

'So great a cloud of witnesses': Shaping Sacred Space in the Victorian Anglo-World

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The foundation stone of the new cathedral at Truro was laid on 20 May 1880 by the Prince of Wales: the future Edward VII. The scene was relayed in the *Illustrated London News*, which portrayed the prince in top hat and masonic regalia, flanked by the architect, John Loughborough Pearson, and the first Bishop of Truro, Edward White Benson, among others (*Fig. 1*). More than twenty years later, that same image was transposed into stained glass, with a few tactful alterations, and installed as part of a window in the northern nave aisle just in time for the Benediction service for the nave and central tower on 15 July 1903 (*Fig. 2*). As [Jim Cheshire](#) points out in his article for this issue of *19*, such translations underline the porousness of stained glass to other, more obviously up-to-the-minute media. But this one also pointed to extra layers of significance. The window marked the end of a carefully conceived theological-historical sequence running from Christ in Glory, at the centre of the east window, via the Incarnation and Crucifixion to the early Church, and from there via the Latin and Greek Fathers to British Christianity — with a Cornish flavour — and culminating with the foundation of the new cathedral in the present day. Conceived chiefly by Benson and executed by the prominent firm Clayton & Bell, largely between 1887 and 1913, this lavish scheme was, as its historian Michael Swift rightly judges, 'unique in Church of England cathedrals in its ambitious scope, unity and comprehensiveness', comprising 104 lights, including three rose windows.¹ Yet it was also characteristic of the muscular ambition of a Church that was expanding rapidly overseas and building or rebuilding unprecedented numbers of new churches at home, too: about one every four days between 1835 and 1875, totalling around 3765 during that period alone.²

Underpinning Anglican cultural imperialism was its confident claim to own the past as well as the present. James Kirby has brilliantly demonstrated the 'pre-eminence' of Anglicans in English historical scholarship

¹ Michael G. Swift, 'The Windows of Truro Cathedral: A Victorian Vision Fulfilled' <<https://www.cornishstainedglass.org.uk/mgstc/chapter1.xhtml>> [accessed 18 June 2020].

² K. D. M. Snell, *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 405.

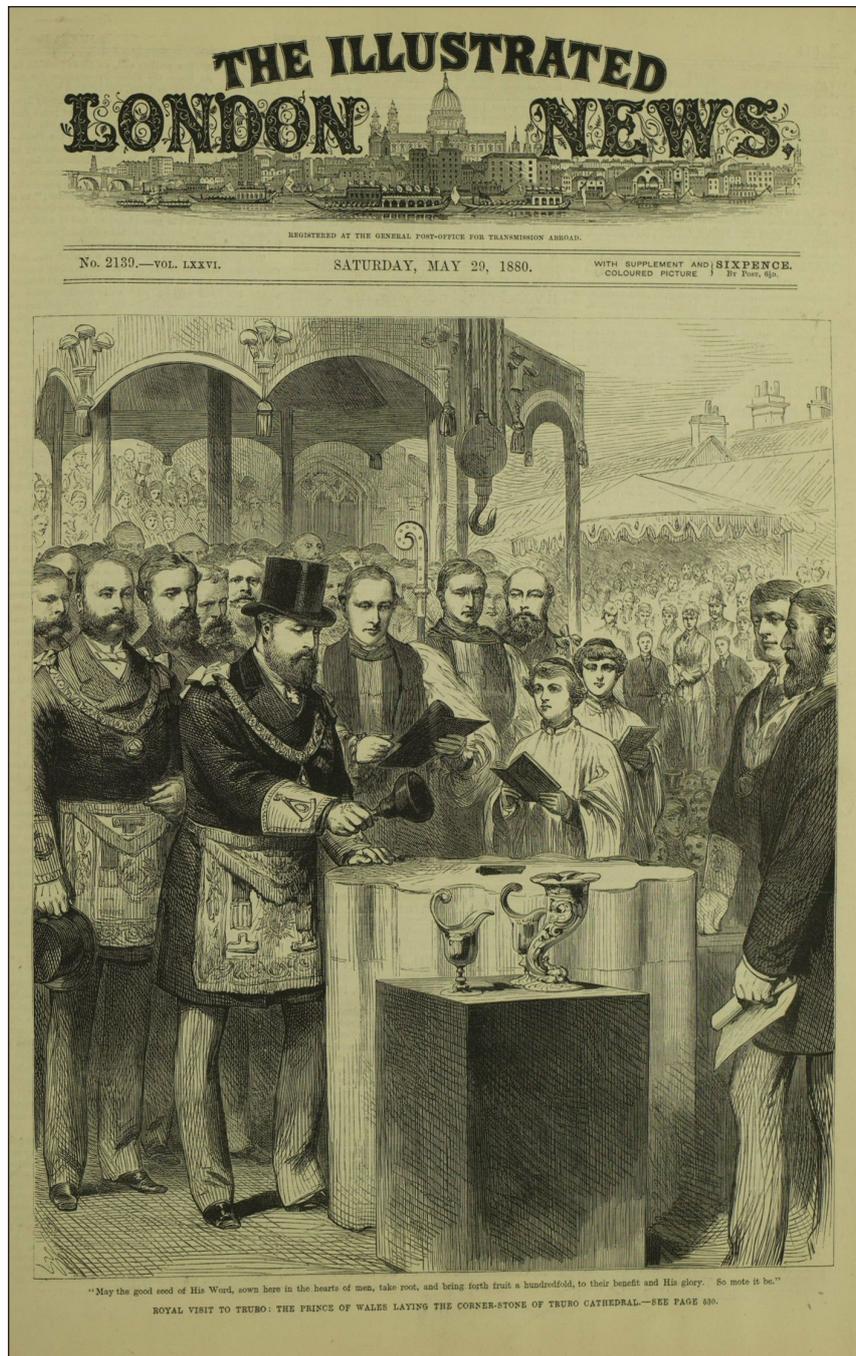


Fig. 1: 'Royal Visit to Truro: The Prince of Wales Laying the Corner-Stone of Truro Cathedral', Illustrated London News, 29 May 1880, front cover. Photograph: © The author.



Fig. 2: Clayton & Bell, Detail of nave north aisle window, Truro Cathedral, 1903. Almost every figure can be identified: the Prince and Princess of Wales, John Loughborough Pearson, Princes George and Albert Victor, Bishop Temple of Exeter, Bishop Benson, George Howard Wilkinson (the second Bishop of Truro), Bishop Cornish of Madagascar, the Earl of Mount Edgumbe, and Sir Wyatt Truscott (Lord Mayor of London and a native of Truro). In front are two young servers, Hugh Williams and Hugh, youngest son of Bishop Benson. Kneeling in the foreground is the window's donor, Arthur James Mason, one-time Canon Missioner at Truro and Benson's chaplain. For more information, see *Cornish Stained Glass* <<https://www.cornishstainedglass.org.uk/mgstc/chapter1.xhtml>> [accessed 18 June 2020]. Photograph: © Michael G. Swift.

in the late nineteenth century, showing how J. R. Stubbs, E. A. Freeman, Mandell Creighton, and others reasserted the centrality of the Church of England to narratives of nationhood.³ They told a story of continuity: the ‘Church of the English’ as they saw it was founded not in the sixteenth century but in the sixth, with the mission of St Augustine. It should come as no surprise, then, that new dioceses like Truro (1876), Newcastle (1882), and Wakefield (1888) stressed their purported ‘beginnings’ in the pre-Reformation Church, or that existing dioceses asserted their ownership of the great Anglo-Saxon founder saints with festivals, statuary, and stained glass: Cuthbert at Durham, Etheldreda at Ely, and so on.⁴ Gothic architecture also connected newly built churches across the empire with their roots in the mother country.⁵ Stained glass in particular became a favoured site for asserting the antiquity — and thus the validity — of one’s beliefs, often through assemblages of figures from across the Christian epoch. Countless parish churches jumped on the bandwagon, installing anything from single windows to entire lavish schemata, frequently with an accompanying guidebook to hammer home the message. The social capital, cultural dominance, and spending power of the Church of England, both at home and abroad, gave it a particular importance in establishing trends in the use of stained glass, as we shall see. Nevertheless, Anglicans were not alone in appreciating the possibilities of the medium. Despite Presbyterian objections, influential Church of Scotland ministers, like James Cameron Lees at St Giles’s Cathedral, Edinburgh, embraced stained glass wholeheartedly, using it to set out narratives of religious establishment and nationhood.⁶ Catholics and Nonconformists, too, created stained glass pantheons, albeit often to convey internationalist, ultramontane, or anti-establishment messages.⁷ Libraries, colleges, universities, schools, and other institutions filled

³ James Kirby, *Historians and the Church of England: Religion and Historical Scholarship, 1870–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁴ Elizabeth Macfarlane, ‘Cultures of Anglican Hagiography c. 1840–c. 1940 with Especial Reference to the Diocese of Truro’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2012).

⁵ See, for example, David Lawrence and Ann Wilson, *The Cathedral of St Fin Barre at Cork: William Burges in Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006); G. A. Bremner, *Imperial Gothic: Religious Architecture and High Anglican Culture in the British Empire, 1840–1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

⁶ Stewart J. Brown, ‘Scotland and the Oxford Movement’, in *The Oxford Movement: Europe and the Wider World 1830–1930*, ed. by Stewart J. Brown and Peter B. Nockles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 56–77 (pp. 74–77).

⁷ See, for example, Our Lady and the English Martyrs, Cambridge, discussed in Lucy Underwood, ‘English Catholic Martyrs’, in *Making and Remaking Saints in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. by Gareth Atkins (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 144–60 (p. 152); and Mansfield College, Oxford, discussed in Clyde Binfield, ‘“We Claim our Part in the Great Inheritance”: The Message of Four Congregational Buildings’, in *Protestant Evangelicalism: Britain, Ireland, Germany and America, c. 1750–c. 1950*, ed. by Keith Robbins (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 201–24 (pp. 205–06).

their windows with collections of forerunners and founders: patron saints in all but name. In a society obsessed with individual character, metaphors of sanctity could be very elastic indeed. ‘Great Men, taken up in any way, are profitable company’, Thomas Carlyle proclaimed in his immensely influential lectures *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History*. ‘We cannot look, however imperfectly, upon a great man, without gaining something by him. He is the living light-fountain, which it is good and pleasant to be near.’⁸

This article, then, explores one of the predominant themes in nineteenth-century stained glass: the urge to assemble collections of individual figures into genealogies of spiritual or institutional descent. This theme has often been noted in passing but never interrogated in any detail. In doing so, this article seeks to think not just about how the creators of such windows intended them to be read, but about the associations they conjured up. As Marshall McLuhan famously insisted, the medium is the message. ‘The effects of technology do not occur at the level of opinions or concepts,’ he suggested, ‘but alter sense ratios or patterns of perception steadily and without any resistance.’⁹ Stained glass was not just a vehicle for the transmission of ideologies; it also carried subtler meanings that added to its appeal as an iconographic medium. Thinking in these terms helps to rebalance our sense of the sacred and our appreciation of the place of space in creating it. It is all too easy to think of Victorian religion as a war of words, with Protestant combatants locked in battles over beliefs, doctrines, ideas. Instead of beginning and ending with texts, as William Whyte has recently shown, it is crucial to consider nineteenth-century faith in embodied, spatial, material terms, to be aware of buildings and iconography and how they shaped people’s emotions and beliefs.¹⁰ This matters not least because the Victorians themselves thought in those terms. But as will become clear later on, it also makes sense because it helps us to explore the changing shape of the sacred. In part the explosion of ‘genealogical’ windows bespeaks the diversification of the sacred in an age of religious consumerism, as churches without official mechanisms for creating saints used stained glass to assert competing lines of denominational descent. Yet genealogical schemes also highlight the subjectivity of the sacred, both as articulated by earnest architects and their clerical clients in explanatory pamphlets and sermons, and as received — and adapted — by believers. Finally, as we shall see, stained glass also allowed the sacred — or something like it — to seep into other

⁸ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History* (London: Fraser, 1841), p. 2.

⁹ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 18.

¹⁰ William Whyte, *Unlocking the Church: The Lost Secrets of Victorian Sacred Space* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

settings. This article can do little more than gesture at these themes. And in doing so it necessarily selects from among the more prominent examples of the type. But in examining how this genre worked, it seeks not to be complete in its coverage, but to provide a set of pointers towards fertile veins of further research.

‘Single figures in bright clothing’

The mid-century boom in stained glass was also a boom in the representation of saints. From the outset, however, this was deeply contested ground. In part the debate was about theology, for the ‘revival’ of Gothic stained glass was also a return to pre-Reformation iconography. In an Established Church that remained decidedly Protestant in many respects, not everyone took readily to such subject matter, although there were post-Reformation precedents: the prophets and apostles at Lincoln College, Oxford (1629–31), for example; and at New College the saints and apostles installed and repaired by William Peckitt in the 1760s and 1770s, or the (perhaps safer?) allegorical figures of virtues and graces designed by Sir Joshua Reynolds (1778–85).¹¹ For ardent High Church medieval revivalists in the 1840s and 1850s, however, the work of Reynolds and others since was a false start: the inappropriate seeping in of ‘secular’ aesthetics and techniques fit only for oil and canvas. Theology and questions of style were thus closely intertwined, making glass painting a perilous subject on which to venture an opinion. ‘There is [...] no subject connected with decorative art, the principles of which are so thoroughly unsettled [...] nor any which it is so dangerous to speak on, unless we wish to bring a hornet’s nest about us’, lamented George Gilbert Scott in his *Remarks on Secular and Domestic Architecture, Present and Future* (1857).¹² The nature of the medium, Scott conceded, certainly made some treatments more suitable — strong outlines rather than soft shading, for instance — but it was absurd to follow past examples slavishly. He urged against filling windows with ‘stupid caricatures of mediæval drawing’, on the one hand, or with ‘sickly copies, by powerless hands, from the paintings of Raphael, Rubens, or West’ on the other (p. 92). By the late 1850s, however, advocates of full-blooded medievalism were undoubtedly in the ascendant. Notwithstanding the controversial installation of opaque pictorial enamelled ‘Munich’ glass at Peterhouse, Cambridge (1855–58), and Glasgow Cathedral (1859–64), the British firms that were coming to

¹¹ *The Online Stained Glass Photographic Archive* <<http://www.therosewindow.com/pilot/Oxford-Lincoln/table.htm>> [accessed 18 June 2020]; Sarah Brown, ‘Important Window at New College Oxford Conserved’, *Vidimus*, 31 (2009) <<https://vidimus.org/issues/issue-31/features/>> [accessed 18 June 2020].

¹² George Gilbert Scott, *Remarks on Secular and Domestic Architecture, Present and Future*, 2nd edn (London: Murray, 1858), p. 89.

dominate the ecclesiastical market tended naturally to work towards the prescriptions of the *Ecclesiologist*, whose clerical readers were among their most lucrative customers.¹³

Among the most extensive and interesting justifications of Gothic stained glass was a series of articles by ‘G. R. F.’ (‘Some Remarks on Glass Painting’), published in the *Ecclesiologist* between 1856 and 1858. Individual figures, he argued, formed natural subject matter for the tall, narrow lights of which Gothic windows were composed.¹⁴ Far from being ‘convenient surfaces for the display of pictures’, the only credible treatment for these spaces was, the anonymous author contended, ‘bright patterns’, i.e. abstract mosaics, or ‘single figures in bright clothing’ (‘Some Remarks, II’, p. 80). The latter echoed medieval practice, wherein the mullions, so far from being in the way, ‘formed natural frames and niches, within which their figures were enshrined’ (II, p. 82). The medium and its constraints, he asserted, militated against naturalistic detail and background. The necessity for leadlines and iron crossbars dictated simple designs with severe lines: stiff, mannered backgrounds; clothing carefully arranged to make the best use of the space; stylized foliage; diapering or some other regular pattern for the background (‘Some Remarks, III’, p. 264). Far from lamenting those limitations, ‘G. R. F.’ celebrated them. As Kirstie Blair has shown, Victorian High Churchmen loved to rhapsodize about how quotidian liturgical rhythms and the verbal repetition of set formulas channelled otherwise unruly spiritual emotions, reflecting this sense of ‘form as freedom’ in their devotional poetry and hymnody.¹⁵ There is something of this in how many medievalizers discussed stained glass. In an interpretative move that reflected much High Church commentary on architecture, as well as pre-echoing the ‘ethical fallacy’ of later modernism, ‘G. R. F.’ held that ‘honesty’ to the constraints of the medium necessarily produced representations that were also theologically correct. Instead of boneheadedly pursuing warts-and-all pictorial realism, he averred, it was more ‘natural’ for stained glass artists to portray their subjects in an ideal state, ‘as the eye of faith contemplates them’ (‘Some Remarks, III’, p. 265, emphasis in original). Like the sculptures on which they were modelled, apostles or saints in stained glass ought to appear in essence, shorn of their earthly imperfections; to have their ugliness, their coarse, lower-class physiognomies and — ‘G. R. F.’ casually added — their Jewishness, smoothed into regularity,

¹³ Martin Harrison, *Victorian Stained Glass* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1980), pp. 20–24.

¹⁴ ‘G. R. F.’, ‘Some Remarks on Glass Painting, No. I’, *Ecclesiologist*, n.s., 14 (1856), 364–67; ‘No. II’, n.s., 15 (1857), 73–83; ‘No. III’, n.s., 15 (1857), 263–71; ‘No. IV’, n.s., 16 (1858), 1–8, 83–86; ‘No. V’, n.s., 16 (1858), 352–60.

¹⁵ Kirstie Blair, *Form and Faith in Victorian Poetry and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 21–51.

for they were not dead but alive and glorified, worshipping and praying for their spiritual brethren on earth (III, p. 267).

Not everyone would have agreed with every facet of the argument, or the theology. But there was a growing acceptance by mid-century that saints were appropriate subject matter even and especially for new stained glass. The shift was not just among ritualists: pre-Tractarian High Churchmen and evangelicals were not averse to harnessing pre-Reformation precedents in the cause of liturgical and architectural reform. The barrister and stained glass historian Charles Winston was perfectly prepared to cross swords with the *Ecclesiologist*, but even he could think of no objection to saints, so long as outlandish stories be ‘rigidly excluded’, notwithstanding ‘the authority of ancient examples’. Winston recommended ‘prophets and apostles, or persons who have really deserved well of mankind’, reckoning that this would allow for the inclusion of ‘the Protestant martyrs, and Fathers of the Anglican Church’ alongside those ‘who have chanced to gain the distinction of canonization’.¹⁶ The restoration of the Temple Church in the early 1840s demonstrates this impulse in action: Thomas Willement’s new windows included some biblical figures, but they also encompassed monarchs associated with the church and Grand Priors of the English Templars.¹⁷ Saintliness was, then, in the eye of the beholder, or perhaps more pertinently, the donor or the designer; and despite anxieties about aspects of Roman Catholic theology or practice, the visual tropes of sainthood were increasingly transposed into other contexts. This was not the preserve of one party, but from the 1850s Anglo-Catholics were to become increasingly strident in their devotion to the Church Fathers and medieval saints, which subjects crowded the catalogues of stained glass designers. And they in particular came to hanker after ways of augmenting the meagre fare provided by the Book of Common Prayer Calendar.¹⁸ This had remained fixed since 1662 and contained no post-Reformation names, save the commemorations around the death of Charles I and the restoration of Charles II. Stained glass became a way for clerical antiquarians to enact de-facto canonization in a Church that had no official channels for doing so.

To appreciate how this worked we need to be aware of conventions about the placing of stained glass in nineteenth-century churches. Whereas the pulpit and reading desk had since the Reformation generally been the focal point, the Victorian ‘rediscovery’ of Catholic sacramental theology

¹⁶ Charles Winston, *An Inquiry into the Difference of Style*, 2 vols (Oxford: Parker, 1847), I, 229.

¹⁷ William Whyte, ‘Restoration and Recrimination: The Temple Church in the Nineteenth Century’, in *The Temple Church in London: History, Architecture, Art*, ed. by Robin Griffith-Jones and David Park (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), pp. 195–210 (pp. 207–08).

¹⁸ Satirized in ‘The Prig’ [Thomas de Longueville], *How to Make a Saint; or, The Process of Canonization in the Church of England* (London: Holt, 1887).

prompted the radical reorientation of church interiors around the altar.¹⁹ Newly inserted stained glass amplified the message. The east windows were usually reserved for Christ, either on the cross or enthroned in glory, and surrounded by apostles, the Virgin Mary, biblical figures, and angels: the backdrop for the ‘re-presentation’ of that divine sacrifice on the altar. Nave windows provided both a challenge and an opportunity to be creative. Save perhaps for the font, ideally placed close to the doors of the church to symbolize the importance of baptism as the rite of initiation, there was little to dictate the content of those windows. Plenty were installed piecemeal. But where money and ambition were plentiful, and especially in new churches, more careful plans could be drawn up, to be fulfilled piece by piece as donations came in. Rows of similar windows lent themselves to didactic narrative: biblical stories could be arranged in unfolding chronological order, perhaps with Old Testament types in the upper halves of windows and their New Testament antitypes or fulfilments in the lower, or facing one another on opposite sides of the nave.²⁰ Closely linked to this but often extending beyond the Bible in coverage were the successions of individual spiritual exemplars for which many designers opted. By placing around and above the Church Militant on earth images of the Church Triumphant in the hereafter, the dead and the living were brought together in theological and ritual space as they looked eastward towards the chancel and altar. ‘Seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,’ as the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews put it, ‘let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith’ (Hebrews 12. 1).

Such schemes mixed figures from the Bible with those from later Christian history, often with a national and sometimes a specifically local flavour. Nevertheless, there was no set formula. There was plenty of scope for theological point-scoring, idiosyncrasy, and personal taste. One impulse came from the theological ‘left’: liberal Protestants versed in the German theologian August Neander’s ‘religion of history’ loved to confront their more narrow-minded contemporaries with unlikely figures from across the Christian past.²¹ With higher and more conservative

¹⁹ Nigel Yates, *Buildings, Faith, and Worship: The Liturgical Arrangement of Anglican Churches 1600–1900*, rev. edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 150–73.

²⁰ For uses of typology in visual arts — although with only sporadic references to stained glass — see Paul J. Korshin, *Typologies in England, 1650–1820* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 20–21; George P. Landow, *Victorian Types, Victorian Shadows: Biblical Typology in Victorian Literature, Art and Thought* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1980), pp. 119–42.

²¹ Joshua Bennett, ‘August Neander and the Religion of History in the Nineteenth-Century “Priesthood of Letters”’, *Historical Journal*, 63 (2020), 633–59 (pp. 641–43, 652–58).

churchmen, tradition and apostolicity weighed heavily. The scheme installed at St Giles's Parish Church, Cambridge from 1888 onwards, for instance, was masterminded by the theologically high-flying vicar, Francis Slater, and designed by Heaton, Butler & Bayne. Installed piece by piece as parishioners made donations, the eighteen windows cover the eighteen centuries of Christianity so far, beginning with a series of early luminaries, from St Clement of Rome to St Gregory the Great ('the Apostle of the English') and focusing thereafter on the English Church which he helped to found. Etheldreda and Bede were fairly standard choices, especially since the former was a 'local' saint, but they rub shoulders with more unusual figures: Alfred the Great, Henry VI, Charles I, and Samuel Seabury, the first American Episcopalian bishop. If Slater was, like many churchmen, clearly a Tory and an ardent royalist, it is equally evident that he could not find much to celebrate in the Reformation Church of England: hence the otherwise inexplicable inclusion of Teresa of Ávila for the sixteenth century in an otherwise Anglocentric plan.²² Such schemes were undoubtedly conceived with particular aims in mind. Even so, they remained open to interpretation in ways that written hagiography was not, allowing for differing emphases between donors and incumbents, perhaps, or for the unsayable to be left unsaid while being perfectly understood!

More extravagant was the scheme by Clayton & Bell for St John's, Friern Barnet, installed between 1892 and the building's completion in 1911.²³ Masterminded by the rector, Prebendary Frederick Hall, it is a bold Anglo-Catholic statement of fashionable narratives of the long continuity of the English Church, its centrality to national life, and its rightful place in the wider Church Catholic. In the apse and ambulatory behind the high altar are British and English saints running from Alban — the first recorded British martyr — via 'Celtic' figures such as Ninian, Patrick, Hilda, and Aidan to Wilfrid, Frideswide, Bede, and Caedmon, the earliest known English poet.²⁴ In the nave, among others, are the first Archbishop of Canterbury, Augustine; the first Bishop of London, Mellitus; the Anglo-Saxon missionary to Europe, Boniface; and a line of medieval figures including Edward the Confessor, Richard of Chichester, and Hugh of Lincoln. Aptly, given that Hall founded Friern Barnet Grammar School,

²² Sylvia Pick and Arthur Hibble, *The Nave Windows of St Giles Cambridge* (Cambridge: St Giles, 2014).

²³ See 'Church Stained Glass Windows' <<http://www.stainedglassrecords.org/Ch.asp?ChId=26855>> [accessed 18 June 2020].

²⁴ The British figures almost certainly derive from Joseph Barber Lightfoot, *Leaders in the Northern Church: Sermons Preached in the Diocese of Durham* (London: Macmillan, 1892), which sought to reassert the importance of 'Celtic' Christianity to a story that was by that time dominated by Anglo-Saxonist Teutonism (Kirby, pp. 85–92).



Fig. 3: Clayton & Bell, Nave north aisle windows, St John the Divine, Friern Barnet, 1908–11. From left (west) to right (east): ‘S: Richard’ of Chichester and William of Wykeham; John Colet and Richard Hooker; Lancelot Andrewes and William Laud; Thomas Ken and Joseph Butler; John Keble and Edward King. Among the most common arrangements for such schemes, the paired figures recall patron saints posed on tall, thin altarpieces. The predellae or platforms on which they stand are also reminiscent of altars and are characteristic of the genre: in this scheme they display coats of arms. Note also the mottoes and dedicatory inscriptions along the bottoms of the windows: evidence that this was a scheme completed through many different donations. Photograph: © Andrew Wood <<https://londonchurchbuildings.com/>> [accessed 18 June 2020].

educationalists are represented in the shape of William of Wykeham, founder of Winchester College, and John Colet, founder of St Paul’s School. From the Reformation onwards the story becomes still more decidedly partisan: from the seventeenth century, Richard Hooker, Lancelot Andrewes, William Laud, and the (eventual) non-juror, Thomas Ken; from the eighteenth, the anti-deist Richard Butler; from the nineteenth, the Tractarian and poet John Keble and the saintly Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln, hailed as a ‘martyr’ by Anglo-Catholics after his trial between 1888 and 1890 for ‘ritualistic practices’ contrary to the Book of Common Prayer (*Fig. 3*).²⁵ Above the sanctuary, a depiction of the Adoration of the Lamb unites the present with the past and places the national tale told below against a cosmic backdrop. The communion of saints it portrays was very up to date, reflecting Britain’s imperial reach and missionary activities across the globe. Alongside elders, apostles, Old Testament figures, bishops, kings, and crusaders among the ‘ten thousand times ten thousand’ gathered around the throne (Revelation 5. 11), are modern representatives of different nations (*Fig. 4*).

²⁵ See Owen Chadwick, *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement: Tractarian Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 256–88.



Fig. 4: Clayton & Bell, St John the Divine, Friern Barnet, sketch, 1902?, installed 1906. Part of a set of eleven two-light windows in the apse and east end depicting the Adoration of the Lamb. The figures, who are recognizably Chinese, stand on clouds and look towards the Lamb. Given the date and the theme of the window it is likely that they represent Christian martyrs killed in the recent Boxer Rebellion. Photograph: © Antipodean Books (David and Cathy Lilburne).

If catholicizing clergy and architects took the stylistic lead, others followed suit. Ordinands worshipping in the chapel at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, a firmly evangelical training college founded in 1881, would have found themselves scrutinized from above by a succession of saintly educators including Church Fathers, Bede and Anselm, Luther and Melancthon, Ridley and Cranmer, other Anglican 'Fathers', and, from among more recent figures, the evangelical 'prince of preachers' Charles Simeon and the biblical commentator J. B. Lightfoot.²⁶ Nor was this format an Establishment preserve. As Nonconformists built grander edifices intended to assert their social status and the historical pedigree of their beliefs, they too came to use stained glass to set out their story.²⁷ Emmanuel Congregational Church in Cambridge, opened in 1874, was a case in point. A pugnacious addition to the townscape with a tower and rose window on the street front, the six lancet windows of its apse, designed by John Henry Dearle, manufactured by Morris & Co., and dedicated in 1906, form a roll call of prominent Puritans connected with Cambridge.²⁸ Henry Barrow and John Greenwood were proto-Independents executed for their separatism in 1593; Oliver Cromwell and John Milton also find places; Francis Holcroft and Joseph Hussey were local Nonconformist heroes, the latter being the first minister of Emmanuel. (William Dowsing, the Puritan iconoclast who smashed so many East Anglian windows in his visitations of the 1640s, was understandably absent.) Like many a Catholic saint, they are portrayed with symbolic 'attributes' referring to their actions or character: Cromwell has his boots, a Bible, and a sword; Milton carries *Paradise Lost* and leans on his blind man's stick (*Fig. 5*).²⁹ There are no heavenly robes or haloes for these Nonconformist saints, who appear not so much in glory as in the act of addressing their spiritual descendants. Pulling against this, though, are the patterned backgrounds and frames against which they appear, the ambiguously classical-Victorian patterned togas in which they are mantled, and indeed the very fact of the visual presentation of preachers of the Word. They convey an otherworldliness that ardent High Church ecclesiologists like 'G. R. F.' would undoubtedly have recognized.

²⁶ F. W. B. Bullock, *The History of Ridley Hall, Cambridge*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1941), 1, 261–64, 296–97.

²⁷ See Binfield; and *Dissent and the Gothic Revival: Papers from a Study Day at Union Chapel Islington*, ed. by Bridget Cherry (London: The Chapels Society, 2007).

²⁸ A. Charles Sewter, *The Stained Glass of William Morris and his Circle*, 2 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), II, 42.

²⁹ Andrew A. Smith, 'Emmanuel United Reformed Church, Cambridge: The Bond Windows' (1987), rev. by Ann Phillips (2002) <<https://www.emmanuel-urc.org.uk/the-bond-windows/>> [accessed 18 June 2020].



Fig. 5: John Henry Dearle (designer) for Morris & Co., Cromwell and Milton, Emmanuel United Reformed Church, Cambridge, c. 1906. Photograph: Steve Day CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

The medium is the message

If stained glass saints were central to Anglo-Catholic architecture, they also spilled over into other church and chapel traditions. But this phenomenon also played into a wider and more diffuse culture of hagiography.³⁰ Even at their most secular, notions of character and heroism were embedded in a matrix of inherited Christian assumptions, and while most Victorians were repelled by Catholic celebrations of celibacy, self-mortification, and fasting,

³⁰ See Gareth Atkins, 'Introduction: Thinking with Saints', in *Making and Remaking Saints*, ed. by Atkins, pp. 1–28.

they bought enthusiastically into a more Protestant appreciation of the need for role models.³¹ They surrounded themselves with Great Men and, as [Veronica Smith](#) shows in her article, Women, chosen eclectically to inculcate discipline, or thrift, or a host of other virtues (*Fig. 6*). The impulse to do

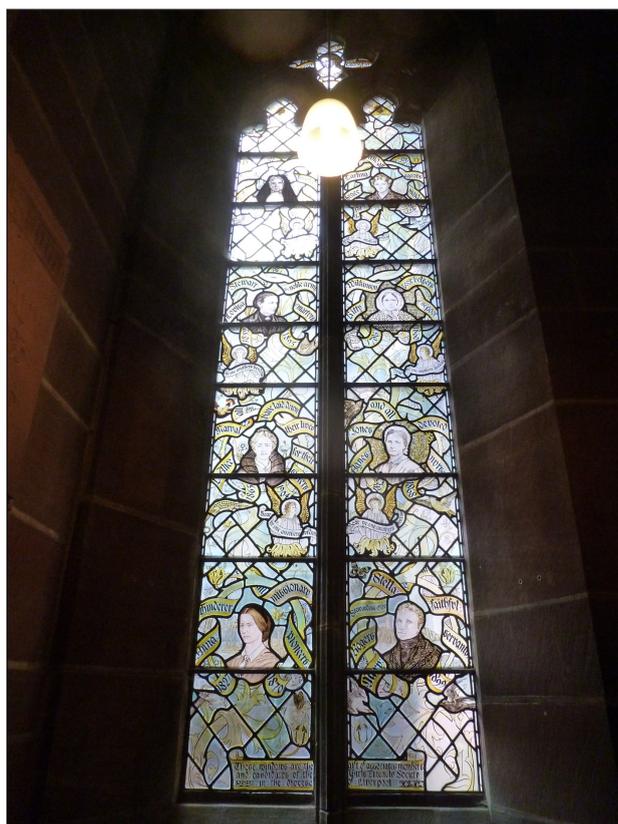


Fig. 6: James Powell & Sons, Staircase window, Lady Chapel, Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, c. 1910, restored in the 1940s by James Hogan and others. Part of a series known as the ‘Noble Women’ windows, they depict British women known for their faith and good works: the Irish missionary Louisa Stewart, killed in China in 1895; the medical missionary Dr Alice Marval, who died of plague in India in 1904; the missionary to Nigeria Anna Hinderer; the Northumberland lighthouse heroine Grace Darling; the Liverpool ‘Saint of the Slums’ Kitty Wilkinson; the nursing superintendent at Liverpool Workhouse Infirmary Agnes Jones, who died of typhus in 1868; and the stewardess of the SS *Stella*, Mary Rogers, who gave up her life jacket to another traveller and drowned in the shipwreck in 1899. Donated by the Liverpool Girls’ Friendly Society, their provenance shows how local associations or individuals could be mobilized to contribute appropriate windows to larger pre-planned schemes. Photograph: Granpic. Flickr CC BY 2.0.

³¹ Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850–1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

this could be reverential and didactic: think, for instance, of the National Portrait Gallery, founded in 1859 as an elevating alternative to the ‘cheap photographic establishments’ on which ‘Joe and Jane’ might fritter away their money.³² Think, too, of the Gothic Albert Memorial, whose angels, finial cross, and quasi-ecclesiastical form — deliberately modelled by Scott on the ciborium or canopy above (some) Catholic altars — made it a shrine in all but name.³³ Stories of lives well lived were also highly commercialized.³⁴ Think of Madame Tussaud’s, or, at home, the books of great lives or missionary heroines and porcelain figurines that infused domestic shelves and mantelpieces with sanctity.³⁵ Indeed, respect and the profit motive often went hand in hand. The story of Grace Darling, the Northumberland lighthouse keeper’s daughter who became a national heroine in 1838 when she helped to rescue survivors of the wreck of the *Forfarshire*, helped to sell everything from poems and commemorative prints to chocolate bars.³⁶ But when Grace died in 1842, aged only twenty-six, Bamburgh Parish Church became her unofficial shrine, with a canopied Gothic tomb outside in the churchyard and a commemorative window within the church, with angels surrounding allegorical figures of Charity, Fortitude (holding an oar), and Hope (with an anchor).

Stained glass played a crucial part in infusing public space with such ideas. Beyond purely ecclesiastical buildings it was widely used to construct ‘soft’ hagiographies, bringing with it moral elevation but without the same theological constraints. As this section will show, it combined with sculpture and decoration to transform town halls, museums, libraries, universities, and a host of other non-religious buildings into landscapes of ancestor-worship. To be sure, it was not used everywhere in that way. In many places stained glass was simply a useful way of both letting in light and providing space to continue decorative or iconographical schemes. It created a solemn, reverential atmosphere. But in ways that have seldom received much attention from historians it also provided a perfect medium for setting forth invented traditions, for it carried useful associations and a

³² ‘A National Portrait Gallery’, *Gentleman’s Magazine*, April 1856, pp. 367–71 (p. 368).

³³ Elisabeth Darby and Nicola Smith, *The Cult of the Prince Consort* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), chap. 3; Gavin Stamp, ‘George Gilbert Scott, the Memorial Competition, and the Critics’, in *The Albert Memorial: The Prince Consort National Memorial: Its History, Contexts, and Conservation*, ed. by Chris Brooks (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 98–133.

³⁴ Uta Kornmeier, ‘Madame Tussaud’s as a Popular Pantheon’, in *Pantheons: Transformations of a Monumental Idea*, ed. by Richard Wrigley and Matthew Craske (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 147–65.

³⁵ Stephen Duckworth, *Victorian Staffordshire Pottery Religious Figures: Stories on the Mantelpiece* (Woodbridge: ACC Art Books, 2017).

³⁶ Hugh Cunningham, *Grace Darling: Victorian Heroine* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007).

well-developed visual vocabulary that could be used to situate what were often new institutions within local and universal narratives of organic development since time immemorial.³⁷ Rochdale, for example, like many an industrial boomtown, signalled its arrival with a lavish new town hall. It was designed by William Henry Crossland in Gothic Revival style and erected between 1866 and 1871. Inside, its crowning glory is the Great Hall. The general effect of brightly patterned walls and a hammer-beamed roof that recalls Westminster Hall is in itself already striking. Combine this with a mural by Henry Holiday depicting the signing of Magna Carta, Victoria and Albert regarding one another from circular windows at opposite ends, and a sequence of stained glass panels by Heaton, Butler & Bayne down each side of the room portraying English monarchs, and the effect is overpowering. This was not, however, a royalist shrine: the highly unusual inclusion of Cromwell is enough to demonstrate that. Rather, in radical Rochdale, these windows situate the celebration of commercial and industrial progress found elsewhere in the building against a constitutional development.³⁸ Taken together with the mural, the message is a reassuring Whiggish one of change-through-continuity repeated in numerous civic buildings across the empire: liberty achieved and maintained but without damaging ruptures between present and past.³⁹

Equally, such schemes could be used to bolster the self-regard of long-established institutions. In the 1880s, at Stationers' Hall in the City of London, Mayer and Co. inserted windows depicting William Tyndale, William Caxton, William Shakespeare, and Thomas Cranmer — none of them members of the company — to assert the role of print in shaping English language, literature, and religion. (The odd one out, St Cecilia, commemorated the regular meetings of the Worshipful Company of Musicians in the hall.⁴⁰) Similar observations could be made about Oxford and Cambridge colleges and the Inns of Court, where the sacred and the secular were deeply entwined: stained glass could give halls and combination rooms a quasi-ecclesiastical feel,⁴¹ but also made chapels into galleries

³⁷ Perhaps surprisingly, stained glass is not mentioned in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

³⁸ Clare A. P. Willsdon, *Mural Painting in Britain 1840–1940: Image and Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 175–76.

³⁹ Colin Cunningham, *Victorian and Edwardian Town Halls* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981); Willsdon, pp. 169–212; and John M. Mackenzie, *The British Empire through Buildings: Structure, Function, Meaning* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), pp. 83–123.

⁴⁰ Robin Myers, *The Stationers' Company: A History of the Later Years, 1800–2000* (London: The Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers, 2001), p. 162.

⁴¹ For example, the William Morris scheme at Peterhouse, Cambridge (1868–74). See Sewter, II, 44–46.

of political or professional luminaries.⁴² ‘Saints’ were not always the chosen form: personifications of virtues and heraldic shields provided alternative ways of signalling professional intent or indicating lines of descent. Nevertheless, the notion of using figures to stand for a corpus or a strand of a tradition — scholars or lawyers or professional forerunners — often placed within wider civic, national, or constitutional narratives, was evidently an attractive one.

These figures were not, of course, saints as such. Visually, however, many such windows were almost interchangeable with the Gothic Revival glass found in churches. Quasi-architectural canopies, geometrical backdrops (foliage, diapering, stonework, mosaic tiles), scrolls to label the protagonists and pedestals to elevate them combined to lend even modern figures a vaguely archaic and quasi-ecclesiastical feel. The medium magnified this. The narrow lights of Gothic windows and their thick leadlines do not lend themselves to the representation of movement or, as we have seen, naturalistic pictorial scenes. Figures in such windows were usually arrayed full length: they appear two-dimensional, stylized, static, sculptural; lined up for inspection or comparison rather than portrayed in realistic action. Similarly, likenesses in roundels — a treatment that was frequently used in more intimate settings, such as stairwells or smaller rooms, where full-length figures might be too dominant, or block out the available light — have a disembodied, icon-like quality. This atmosphere redolent of some imagined afterlife was further enhanced by other visual cues imported from ecclesiastical stained glass. Whereas apostles and early saints usually bore the instruments of their martyrdoms, or small models of the institutions they founded, modern-day high achievers clutched copies of their writings or emblems of their accomplishments. Most telling of all, perhaps, was how full-length figures in long lights were often placed above a smaller square or rectangular panel, the predella. Separated from the rest of the window by a horizontal bar, this contained either ‘carved’ detail or a miniature scene, usually from, or metaphorically related to, the life of those portrayed above. This arrangement and the language used to describe it serves to underline further the ecclesiastical connotations of stained glass, for in medieval and Renaissance sacred art the predella is the platform or plinth upon which an altarpiece stands. As in Gothic windows, altarpieces were made up of tall, narrow panels, each usually containing a single figure. The predella offered freedom for the sculptor or painter to be creative and to tell the saint’s story.

Much of this was in evidence at the new university established in Sydney, Australia in 1850. Its purpose-built buildings, designed by Edmund Blacket in Perpendicular (‘Tudor’) Gothic and completed in 1861,

⁴² For example, Henry Holiday’s scheme at Trinity College, Cambridge (1871–75) <<http://trinitycollegechapel.com/about/windows/>> [accessed 18 June 2020].

were deliberately intended to echo the collegiate architecture of Oxford and Cambridge, while its motto, *Sidere mens eadem mutato* ('the stars change but the mind stays the same'), evokes a sense of connection across space and time.⁴³ Its Great Hall elaborated on this theme in one of the grandest early schemes Clayton & Bell undertook.⁴⁴ Two large traceried windows face each other at opposite ends of the hall: in the east, the founders of the Cambridge colleges; in the west, those from Oxford, the figures holding miniature versions of their foundations and standing on predellae decorated with college coats of arms. Running clockwise from the north-west corner is a series of eleven windows representing luminaries in History, Literature, Science, and Art, set out in triptychs and arranged in chronological order. The earliest are Anglo-Saxons — the ecclesiastical historian Alcuin, Bede, and Caedmon — and the latest are from the eighteenth century — the jurist William Blackstone, the Scottish chemist Joseph Black, and the explorer Captain James Cook, tying the scheme neatly to the 'discovery' of Australia (Dallen, pp. 20–21). Although the University of Sydney was not a religious foundation, this did not mean that Christian figures or themes were rigidly excluded. Far from it: most of the college founders were ecclesiastics, and the speeches at the inauguration of the young institution were laced with the language of providence and faith-conjoined-with-knowledge (Dallen, p. 10). Much of the Gothic tracery in the hall was peopled with religious figures. More incongruously, but just as pointedly, stained glass was also pressed into service in the windows of the new Medical School, now the Anderson Stuart Building, opened in 1889, which connect Galen, Hippocrates, and Aretaeus of Cappadocia — the 'fathers' of medicine — with prominent Scottish and English surgeons and physicians of the more recent past (Dallen, pp. 34–35). The Gothic framing and details jar wildly with the Hanoverian and Victorian dress of the most recent of those figures, but show how embedded this style was in such contexts (*Fig. 7*). Similar points could be made about any number of new universities in New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa, where (adapting from Alex Bremner) what might be termed collegiate imperial Gothic held sway. As in the churches from which the style was borrowed, collegiate Gothic was not just decorative or romantic. It did important ideological work in proclaiming both the local production of knowledge and its universal (and imperial) significance.⁴⁵

⁴³ Robert A. Dallen, *The University of Sydney: Its History and Progress Illustrated* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1914), pp. 8, 14–21, 47.

⁴⁴ Beverley Sherry, *Australia's Historic Stained Glass* (Sydney: Murray Child, 1991), pp. 67–69.

⁴⁵ See Tamson Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars: Universities, Networks and the British Academic World, 1850–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 17–31.



Fig. 7: Eastern window, Anderson Stuart Building, University of Sydney, 1892. Donated by the leading physician Sir Philip Sydney Jones (1836–1918), the window is one of a pair that celebrates a professional ‘apostolic succession’ from Hippocrates and Galen to prominent modern British medical practitioners. Top row, left to right: Richard Bright (1789–1858), English physician; Edward Jenner (1749–1823), who discovered the vaccination for smallpox; Sir James Simpson (1811–1870), the Scot who pioneered the use of chloroform. Bottom row: James Syme (1799–1870), Scottish surgeon and lecturer; Sir Benjamin Collins Brodie (1783–1862), English surgeon; Sir Astley Paston Cooper (1768–1841), surgeon and medical author. Photograph: © Craig Barker.

New settings, subject matter, and technology generated aesthetic problems that were not easily resolved. Following medieval iconography linking the rulers of Israel with Christ, the Jesse Tree was a well-worn choice for presenting royal ancestry in stained glass: hence its use in the Great Hall at Sydney for the kings and queens of England. Although the enthronement of Queen Victoria in the centre — in the place of Christ — might have troubled those church people who saw the cult of Victoria as idolatrous, more unsettling to the viewer are the teeming heads of her ancestors around her.⁴⁶ Whereas medieval artists could simply people their windows with generic bearded kings, there was in the nineteenth century a strong imperative, shared between painters and stained glass designers, to research costumes and likenesses and to reproduce them correctly.⁴⁷ Here, this renders the composition uncomfortably crowded, with faces unnaturally angled and squashed together amid descriptive scrolls (*Fig. 8*). Elsewhere, living or recently deceased people appeared in windows fairly frequently, in much the same way that pious medieval donors were inserted into sacred art. Yet, as Jim Cheshire suggests elsewhere in this issue, it was difficult to avoid the differences of texture, tone, and attitude that betrayed a figure's origins in a photograph or engraving. They are often easy to spot. Adrian Barlow has



Fig. 8: Clayton & Bell, Royal window, Great Hall, University of Sydney, c. 1859.
Photograph: © Jasmine Allen.

⁴⁶ See Michael Ledger-Lomas, *The Highest in the Land: Queen Victoria: A Spiritual Life* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

⁴⁷ Roy Strong, *Painting the Past: The Victorian Painter and British History*, rev. edn (London: Pimlico, 2004).

recently shown how the popular essayist A. C. Benson became grumpily obsessed with the notion that every window produced by his friend Charles Eamer Kempe was a narcissistic self-portrait, complaining in his diary that

we do *not* want unadulterated Kempe everywhere — we don't want Mr Kempe as St. Peter, only bleached like celery, without the wholesome oranges and purples of Mr K's face — talking to Mr Kempe as St Andrew — with two Mr K's walking in the distance; and Mary Magdalene (as Kempe shaved and feminised [*sic*]) falling to the ground under a weight of Turkey carpets.⁴⁸

It might therefore be suggested that there were inbuilt tensions between historicity and devotion; that while real figures needed to be recognizable, it was important that they were not too lifelike.

If quasi-ecclesiastical ideas and forms were increasingly adapted for other settings in our period, there were also significant re-imports, as churches reinvented themselves as civic or national spaces. [Michael Ledger-Lomas](#) shows in his article for this issue how the nave windows of Southwark Cathedral were peopled with playwrights and literary figures in a nod to the Tudor and Stuart theatres that had once been a feature of the area. Across town at St Margaret's, Westminster, in the shadow of the abbey, the liberal evangelical F. W. Farrar lobbied interest groups to fund new windows commemorating the printer William Caxton, Milton, the Tudor and Jacobean courtier Sir Walter Raleigh, the Puritan admiral Robert Blake, and Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, among others, working his connections to elicit dedicatory verses from literary luminaries.⁴⁹ These windows are best described as semi- or quasi-religious in nature: [Caxton's window](#), for instance, placed him between the learning of the Dark Ages, represented by the monk Bede, and the new intellectual world of humanism, represented by the scholar Erasmus.⁵⁰ The accompanying inscription, by the Poet Laureate Tennyson, was inspired by Caxton's motto, *Fiat lux* ('let there be light'). Drawing on liberal and vaguely Protestant cultural assumptions about the enlightening and providential effects of print, it suggestively presented the printer as a prophet:

Thy prayer was 'Light, more Light — while Time shall last!'
Thou sawest a glory growing on the night,
But not the shadows which that light should cast,
Till shadows vanish in the Light of Light. (Reginald Farrar, p. 227)

⁴⁸ Cited in Adrian Barlow, *Kempe: The Life, Art and Legacy of Charles Eamer Kempe* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2018), pp. 238–39, emphasis in original.

⁴⁹ Reginald Farrar, *The Life of Frederic William Farrar* (London: Nisbet, 1904), pp. 226–29.

⁵⁰ F. W. Farrar, *A History and Description of the Caxton Memorial Window, in St Margaret's Church, Westminster* (London: Printers' Register Office, 1882).

On one level such presentations reflect the awe in which the Victorians held inspired individuals, literary ones in particular. Perhaps Shakespeare (or Chaucer, or Milton, or Dr Johnson) literally were cult figures.⁵¹ Also significant, though, was the Liberal Anglican impulse to present the Established Church as the guardian of the nation's cultural patrimony, not least as custodian of many of her ancient buildings, and of her dead: a more embracing version of the Anglo-Catholic narratives discussed above.⁵² Dean Stanley, for example, pushed the idea of Westminster Abbey as a Macaulayan 'temple of silence and reconciliation' which told an inclusive national story of the unfolding of moral truth.⁵³ Truro, likewise, included multiple secular figures, Tennyson among them. Anglicans did not, as we have seen, have a monopoly on ideas of religious nationhood. And nor did their use of such ideas work equally well everywhere: in Wales, and more so in Ireland, their claims to historical and cultural primacy looked increasingly shrill. Nevertheless, there was a wide recognition of the power of stained glass to adapt existing spaces, co-opting figures from the present and the past and using them to meld together ecclesiastical and providential narratives with national stories.

Conclusion

The Victorian Gothic Revival in church architecture was remarkably successful in propagating the idea of sacred space: propagating it, moreover, in a Protestant culture that had hitherto been ambivalent about that notion.⁵⁴ With that shift came the sharpening of other binaries. The revival of Anglican monasticism, the beauty of holiness, reserve, mystique, robed choirs, and clouds of incense all helped to set the sacred apart from the secular. As Alex Bremner has shown in *Imperial Gothic*, High Church architecture and the culture that went with it was a highly successful imperial export, seeding imitation churches around the globe and giving coherence and confidence to the nascent Anglican communion. It was also adapted for different religious contexts at home, for although High Church theology

⁵¹ Charles LaPorte, *The Victorian Cult of Shakespeare: Bardology in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

⁵² John Wolfe, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland, 1843–1945* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 123–58; and John Wolfe, *Great Deaths: Grieving, Religion, and Nationhood in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 56–93.

⁵³ Michael Ledger-Lomas, 'An Erastian Descent: History and Establishment in the Thought of Arthur Penrhyn Stanley and E. A. Freeman', in *Making History: Edward Augustus Freeman and Victorian Cultural Politics*, ed. by G. A. Bremner and Jonathan Conlin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 65–82.

⁵⁴ Whyte, *Unlocking the Church*.

was not to all tastes, the Gothicizing ethos was taken up across the denominational spectrum. This was especially true for stained glass, which — for reasons that have yet to attract much scholarly attention — seems to have attracted less ire from hostile Protestant commentators than statuary, say, or vestments. Crucial to understanding that, as this article has suggested, were the themes of ‘antiquity’, ‘ancestry’, and ‘sanctity’ that were deployed in a variety of contexts, both old and new.

Not all of those contexts were religious ones; indeed, some of them were avowedly neutral. It might therefore be tempting to regard the prevalence of stained glass ‘saints’ in the later nineteenth century as evidence for cultural secularization, as ‘religious’ forms were removed from the contexts that imbued them with meaning and drained of their doctrinal content. Yet as recent scholarship has begun to make clear, disenchantment is only one of several stories that can be told about the changing shape of the sacred in modernity.⁵⁵ Much recent scholarship has turned away from institutional structures and doctrines towards lived experience, images, materiality. If Gothic Revival stained glass translated readily into new settings it was because it carried ecclesiastical or quasi-ecclesiastical connotations with it. It was appealing, then, because it could be manipulated to tell particular stories, but also to create a broader mood. Moreover, it allowed observers to join the dots for themselves, and to elicit their own meanings from it. Stained glass saints are, then, an apt metaphor for a culture that remained soaked in Christian images and values, but whose sense of sanctity blurred into a variety of other urges.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Gordon Lynch, *The Sacred in the Modern World: A Cultural Sociological Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); and Elizabeth Drescher, *Choosing our Religion: The Spiritual Lives of America’s Nones* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).