anglican church north of the Vaal, St Mary's, Potchefstroom. He lived in seclusion after his return to England in 1869.

Allan Becher Webb (1839-1907), was born in Calcutta, educated at Rugby and Corpus Christi, Oxford, and was a fellow of University College from 1863 to 1867. From 1864 to 1865, Webb was also vice-principal of Cuddesdon. As Bishop of Bloemfontein from 1870 to 1883, Webb saw the number of clergy in the diocese rise from three to thirty-five. As Bishop of Grahamstown after Merriman's death, he brought reconciliation to a second troubled diocese. He founded two religious communities for women, St Michael and All Angels, Bloemfontein, and the Community of the Resurrection, Grahamstown. He resigned his see in 1898 to become Provost of Inverness and assistant bishop of Moray and Brechin. From 1901 until his death he was Dean of Salisbury.

Thomas Earle Welby (1810-1899), was the son of W.E. Welby, bt., and of Wilhelmina Spry, heiress of William Spry, Governor of Barbados from 1768 to 1772. On his sixteenth birthday, Welby joined the 26th Regiment of Foot as an ensign, was gazetted lieutenant in 1829 and transferred to the 13th Light Dragoons with the same rank. He served in India before selling out in 1837 in order to enter the church. He attended Christ's College, Cambridge, without obtaining a degree, was ordained in 1844 and served in Canada for three years before returning to England. In 1847 he met Robert Gray and Nathaniel James Merriman, and decided to come to south Africa. Welby was appointed colonial chaplain of George in 1849, Archdeacon of George in 1850, and canon of Cape Town cathedral in 1852. He was consecrated Bishop of St Helena in 1862, and was the last bishop of the south African province to receive letters patent. He introduced synodical government on St Helena.

Thomas Edward Wilkinson (1840-1914), Bishop of Zululand, was educated at Jesus College, Cambridge. After nine years as curate of Cavendish and Rickinghall, Suffolk, he was consecrated Bishop of Zululand. He did much pioneering work in the Transvaal and Mozambique before he resigned in 1875. From 1886 to 1911, he was bishop for North and Central Europe.

Clergy of the Diocese of Grahamstown, 1849-1882

Stephen Adonis Bangela, an umMpondomise, was made deacon by N.J. Merriman in 1873, and ordained priest by the Bishop of St John's in 1887. He worked at St Augustine's from 1878 to 1882, at St Mark's for a year, at Umtata from 1884 to 1889, and at Maclear, 1890 to 1892.

James Barrow was ordained deacon in December 1832, and priest in January 1833, by the Bishop of London. He arrived at the Cape on 11 May 1833 to take up duties as colonial chaplain at Bathurst and was appointed chancellor of the diocese of Grahamstown in 1861. He retired in 1868, and died in 1891 at the age of eighty-six.

Jacob Boom was made deacon by Bishop Merriman in 1874 and stationed at St Matthew's from 1874 to 1878. He then worked at various outstations until he moved to the diocese of St John's in 1882. He died in 1889 of a liver complaint.

Langford Sotheby Robert Browne graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1861. From 1865 to 1875 he was head of St Andrew's College, Grahamstown, and was ordained in 1868. From 1875 to 1877 he was headmaster of the Diocesan Grammar School in King William's Town, after which he returned to England. He subsequently came back to south Africa and worked in the Transvaal and in the diocese of Cape Town. He died in 1924.

Edward Moore Burney graduated from Merton College, Oxford, in 1873, and was made deacon in the same year by the Bishop of Salisbury. He was ordained priest by the Bishop of London in 1876. From 1873 to 1885, Burney occupied a succession of curacies in England, and came to Grahamstown as curate at St Michael's procathedral in 1885. He was priest-vicar of St George's 1885-1886, and in 1886 he married Bishop Webb's sister. Burney returned to England in 1886, and died in 1897.

Edward Clayton, a graduate of Christ Church, Oxford, was ordained deacon in 1841, and priest in the following year. He spent a short time in the diocese of Grahamstown, and established the first mission in that diocese, St Luke's, in 1854, but returned shortly afterwards to England. He died in 1895, aged seventy-eight.

Philip Walter Copeman (1813-1898), graduated from Queen's College, Cambridge in 1839. He arrived at the Cape in 1847, and from 1847 to 1856 was colonial chaplain at Uitenhage. He was colonial chaplain at Alexandria from 1856 until his retirement in 1889.

Joseph Morthland Cotterill, brother of Bishop Cotterill, was made deacon in 1861 and priest in 1862. He spent eleven years in southern Africa, from 1861 to 1867 at St Mary's, Port Elizabeth and from 1869 to 1872 as rector of St Bartholomew's. From 1873 to 1904 he was rector of a church in Edinburgh, but resigned because of ill-health at the age of seventy-five.

Samuel William Cox was born in 1840 in Leeds. He was educated at St Augustine's College, Canterbury, made deacon by the Bishop of Dover in 1878, and ordained priest in 1880 by the Bishop of Grahamstown. Cox was missionary at St Michael's, Herschel, from 1878 to 1900, missionary at St Stephen's, Port Elizabeth, from 1901 to 1912, and rector of Peddie, 1912 to 1916. He retired to Port Shepstone, Natal, and died before 1921.

Servaas Nicolas de Kock was Dutch, and originally an L.M.S. missionary. He was ordained deacon in 1856 and priest in 1858. From 1858 to 1864 and from 1868 to 1876 he was stationed at Colesberg. He died in 1884.

William Douglas Dodd was born in Eton in 1841 and trained at St Augustine's College, Canterbury. He was ordained deacon in 1864 and priest in 1870 by the Bishop of Grahamstown. Dodd worked at St Augustine's mission 1865 to 1867 and at St Alban's 1867 to 1874, when he resigned from mission work because of ill-health. He was incumbent of St Paul's, Port Alfred, from 1875 to 1888, and priest-in-charge at Lady Frere from 1888 to 1898, missionary at St Peter's-on-Indwe from 1898 to 1902, and rector of Molteno from 1903.

John Espin (1836-1905), graduate of Merton College, Oxford, was ordained priest in 1868. He left England for health reasons in 1868, and taught at the Diocesan College, Cape Town. In 1870, he became headmaster of Zonnebloem. Espin settled in Grahamstown in 1874, as theological tutor and, from 1876, canon chancellor of the cathedral. His wife was headmistress of D.S.G. from 1874 to 1882. From 1882 to 1902, he was head of St Andrew's College, where he created a university college department

which was a forerunner of Rhodes University. In 1902, Espin was appointed first warden of St Paul's theological college.

William Henry Fowle, graduate of Trinity College, Oxford, was ordained deacon in 1846 and priest in 1848. He was rector of St Mary's, Port Elizabeth, from 1853 to 1858, but returned to England, where he died in 1895.

John Gordon was born in the Cape Colony and educated at the South African College, Cape Town. His father was killed in the war of Mlanjeni. He was made deacon in 1861 and priest in 1864. From 1862 to 1877, he was missionary at All Saints', and assisted Archdeacon Kitton in King William's Town, 1877 to 1892. Gordon died of diabetes in Cape Town, where he was curate of the cathedral, in 1893.

Thomas William Green was made deacon in 1868 and priest in 1873. He was curate of the German congregation at Bell from 1870 to 1874, and missionary at Herschel 1874-1876, All Saints' 1877-1886, and Matatiele, where he retired, 1886-1909. Green died in 1918.

William Greenstock, made deacon in 1854 and ordained priest in 1855, worked at St Luke's mission from 1856 to 1859, and at St Matthew's, from 1859 to 1869. He married Bishop Cotterill's daughter in 1861. He left St Matthew's to open St Stephen's mission, Port Elizabeth. He spent 1875 to 1877 as a travelling missionary in the Transvaal and beyond, and 1879 to 1885 at Springvale in Natal. Greenstock was Canon of Maritzburg, 1882-1886. He died in Siam in 1912.

John Heavyside (1799-1861), was educated at St Bee's, and made deacon for work in India by the Bishop of London in 1830. He was ordained priest in Calcutta in 1831. In 1833, he was appointed acting colonial chaplain of Grahamstown, and the appointment was made permanent in 1838.

Thomas Henschman was ordained deacon in 1848 and priest in 1850. He was rector of Fort Beaufort and colonial chaplain from 1852 to 1877. He was appointed canon of Grahamstown cathedral in 1867. Henschman died in Fort Beaufort in 1917.

Richard Goode Hutt was born in 1831. He arrived in Grahamstown with Cotterill's party in 1857, and was ordained priest in the following year. He worked at St John the Baptist's mission until 1862, when he took over principalship of the Kafir Institute for a year. He was acting-colonial

chaplain of Grahamstown from 1863 to 1866, and then returned to England.

Henry Kitton (1819-1891), was educated at St Bee's, a theological college for non-graduates. He was made deacon in 1846 and priest in 1847 by the Bishop of Chester. He arrived in southern Africa with Bishop Cotterill in 1857, and from 1862, he was rector of Holy Trinity, King William's Town, canon of St George's cathedral, and Archdeacon of British Kaffraria, later known as the archdeaconry of King William's Town.

William Llewellyn graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1855, was ordained deacon in 1856 and priest in 1858. From 1858 to 1892 he was rector of Uitenhage. From 1892, he was Archdeacon of Port Elizabeth, and canon of Grahamstown cathedral. He died in 1907.

Albert Maggs was born in 1840, and was originally a Wesleyan local preacher. He came to Grahamstown in 1860, and worked at various mission stations for several years. He served at St Luke's from 1869 to 1882. Maggs died by his own hand while of unsound mind in 1882.

Daniel Malgas was educated at the Kafir Institute in Grahamstown, made deacon in 1879, and ordained priest in 1885. He worked at St Luke's 1879-1880, St Andrew's 1881-1882, Port Elizabeth 1883-1885, and Fort Beaufort 1887-1933. He became honorary canon of Grahamstown cathedral in 1924. Daniel Malgas died in 1936.

Peter Masiza, educated by the Moravians and at Zonnebloem, taught at St Matthew's mission in 1858 and at St Mark's from 1865. He was made deacon by Merriman in 1873, and in 1877, he became the first African priest of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa. He worked in the diocese of St John's until his death in 1907.

William Meaden was made deacon in 1855 and ordained priest in 1857. He was curate of Southwell 1855-1857, and rector of Winterberg 1859-1877. He returned to England for a year 1865-1866, when he acted as curate of Holywell, Northamptonshire. He became rector of Bathurst in 1877 and died in 1892 at the age of sixty-seven.

John Mee graduated from Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1850, was made deacon the same year, and was made priest in 1852. He was incumbent of Riddings with Ironville from 1851, and after his return from

Grahamstown, he became incumbent of St Jude's, Southwark, and in 1871 Mee became rector of Westbourne, Sussex, where he died in 1883 at the age of fifty-nine.

Stephen Mnyakama was educated at St Augustine's College, Canterbury, and ordained deacon by Merriman in 1874. He worked for ten years at Trinity mission, Fort Beaufort. In 1885, he died by his own hand while insane.

Robert John Mullins (1838-1913), born in Box, Wiltshire, came to the diocese of Grahamstown in 1854 with Bishop Armstrong, and worked at various missions, notably St John the Baptist's, and St Peter's, until 1860, when he spent a year at St Augustine's College, Canterbury. He returned to St John the Baptist's until 1864, when he became principal of the Kafir Institute in Grahamstown. He was ordained deacon in 1863 and priest in 1864, and became a canon in 1883. He was for many years Diocesan Secretary for Grahamstown.

Alfred James Newton started work in the diocese of Grahamstown in 1860. He was ordained deacon in 1867 and priest in 1869. From 1867 to 1878 he was missionary at St Peter's, Gwatyu, and from 1879 to 1896 at St Peter's-on-Indwe. He died in 1896.

Matthew Norton was ordained deacon in 1860 and priest in 1862. He was rector of Adelaide from 1862 to 1866, of Cradock from 1867 to 1873, and minister of Christ Church, Grahamstown, from 1877 until his death in 1912.

Jonas Thomas Ntsiko, an Mfengu, was born in 1850, and educated at St Augustine's College, Canterbury. He was made deacon in 1873, and worked at outstations of St Matthew's. His whereabouts after 1877 are unknown.

Eleazar Nyovani was ordained deacon in 1877 and worked at St Matthew's, Keiskammahoek from 1877 to 1882. He was dismissed in 1883.

Charles Frederick Overton, graduate of Worcester College, Oxford in 1861, was ordained deacon in 1866 and priest in 1868. He was military chaplain in East London from 1868 to 1874, and rector of Holy Trinity, Port Elizabeth from 1875 to 1877. He went to England until 1884, but returned to Grahamstown because of ill-health. He assisted at

St Bartholomew's for a year, took over from Williams as rector of St George's, and was subsequently priest-vicar of the cathedral until his death in 1887.

Cyrus Hugh Larken Packman (1837-1918), graduate of Clare College, Cambridge, was made deacon in 1865, and ordained priest in 1866, by the Bishop of Chester. He was rector of St Bartholomew's, Grahamstown from 1875 until his death.

Charles Frederick Patten was made deacon in 1864 and ordained priest in 1867, and was stationed at St John's, Bolotwa, from 1865 to 1887. He retired to Queenstown and died in about 1920.

William Philip was educated at the Kafir Institute in Grahamstown, and made deacon by N.J. Merriman in 1879, and ordained priest in 1885. He worked at the Kafir Institute, Grahamstown from 1879 to 1882, at Newlands from 1882 to 1903, and Lady Frere from 1903 to 1907, and he retired to Matatiele in 1911.

George Gould Ross was made deacon in 1857 and ordained priest in 1858 by the Bishop of Oxford. He was rector of Oving, Buckinghamshire 1858-1863, railway chaplain at Leatherhead 1863-1868, and chaplain at Dieppe 1869-1875, before becoming principal of St Andrew's. He returned to England in 1884, and died in 1903.

William Rossiter was ordained deacon in 1863 and priest in 1867 by the Bishop of Grahamstown. He was stationed at Aliwal North from 1865 to 1903, and had a general licence to officiate in the diocese of Grahams-town from 1904.

Philip Barrington Simeon, made deacon in 1870, and ordained priest in 1871, came to Grahamstown in 1885 to found a religious community. This never materialised, but Simeon began the church railway mission, itinerating along the line to reach isolated communities. In 1892 he became rector of Fort Beaufort, he returned to England in 1900, and died in 1926.

Wharton Buchanan Smith, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, was ordained deacon in 1871 and priest in 1872, by the Bishop of Winchester. He came to Grahamstown in 1883 and was priest-in-charge at the procathedral. From 1887-1899 he was canon of the cathedral, and from

1900-1901; chaplain to the Archbishop of Cape Town. Between 1901 and 1907 he had a preaching licence in the diocese of London, and from 1907, a general licence to officiate in the diocese of Cape Town.

Frederick York St Leger (1833-1901), was born in Limerick, but went to England in about 1840 and was educated at St Paul's School, London. He won a scholarship to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and was a gold medallist in the classics tripos. He came to south Africa in 1856 and was ordained by Gray, before he took up a post as second master at St Andrew's. In 1857 St Leger went to Port Elizabeth to be head of the Diocesan Grammar School there. From 1859 to 1862, he was head of St Andrew's, and from 1863 to 1867, rector of St Michael's, Queenstown. From 1871, St Leger worked as a journalist. He launched the Cape Times in 1876.

William Anderson Steabler (1823-1894), was made deacon by Robert Gray in 1850, at the first Anglican ordination in Natal. He was military chaplain in Bloemfontein from 1850 to 1854. He was ordained priest in 1855, and from then until his death he was rector of Graaff-Reinet, and was appointed canon of Grahamstown cathedral in 1867. He was married to the daughter of John Heavyside.

Charles Taberer was born in 1843 at Nuneaton. Ordained deacon in 1867 and priest in 1869, he was stationed at Fort Beaufort 1867-1869, and at St Matthew's from 1870 until his death in 1916.

George Thompson came from England with the Merrimans, and was ordained deacon in 1849. He was curate of St George's, with charge of the rural districts, and was appointed canon in 1873. He died at the age of seventy-three in 1874.

William Homan Turpin, born at Tullamore, Ireland, offered himself to the S.P.G. at the age of twenty-one, and was ordained deacon in 1859 and priest in 1864 by Bishop Cotterill. He worked at St Mark's in 1859-1860, and then at St Philip's mission, Grahamstown, until his death in 1920. In 1903, he was appointed canon of the cathedral, and Archdeacon of Cradock in 1911.

Alexander Jolly Urquhart, made deacon in 1856, was ordained priest in 1857. He was at Cradock between 1856 and 1861, and in Grahamstown

1862-1864, after which he left south Africa to work in the Scottish Episcopal Church.

William Charles Wallis was made deacon in 1856 and ordained priest in 1857. He worked in Alice for a year, at Burghersdorp 1858-1863, and at Cradock from 1877 until his death in 1898.

Henry Tempest Waters was born in Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1819, and came to the Cape on the "Gwalior" with N.J. Merriman. He was ordained deacon by Robert Gray in 1850 and priest by John Armstrong in 1855. Waters was stationed at Southwell from 1850 to 1855, and at St Mark's from 1855 to 1883. He was Archdeacon of St Mark's in the diocese of St John's from 1874 and died in 1883.

Henry Master White (1820-1892), like Merriman a Wykehamist, graduated from New College, Oxford, with a first in classics and second in mathematics, and was ordained deacon in 1844 and priest in 1846. In 1848, he offered his services without stipend to Robert Gray, and arrived with Merriman on the "Gwalior". He was principal of the Diocesan College, with the added task of preparing candidates for ordination, until he returned to England in 1857. He was appointed Archdeacon of Grahamstown in 1871. He helped to establish the Diocesan School for Girls, acted as chairman of the governing body of St Andrew's, and was a member of the convocation of the University of the Cape of Good Hope from 1874 until his death, a member of the University Council in 1874 and 1879. His daughter, Henrietta Mary, obtained a bachelor's degree from the Cape university in 1890.

Augustus Theodore Wirgman (1846-1917), was educated at Magdalene College, Cambridge. He was ordained deacon in 1870 and priest in 1871. He came to the diocese of Grahamstown as a master at St Andrew's in 1874, but at the end of the year became rector of St Mary's, Port Elizabeth, where he remained until his death. He became a canon in 1899, and was appointed Archdeacon of Port Elizabeth. Wirgman was the author of numerous books on aspects of the history of the Anglican church in south Africa. He was an expert in canon law, and the possessor of pronounced imperialist views.

Henry Reade Woodrooffe, graduate of Christ Church, Oxford, who came to south Africa with Bishop Cotterill in 1857. He was made deacon in 1857

and priest in the following year. He did valuable work in translating the Book of Common Prayer into Xhosa while working on various mission stations in the diocese, 1858-1865. He then spent three years in England, but returned to the diocese of Grahamstown to become rector of Somerset East from 1868 to 1880. From 1880 to 1886, he was rural dean of Graaff-Reinet. Woodrooffe also acted as government Inspector of Schools. He died in 1913.

Clergy of the Church of the Province of South Africa

Hopkins Badnall (1821-1892), educated at home, became a fellow of University College, Durham. He was ordained deacon in 1845 and priest 1846. His first curacy was at Stockton-on-Tees, where Robert Gray was vicar. Badnall travelled to Cape Town with Gray in 1848. He was vice-principal of the Diocesan College until 1853, when he went back to England. He returned to the Cape in 1862 to become Archdeacon of George. He was also Archdeacon of Cape Town, and rector of St Paul's, Rondebosch, from 1869 to 1885. In 1886 he returned to England and became rector of Fishlake, Doncaster. He was an able canon lawyer, and conducted the case against Colenso. He was vicar-general of the diocese of Cape Town after the death of Robert Gray and during West Jones's absences overseas.

Charles William Barnett-Clark (1830-1916), was educated at Shrewsbury and Worcester College, Oxford. He was made deacon in 1854, and ordained in 1855. He arrived at the Cape in 1871 to be Dean of Cape Town. He was a freemason, chaplain to the forces, and an enthusiastic social worker. A moderate Anglo-Catholic, he was involved in no serious controversy.

Davis George Croghan, graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Cork in 1861, and priest in 1862 by the Bishop of Chester. He went to the diocese of the Orange Free State in 1867 at the request of Bishop Twells. From 1867 to 1872, he was priest-vicar of the cathedral, and from 1872 to 1886, Archdeacon of Bloemfontein and Kimberley, and Provost of the cathedral. He also lectured

at St Cyprian's theological college, Bloemfontein, from 1876. From 1886 to 1889, Croghan was Dean of Grahamstown, and he died in 1890.

James Green (1821-1906), was educated privately and at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where he was sixteenth wrangler in the mathematics tripos in 1844. He was ordained in 1845. In 1847, Gray asked him to work in Natal. He was installed as first dean of St Peter's cathedral, but friction soon developed between Green and Bishop Colenso. In 1876, Green was installed as dean of Macrorie's cathedral, St Saviour's. Green ceased pastoral duties in 1896, and was awarded an honorary D.D. by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Bransby Lewis Key (1838-1901), was the son of a surgeon, who trained as an engineer before entering St Augustine's College, Canterbury, in 1862. He was ordained in 1864, and worked at All Saints'. In 1865, Key founded St Augustine's which was destroyed in 1880. To replace it, Key founded St Cuthbert's, Tsolo, in 1882. He was consecrated in 1883 as Coadjutor Bishop of St John's, and succeeded Callaway as bishop in 1886. He advocated the development of a black ministry. Key was a good administrator and a fluent Xhosa linguist. He promoted the idea of corporate missionary action, and organised the first provincial missionary conference at Clydesdale in 1892. Key attended the 1888 Lambeth Conference. His death in 1901 was the result of a carriage accident. Key's wife, Georgina Waters, daughter of Henry Tempest Waters, had been born on board the "Gwalior".

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NOTE ON THE SOURCES

The historian writing about the Church of the Province of Southern Africa owes much to the pioneering research and writing done by Canon Peter Hinchliff, but it is only in recent years that most of the primary material used for this thesis has become readily available.

The value of the records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, some dating back to the eighteenth century, but mainly nineteenth century documents, was only realised after a flood in London in 1928. Funds were then provided for a building to house the collection and for staff to process the archives. More recently, the microfilming process has made the records more accessible.

A court case in which the Church of the Province was involved in the 1930s, led to a search for key documents, which brought the provincial archives, housed in an unlit room, ventilated by an open grille, under St George's cathedral, Cape Town, to light. These had never been classified or indexed, and were deposited at the University of the Witwatersrand Library, where they are now processed and available. In 1974, a further collection of church papers, the records of the metropolitans, which had previously been stored at Bishops court, was moved to the University of the Witwatersrand.

Until June 1982, when they were deposited in the Cory Library for Historical Research, the Grahamstown diocesan archives, were housed in the diocesan office in the city. During the 1950s, these had been listed by the diocesan secretary at the time, H.M. Matthew, who also provided an index. He divided the collection into two sections: the Library Volumes, which included published books, pamphlets, press cuttings, and manuscript letterbooks and diaries; and the A-Series, a collection of unbound papers. Synod minute books, St George's cathedral vestry minute books, and mission conference mission books, Matthew did not catalogue at all. Since Matthew's resignation twenty years ago, the accessions list and card index has only been sporadically maintained. All three collections, the Library Volumes, A-Series, and the official minute books of all diocesan bodies, are now being processed in the Cory Library. This means that they will be listed under numbers other than those I have used in the footnotes, but the individual items will be traceable, as Matthew's numbers will not be obliterated. In addition to citing the Matthew number, I have provided a brief description of the document, so that the items can be traced through the Cory manuscript index.

Although there is no single collection of the correspondence of Nathaniel James Merriman, a substantial number of letters from him exists in the U.S.P.G. Archives, the University of the Witwatersrand Library, and the Grahamstown Diocesan Archives. While these focus largely on his official life, the J.X. Merriman papers in the South African Library are an extremely valuable source for Merriman family life.

I have been unable to trace the papers of Henry Cotterill and Allan Becher Webb. If found, the former especially would illuminate the early constitutional development of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa.

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