

Sabine Baring-Gould: The Long Road to Ordination

By Ron Wawman

The Catholic Revival in the Anglican Church

It is not possible to follow the spiritual development of Sabine Baring-Gould between 1850 and his ordination in 1864 without taking into account the theological confusion and conflict that existed within the Anglican Church during much of the 19th Century. Arguably the most important development during this time was the growth of the Catholic Revival within the Church of England as a reaction to the Protestant legacy of the Reformation.

Central to the Catholic Revival was the formation in the 1830s of the ‘Oxford Movement’ around John Keble, Professor of Poetry at Oxford, as he became increasingly outspoken over the deepening problems of the Church. The movement was concerned by what its followers saw as the secularisation of the church and, as part of this, the extent to which it was being treated as though it was a department of state. They sought a return of the Church to its heritage of apostolic order, to the Catholic doctrines of the early Church fathers and to medieval liturgy. John Henry Newman together with William Palmer and Richard Hurrell Froude joined with Keble in writing and publishing a series of *Tracts for our Times* in which they developed their arguments. This led to yet another name for the movement ‘The Tractarians.’ Newman withdrew from active involvement in the movement in the face of the huge furore aroused in 1841 by tract 90 which had been written by him. This claimed that the 39 articles of the English Church adopted by Act of Parliament in 1591 were entirely compatible with Roman Catholicism. By making this claim Newman seemed to confirm widely held suspicions in Protestant England that the movement was no more than a subversive branch of the Church of Rome.

So it was that, after a torrid time during which several members, including Newman, seceded to Rome, the battered remnants of the movement regrouped. Edward Bouverie Pusey, who had written an influential tract on *Baptism* and controversially preached on *The Holy Eucharist, a Comfort to the Penitent*, came to be seen as the leading figure. Under Pusey, the doctrine of the presence of Christ in worship and the role of the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist and auricular confession, in a search for personal holiness, became central to the movement. As it developed, other strands emerged such as the role of liturgy, hymnody, and architecture in worship as well as the importance of good works, especially social works.¹

Under the influence of priests working with the poor (particularly Charles Lowder at St. Barnabas, Pimlico and St. George’s-in-the-East, Wapping), many, but not Pusey, nor, as will be seen, Nathaniel Woodard, became convinced of the importance of ritual in worship. Thus the name ‘Ritualists’ also became associated with the group. The wrath of opponents, both within and outside the Church, and accusations of popery were mostly focussed on this outward display of Catholicism. Auricular confession, accepted within the movement as

the certain means of restoring a right relationship with God in circumstances of decay and depravity,

was also regarded by those hostile to the movement as highly subversive.

¹ Ruth Kenyon, *The Social Service of the Catholic Revival*, London: Catholic Literature Association (no date). This can be found at http://anglicanhistory.org/england/kenyon_social.html (accessed 18 April 2008.)

During Sabine's formative years, from 1851, at the age of 17, when he was living with his parents in Bayonne, to the time 13 years later when he was ordained and took up his curacy at Horbury, Sabine was closely associated with the Catholic Revival in the Church of England.

Sabine's Early Religious Development

How and when did Sabine's religious convictions first begin to crystallise? Until recently there has been little more of substance to find than the statement in his *Early Reminiscences* that, in 1851, at the age of 17 years when he was living in Bayonne, he had formed his three great purposes in life:

*...when I was a boy of seventeen I formed my purposes, and from their accomplishment I have never deviated.*²

The first of his purposes was to restore Lew Trenchard Church. The second was to improve the spiritual welfare of the parishioners, by which it can be assumed that he intended to be ordained and eventually become the Rector at Lew Trenchard. These first two purposes hint at some sort of religious commitment. His third purpose was to restore Lew Trenchard Manor House, or Lew House as it was then known.

Then in January 2013 further information came to hand in the shape of a hitherto mislaid *Introduction* and *Chapter I* of the book *The Growth of Religious Convictions*³ that Sabine was writing during 1923, the last year of his life, but which had never been published. The first chapter opened with:

In 1851 I had reached a period in my life in which opinions began to shape themselves into convictions, and wavering lines of thought began to straighten out. Hitherto I had not possessed other than a vague acquaintance with the English Church, its doctrines, its Constitution, and its Services. I knew the Catechism, the Psalms and the Collects, some of the former and all the latter my mother had made me learn by heart, and the Sermon on the Mount, on which my father had insisted as the guide of life. I could respond Amen to the prayers, but I detested Sermons.

The introduction to the book included the following remarks:

Until I reached the age of seventeen such religion as I entertained was unenquiring. I was conscious of certain dislikes, but not of any particular likings; with adolescence, however, I saw that religion was too serious a matter to be treated with indifference...

...My Father was a most honourable and upright man, but had no definite theological convictions. He had been educated at Halibury [sic. Read Haileybury] College, an institution for the training of pupils for the service of the East India

² S Baring-Gould, *Early Reminiscences*, London: Bodley Head (1923) p. vii – viii.

³ S Baring-Gould, *The Growth of Religious Convictions*, written 1923. Unpublished. Typescript held in the Baring-Gould Archive Box 5203, Devon Record Office. This book has now been transcribed, edited, annotated and introduced by Ron Wawman. A decision has yet to be taken on how to make this work available to others.

Company. He left for India when aged eighteen, and had imbibed no beliefs in Christianity, but was guided entirely by Natural Religion.⁴

That still did not add much to what was already known. Further on Sabine wrote:

Anglican worship was not at that time stimulating, and Anglican teaching was indefinite. Such as it was, this teaching was accepted [by me] much as at dinner one accepts cabbage. It was taken because everyone else took it.

Then again in Chapter I:

At this time, when issuing out of boyhood into manhood, the boy not yet shaken off, and the man not yet put on, I began to think out religious and ecclesiastical questions for myself.

The first of these was as to the origin and constitution of the Church. I did not then concern myself about dogmas, disputed or undisputed, but tried to find out the principle of the life and organisation of the Church itself. To me, at this time, it seemed that the primary question to be answered was:- what is the Church? One must have a bottle ready to contain wine before attempting to draw the liquor.

The impression gained is that Sabine wanted his readers to believe that what was to become an intense espousal of Anglo-Catholicism was largely an intellectual exercise undertaken as part of the process of growing up. There is, however, reason to believe that the process may not have been quite as simple as that. To understand the full significance of Sabine's comment above that

...with adolescence, however, I saw that religion was too serious a matter to be treated with indifference.

it has been necessary to draw on information from a wide variety of sources.

The Ministry of the Keys – Auricular confession.

Before returning to the awakening of Sabine's religious convictions it is necessary to first reflect on what he had to say on the subject of auricular confession – a sacrament dear to the hearts of followers of the Anglo-Catholic Revival – in the chapter on *St. Saviour's Church in Leeds*, that he had written many years later in his book *The Church Revival*.⁵ In this chapter Sabine was writing about pastoral work at the new Gothic church that had been founded in 1845 by the leading Anglo-Catholic, Pusey in a slum area of Leeds as a personal penance. Sabine wrote at some length about the intense hostility endured by the clergy at St. Saviour's – some of whom had been recruited by Pusey from clerics in Nathaniel Woodard's schools, with which Sabine would later become closely associated:

⁴ One dictionary definition of Natural Religion or Natural Theology is: *A religion derived from reasoned facts, not revelation.*

⁵ S Baring-Gould, *The Church Revival*, 1914, London, Methuen p 273.

It was not the ritual of St. Saviour's that was objected to, for there was practically none; it was the insistence on the confession. Amidst the awful wickedness that prevailed in the district, it was necessary to urge confession. Nothing could combat it, and conquer it piecemeal, but the Ministry of the Keys, and getting into the confidence of the poor lads and lasses who worked in the mills and were surrounded by evil influences.

What is *The Ministry of the Keys*?

Put simply the Ministry of the Keys, that is the sacrament of auricular confession, can be described as the authority from Jesus Christ to forgive (loose) or to retain (bind) a person's sins. The biblical basis for this is at John XX verses 21-23:

21. Then Jesus said to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22. And when he said this he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

23. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose so ever sins ye retain, they are retained.

The authority to forgive sins can also be found at Matthew XVI: verses 18, 19, significantly in association with a direct reference to the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. Hence: *The Ministry of the Keys*

18. And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

*19. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and what so ever thou shall **bind** on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what so ever thou shall **loose** on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

Importantly the author is familiar with this text from Matthew in a very different context. In 1851, at that significant age of 17 when Sabine described the early crystallisation of his religious convictions, it is known that he kept a little notebook in which, amongst much else, he referred to this particular text from Matthew XVI along with several other biblical texts related to sin, departing from faith, and forgiveness through the blood of Christ.⁶ Thus among numerous similar references are to be found:

1. Timothy IV: 1: Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and the doctrines of devils.

1 John I: 7: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Matthew XIII: 19: (The Parable of the Sower) When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catches away that which was sown in his heart. This is he that received seed by the wayside.

⁶ S Baring-Gould, *Adolescent Notebook*, 1850/51, Devon Record Office, Box 5203, (Baring-Gould Archive). Also Ron Wawman, www.nevercompletelysubmerged.co.uk, *Sabine's Adolescent Notebook*, p.38 et seq.

Revelations I: 5: And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us of our sins in his own blood.

A Tortured Mind?

Significantly, these biblical texts are immediately followed in the notebook by two poems written on a single page. The first is an anguished love poem (one of four in the notebook):

*'Tis here she lives; alas I gaze
And love her, oh, too faithfully;
And turn aside in bitterness
For mine alone she cannot be.*

*I never have told her how I love,
For what can that avail me;
Within my bosom lies my secret;
Oh for mine she ne'er can be*

*For tho' we are separated
By no laws which are divine;
Yet 'tis man, stern man prevents it
And she never can be mine*

There is good reason to believe that the subject of his affections may have been a certain Constance Frazer⁷, a young woman Sabine met in Bayonne and for whom, in *Early Reminiscences*, he denied any clear memory, despite writing several pages, based on entries in his brother's diary, about the relationship between her and her sisters on the one hand and himself, his tutor and his brother and sister on the other. It is also tempting to speculate that the *man, stern man* of the poem was Sabine's father, with whom Sabine had a troubled relationship and who, quite possibly, disapproved of members of his household associating with members of the Frazer family.

The contents of the other poem, entitled '*Night Thoughts*',⁸ are very different and imply that at this time Sabine was struggling mentally with what he regarded as sinful thoughts and associated feelings of guilt and shame.

*Oh. How I love a night walk all my thoughts
Come trooping clust'ring round in wild dismay
And some cry shame and others whisper sin
Then blank despair with sullen tread draws near
And clasps his iron hold. Then pure and bright
A spirit fair descends and on his brow
Is written - Light – Be thou my guide of hope?
It cannot be! for hope 'gainst hope is but
The reproduction of stern dark despair*

⁷ S Baring-Gould, *Early Reminiscences*, pp 195-197, 202.

⁸ It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the 17-year-old Sabine was familiar with Edward Young's series of poems, *Night Thoughts* written between 1742 and 1744 and later famously illustrated by William Blake. However Sabine's poem bears no resemblance to Young's monumental work.

*And I must stoop beneath her iron sway
 These warring powers will burst the mansion doors
 Of my tortured mind – But oh, I must despair.*

What was going on in Sabine's 'tortured mind' at this time?

In his notebook Sabine also wrote:

*{{pro - Math XVI . 18 . 19
 {{con – the parable of the sower hence “The Kingdom of heaven” is
 the bible
 { and the keys of – the knowledge of –*

This brief entry in the notebook might simply mean that Sabine was doing nothing more than deliberating over the so called 'Papal Aggression' of 1850 when, as he wrote⁹

*Pius IX parcelled out England into Roman dioceses. I remember how my blood
 boiled at what I thought was a gross piece of impertinence.*

This would suggest that Sabine was searching for the Biblical pros and cons for the claims of the Church of Rome for supremacy. Ie: was that church the sole keeper of the Keys? If so then he would seem to have concluded that the parable of the sower could mean that the Bible is the Kingdom of Heaven and therefore the Keys of the Kingdom are nothing more than knowledge of the Bible. Therefore the claims of the Church of Rome for supremacy would be null and void.

However Sabine's pre-occupation with unspoken love, thoughts of sinfulness and feelings of guilt and shame, when taken together with the biblical texts dealing with sin and absolution and with the formation around this time of his *three purposes in life*, point to something much more personal. It seems likely that Sabine was going through an adolescent state of guilt-ridden emotional turmoil that led to a desire for penitence, confession and absolution. Under these circumstances, the quotations from Matthew XVI could also imply that he was experiencing a desire to confess his sins.

Two of Sabine's three purposes in life fit well in the context of penance. These are his determination to restore Lew Trenchard Church and his intention of improving the spiritual welfare of the parishioners there. At first sight the third purpose, to restore Lew House, sits incongruously beside them. But, taking into account Sabine's difficult and resentful relationship with his father, it is possible to speculate that his penance might also have included reparation towards his temporal father through loyalty to the family estate. This would help to explain why, in later years, Sabine put the restoration of Lew House before much else in life – including his personal interests and, at times, the needs of his wife and family.¹⁰

What can be gleaned about Sabine's spiritual development from what he wrote in *Early Reminiscences* about this time in his life? Firstly the bald statement that

⁹ S Baring-Gould, *Early Reminiscences*, p 214.

¹⁰ Ron Wawman, *Never Completely Submerged*, being the transcription of and commentary on *The Diary of Sabine Baring-Gould*, 2009, Guildford, Grosvenor House.

... all the time we were abroad I never went to a Roman Catholic service.¹¹

If he had attended a Roman Catholic service, as an Anglican, he would in any case have been prohibited from taking part in the sacraments. He wrote that while the family was for a time at Argelez in 1850 he had made friends with the village curé who sometimes dined with the family, but that seems to have been as far as it went and the family never attended mass.

Mr. Hedges, the English Chaplain at Pau, where the family lived for most of 1850, was someone for whom Sabine, as well as his father, had the utmost disdain. Sabine would never have considered calling on his services. At Bayonne, where the Baring-Gould family moved in late 1850, there was no English chaplain and the family continued to rely on their father, Edward, reading prayers on Sunday mornings and reading....

....to the family every Sunday evening a printed Sermon, this was not done until he had divested it of all definite dogmatic assertion; scoring out such passages with his pencil.¹²

Was there no lay person in Bayonne that Sabine could have turned to for support during what today would be regarded as the awakening of normal adolescent feelings and behaviour? It is evident that, given the nomadic life the family was living, Sabine had no lasting close friendships with boys of his own age with whom he could share his experiences. Given the problems in their relationship, he was patently unable to turn to his father. The only other person he might have turned to at this time was his tutor, Mr W E Hadow, but Sabine's relationship with Hadow, although friendly, was not strong enough to encourage the unburdening of emotional problems. Indeed in *The Growth of Religious Convictions* Sabine described Hadow as:

a good kindly man, but not one inspiring much respect.

As will be seen Sabine did get help from this tutor in the development of his religious understanding simply through the loan of a book. Indeed it was to religious books and texts that Sabine mainly turned for support at this time.

The Sources of Sabine's Anglo-Catholicism: John Mason Neale and Christopher Wordsworth.

On one occasion Sabine's mother took him, *in a resentful spirit*, to what he disparagingly referred to as a French Protestant 'conventicle'. He was in a resentful spirit because he was convinced that such meetings were non-sacramental and as such of no spiritual value. Elsewhere in *Early Reminiscences*¹³ in a passage in which he admitted to no great affection for what little he had experienced of the Church of England at Lew, in London or indeed anywhere, Sabine went on to write:

I obtained glimpses of brighter things from the church history story books I had read. But they taught me to look back to past days for the ideal of the Church and of worship.

¹¹ S Baring-Gould, *Early Reminiscences*, p179.

¹² S Baring-Gould, *The Growth of Religious Convictions*, p.2.

¹³ S Baring-Gould, *Early Reminiscences*, p 199.

A patently Anglo-Catholic view.

Fortunately, in the *Introduction* to his book *The Growth of Religious Convictions*, Sabine pointed to the source of this Anglo-Catholic point of view. Here he wrote that one of the books of *Church history tales* was given to him by his uncle, the Rev. Charles Baring-Gould, but, significantly, he also added that the stories were written by the Anglo-Catholic cleric, John Mason Neale.

Almost certainly this particular influence on Sabine's spiritual development was Neale's *A Mirror of Faith: Lays and Legends of the Church of England* published by Burns and Walters in 1845. This delightful little book contains stories and poems relating to the lives and times of the early Saints.¹⁴

In *Early Reminiscences* Sabine went on to state that, in response to his desire for a firmer grounding in the Church, his tutor in Bayonne, Mr W E Hadow, had furnished him with Christopher Wordsworth's *Theophilus Anglicanus* to study.¹⁵ This book gave him

*a rationale of the English Church which I thoroughly laid hold of and from which I have never deviated*¹⁶.

The *Theophilus Anglicanus* is, in the opinion of the author of this paper, essentially a dry student's manual, albeit with Wordsworth's very firm Anglo-Catholic leanings, and as such added to, but also contrasted with Sabine's earlier use of Dr Neale's story book for religious education. Sabine's comments, considered alongside the biblical texts written in the notebook in 1851, suggest that, at the age of 17, Sabine had a reasonably well-developed understanding of current theological trends and conflicts as seen from an Anglo-Catholic standpoint.

There is no doubt that Wordsworth's manual on the English Church did make a deep impression on the young Sabine for in later years he bracketed Christopher Wordsworth with John Mason Neale, the warden of Sackville College, East Grinstead, as the two people who had the greatest influence on his religious development. Thus he wrote in *Early Reminiscences*:

*I received my first Church principles mentally from Wordsworth, but spiritually I owe everything to the Warden of Sackville College whose learning, ecclesiology, poetry, historical knowledge, and profound spirituality have made of me a very humble and unworthy disciple.*¹⁷

John Mason Neale

While a student at Cambridge in 1839 John Mason Neale had been involved in the foundation of the Cambridge Camden Society which in 1845 came to be known as the Ecclesiological

¹⁴ In passing it is worth noting that Neale's preface to his book *A Mirror of Faith: Lays and Legends of the Church of England* included the intriguing comment: *the whole of the following ballads were written before the appearance of the first part of the 'Lives of the Saints.'* It is not known who wrote the particular *Lives of the Saints* to which Neale referred. Patently not the Rev. Alban Butler's volumes that were published 1779/80. But it could well be that Neale's legends and poems influenced Sabine's decision to research and publish his own monumental *Lives of the Saints* in 1872-77.

¹⁵ Christopher Wordsworth, *Theophilus Anglicanus or Manual of Instruction on the Church and the Anglican Branch of it*, 1843, London: Rivingtons.

¹⁶ S Baring-Gould, *Early Reminiscences*, p 197-198.

¹⁷ S Baring-Gould, *Early Reminiscences*, p 302-303.

Society. Today that Society is simply described¹⁸ as *for those who are interested in the art, architecture or liturgy of the Christian Church*. However, when it was founded this influential society advocated the return to medieval styles of Church architecture either through the building of new churches, according to medieval liturgical principles or through the restoration of old churches. In this context ‘restoration’ involved clearing away the box pews and the three-decker pulpit, refurbishing the chancel and sanctuary, re-installing the font, and uncovering ancient sedilia, ambries and piscinae.¹⁹ The essential aim of this return to Gothic architecture and furnishing was not for aesthetic visual display; it was to provide an architectural medium through which to proclaim a theological message – a sacramental expression of the Church Catholic and its worship. There was much else to Neale, as is evident from Sabine’s comment on him in *The Church Revival*:

*Mr. Neale was not only a man of wide and brilliant scholarship; he was the most learned ecclesiologist and liturgiologist we had at the time in England; his History of the Holy Eastern Church is a classical work, and his hymns are to be found in every Anglican Church hymnal, and are used in dissenting meeting-houses as well.*²⁰

Many of Neale’s hymns were translated from medieval liturgies. Neale also delighted in wonders, was intrigued by symbolism and drew heavily on symbolic and mystic interpretation of the scriptures. That also would have attracted a like-minded young Sabine.

In his *Early Reminiscences* Sabine wrote that in 1851, at the age of 17, he spent many hours in the beautiful Gothic Cathedral of Sainte-Marie at Bayonne, sketching features of the architecture which greatly impressed him. This Cathedral also featured in *Peace*, another notebook poem written by Sabine in 1851.²¹ So it seems quite possible that he was by then very aware of the significance attached by many in the Anglo-Catholic movement to medieval architecture in worship. He already knew of John Mason Neale and ecclesiology.

A Religious Conversion?

At this time, (1850/51) when the young Sabine was looking for spiritual relief from his *tortured mind*, members of the Catholic Revival within the Church of England were viewed with the greatest suspicion as part of a backlash to what was seen in the Church of England as the ‘Papal aggression.’ Some members had been severely persecuted and thrown on the defensive. Thus at the Chantry chapel on Wakefield Bridge, a simple Paschal Cross (see below) was thrown down and damaged by rioters, while, at Lancing College, Nathaniel Woodard was sweating under intense pressure from Bishop Gilbert of Chichester over the use of auricular confession with children in his schools. Sabine would probably have known about events like this from his father who not only read the newspapers but was openly intolerant of what he saw as popery. Sabine would probably also have read the news but, having formed views not in line with those of his father, prudently kept them to himself.

All in all it seems unlikely that Sabine did make use of a confessor at Bayonne, if for no other reason than because he did not know how to find one. But could it be that, around the time that he formed his purposes in life, studied biblical texts, read theological manuals and wrote guilt ridden poems, he had experienced some sort of spiritual enlightenment, possibly of a

¹⁸ Ecclesiological Society: www.eccsoc.org

¹⁹ Sedilia: Stone seats for the officiating priest and his assistants found on the south side of the chancel. Ambry: a niche near the altar for keeping sacred vessels and vestments. Piscina: a basin on the south side of the altar for emptying and cleaning sacred vessels.

²⁰ S Baring-Gould, *The Church Revival*, p 226.

²¹ S Baring-Gould, *Adolescent Notebook*, 1850/51.

mystical nature, that led to an acknowledgement that something deeper than just a sentiment of repentance was called for? If so he would not be the first Tractarian to start out in this way, Pusey being a particularly significant example.

The possibility that the formation of Sabine's three purposes in life at this time might have been associated with some sort of spiritual event receives indirect support from a statement in his book *A Study of St Paul*, written more than forty years later:

*I suppose there are few men not in the whirl of business or tangle of social frippery, that have not their moments of elevation into commune with God, when sudden visions of truth, not to be accounted for by any apparent causes, burst upon the mind; their moments when God is present and very real to them in a manner quite unutterable by words.*²²

It is not difficult to conclude from this statement that Sabine had experienced such moments. However nowhere in his writing did Sabine write about *a sudden vision of truth* at the age of 17 – or indeed at any other time in his life.

It sometimes seems from his Reminiscences and from his diaries that Sabine was blown about by circumstance during his formative years and that, for example, he went to Horbury in 1864 as a curate by default.²³ But there is much to suggest that, despite all the pressures on him to do otherwise, he tenaciously ploughed his own furrow throughout his life. More than once he wrote in his published work that he never wavered from his three purposes in life and it is probable that, until great old age when his life was ruled by others, he rarely did anything for negative reasons and generally knew where he was going and why. In a letter to his daughter Mary he wrote:

*When I take a resolve to do a thing I do it.*²⁴

On the return of the family to Devon in May 1851 after, at the most, eight life-changing months in Bayonne, Sabine spent time roaming around Dartmoor on his pony, often visiting and sketching the churches he passed along the way. He also wrote that he sought out and hid away pieces of the old rood screen and bench ends from Lew Trenchard church that he had found. This gave a clue to the sort of restoration he had in mind for that church and why.²⁵

Clare College, Cambridge

In 1853 Sabine went up to Cambridge where he was for some time ostracised by fellow undergraduates at Clare College. He wrote to his mother:

*At first the men used to say most unkind and wicked things about me and it made me so unhappy (that was my first year) that I was almost in despair, they used to show me such contempt and men I had known would stare at me and then walk away without taking the slightest notice of me*²⁶.

²² S Baring-Gould, *A Study of St. Paul*, 1897, London, Isbister.

²³ Keith Lister, Personal communication.

²⁴ S Baring-Gould, Letter Mary Dickinson, 5 Nov 1893, Devon Record Office, Dickinson, E.

Ron Wawman, www.nevercompletelysubmerged.co.uk *Last Thirty Years of Sabine's Life. Part I Letters to Mary Dickinson*, p 19.

²⁵ S Baring-Gould, *Early Reminiscences*, p. 145.

²⁶ Devon Record Office, Ref 5203 (Baring-Gould Archive), Box 25, *Letter to Baring-Gould's mother, Sophia dated 'Easter 1857'*. Ron Wawman, *Early Family Correspondence by Sabine Baring-Gould*, p 3,4. www.nevercompletelysubmerged.co.uk *Early Family Correspondence by Sabine Baring-Gould*, p 3,4.

These attitudes attributed by Sabine to fellow students may well have been a reaction to the openness of Sabine's religious attitudes as well as to his regular devotions, his alms giving and his frequent attendance at services in King's College Chapel. Here he would have been attracted to the Gothic architecture and the choral liturgy. No doubt Sabine's negligible experience of attending school with other boys during his childhood made it difficult for him to know how to behave in the company of other students without arousing antagonism. He would have found himself on a steep learning curve as he learnt to keep his religious beliefs either to himself or share them only with like minded students. It is of interest that the view from the rooms he is known to have occupied during his time at Clare College is still totally dominated by King's College Chapel. No doubt it was for this reason that Sabine went out of his way to secure the use of these rooms when they became vacant. It is equally likely that most other students would have avoided such rooms as being unduly dark and gloomy.

Eventually Sabine, together with other likeminded undergraduates, formed a society of the Holy Cross at Cambridge, mirroring in a small way the *Society of the Holy Cross* created by Charles Lowder of St. Barnabas in 1855.²⁷ Sabine also wrote in *Early Reminiscences* that the members of his society attended services at St. Giles because this was the only church in Cambridge where the Eucharist was celebrated every Sunday.²⁸ Sabine's description of the incumbent at St. Giles does not suggest he would have been used as a confessor, but it is likely that the society did have its own links with a network of Anglo-Catholic confessors on whom the members of the society could call if they wished.

Sabine's Paschal Cross.

A significant happening at Cambridge, not long after his arrival there in 1853, was his purchase of a Paschal Cross from a local wood carver. The history of this cross is chronicled in *The Church Revival*.²⁹ It is associated with the famous medieval Chantry Chapel at Wakefield.³⁰ The restoration of this chapel from secular use by the Yorkshire Architectural Society, which had been formed, like Neale's Camden Cambridge Society, along ecclesiological principles, had been initiated and funded in the 1840s by the Rev. Samuel Sharp, vicar of Wakefield and father of John Sharp, later vicar at Horbury.³¹ The Cross was commissioned by the Anglo-Catholic Rev. Parkinson who was appointed incumbent at the chapel when the parish of Wakefield was divided in 1844, but who faced physical hostility there, in the context of the nationwide reaction to the 'Papal Aggression' of 1850. In response to this hostility Parkinson gave up, seceded to Rome and returned the Cross, which had been damaged in the violence, to its maker in Cambridge.³² History does not tell us if Samuel Sharp was also of Anglo-Catholic persuasion but it would be difficult to explain his involvement in, and financial sacrifice to, such a restoration in any other way. It is likely that Sabine did his own researches while at Cambridge and became aware of the role played by Samuel Sharp in the history of his Cross.

²⁷ Ruth Kenyon, *The Social Service of the Catholic Revival*.

²⁸ S Baring-Gould, *Early Reminiscences*, p. 227.

²⁹ *The Church Revival*, p 316.

³⁰ Kate Taylor (Ed.), *Worthies of Wakefield*, 2004, Wakefield. Wakefield Historical Publications, See articles by Keith Lister on John Sharp, and Samuel Sharp. Also John Goodchild: *The Chantry Chapel of St Mary the Virgin Wakefield*; Wakefield: The Friends of Wakefield Chantry Chapel, (no date).

³¹ See *The History of the Yorkshire Architectural and York Archaeological Society* - www.yayas.free-online.co.uk/history.html (accessed 19 April 2008.)

³² Keith Lister, personal communication.

When Sabine arrived in Horbury in 1864, together with the Cross, Samuel's son, John, vicar of Horbury, would have confirmed this to him. It is known that the Paschal Cross was subsequently used by Sabine in the Mission chapel he created at Horbury Bridge. No doubt it also accompanied Sabine to the churches at Dalton and East Mersea. It eventually came with him to Lewtrenchard where it is now a treasured possession of St Peter's Church.

Father Charles Lowder, the Churches of St Barnabas and St. Georges in the East.

Sabine would have been conscious of the importance of 'good works' as part of his Anglo-Catholic commitment and, by 1856 at the latest, this had drawn him to spend time during his Summer vacation at the Church of St. Barnabas, Pimlico, with the Rev. Charles Lowder, who was to become the best known of the illustrious slum priests within the Catholic Revival.³³

Built in 1850, St. Barnabas was the first new Gothic church to be erected in London according to ecclesiological principles and as part of the Catholic Revival. That alone would have drawn Sabine there but there were other compelling reasons. St. Barnabas, like most new Gothic churches of the Catholic Revival was built, not only *amongst* the poor, but also *for the salvation of* the poor. The Catholic Revival had led to a new type of pastoral life in which priests and laity threw themselves into social work because they saw Christ in the poor and in the suffering, and desired to serve Him through them.

Squalor, poverty, disease and crime were rife but although these physical problems were being vigorously tackled, this activity took place almost as an adjunct to what the Rev. Skinner of St. Barnabas described as:

... the task of raising up the ignorant and vicious and oppressed to a higher and truer conception of God and of themselves; they [the priests] learned by experience how much a warm and bright and beautiful ceremonial [i.e. ritual] contributed to this end.

As Lowder himself wrote, the priests and laity were there:

... in the name and in the strength of Christ to save, with the old church weapons and operate on old church lines. Our great object must be to save souls.

The old (i.e. medieval) church weapons were conversion, confession, communion, teaching, catechising and preaching. However, bringing the poor to the ministry of Christ in the celebration of the sacraments and in preaching of the gospel was a challenging task and the priests were convinced that nothing less than the beauty and uplifting effect of the full panoply of Catholic worship would do. Censers were swung, genuflecting was practised and the sign of the cross was used. Confessions were heard, holy anointing took place and devotion to the Blessed Sacraments was paramount. Given the crucial part Sabine believed auricular confession had to play in the community around St. Saviour's where the evils of drunkenness, prostitution, robbery and violence were said by him to be rife, he would have accepted that this was just as true in Pimlico, and later in the mission at St. George's-in-the-East, Wapping, as it was in Leeds.

³³ Ruth Kenyon, *The Social Service of the Catholic Revival*.

After Sabine came down from Cambridge in 1857, matters with his father came to a head with Sabine expressing his determination to be ordained and bluntly refusing to take up the teaching appointment his father had arranged for him at Marlborough Grammar School, where the headmaster was his uncle, Frederick Bond, who had no sympathy with Anglo-Catholicism. Sabine's father, Edward, then made it clear that if Sabine did become ordained, this would be counter to his father's intentions. Therefore Sabine would not inherit the Lew Trenchard estate which would instead pass to his second son, William. Sabine could only expect to be rector. Sabine's response to this was to angrily disappear from Lew Trenchard and take himself back to Father Lowder at St Barnabas, Pimlico without telling his parents where he was going.³⁴ He was to remain there for some two or three months, maintaining contact with his parents through his great uncle, (then Colonel, later, General) Edward Sabine, who lived less than a mile from Pimlico, but without telling them where he was.

So what was Sabine involved with at Pimlico? The prudently neutral name 'college' was sometimes given to institutions and communities created within the Anglo-Catholic movement very much along monastic lines.³⁵ These were the communities to which Sabine gravitated, both at Pimlico and later in the area of Wapping around the Church of St. George's-in-the-East.

The mission at St. George's started with three priests, including Father Lowder, together with two young laymen. It is evident from a letter to his mother (see below) that Sabine aspired to be one of these laymen and, as such, he would have been involved not only in teaching but also in such activities as house to house visitations with particular regard to sanitary conditions. There was also the beginning of a Sisterhood of the Holy Cross under none other than John Mason Neale's sister. Sabine wrote in *The Church Revival* that from these small beginnings, by 1859 there would be 6 members of the clergy and a large group of laymen working there and that 600 children would be under instruction at the St. George's mission.³⁶ Clearly education for the children of the poor was high on the agenda. There can be no doubt that, in the face of the high level of what would have been regarded as unregenerate sinfulness, auricular confession would have played a central part in their instruction. Sabine was there as a layman and could not have been directly involved in this, but he would have been aware of this use of the confessional. It is also likely that he, along with the other laymen, would have followed accepted practice there and presented himself as a penitent to a confessor – possibly Fr. Lowder himself.

A Middle School. Nathaniel Woodard. Self-Pollution.

When Edward, having at last ascertained where Sabine was, ordered his 24 year old son to leave St. Barnabas at once and would not agree to the move to St. George's-in-the-East, Charles Lowder then suggested to Sabine a move to a teaching post at the Woodard schools for middle class children. Sabine would seem to have readily agreed to this move. At first glance such a move does not seem to make sense. Surely the needs of children at schools for the middle classes were far removed from the needs of children of the poor?

Not so. Lowder, together with most members of the Victorian middle classes would have been deeply concerned about one particular behaviour, accepted nowadays as harmless and normal, in which then, as now, the young were likely to indulge no matter to which social

³⁴ Ron Wawman, *Never Completely Submerged*, pp 63-65.

³⁵ John Hunwicke, personal communication.

³⁶ S Baring-Gould, *The Church Revival*, p 283.

class they belonged. In the 19th century the ‘heinous sin of self-pollution’³⁷ was abhorred as an evil, which, if unchecked, would lead to both moral and physical decay and to death. No doubt the confessionals undertaken by Anglo-Catholic priests working with slum children would have addressed this ‘sin’ along with whatever else they encountered. But what of the ‘sins’ of middle class children? If the Anglo-Catholics were to save the poor from ‘this heinous sin’ but neglect the children of the middle classes, what would become of them?

The letter written from Pimlico by Sabine to his mother, probably around Easter 1857, before his father’s ultimatum, actually included the passage:

*... You seem to be so afraid of my not getting a gentleman’s situation but I don’t care three straws for it being a gentleman’s place so long as I can be doing something which will fit me hereafter for H. orders. I thought that a middle school would be best for that but I think this idea of going to Mr King’s parish would be better...*³⁸

It is known that Sabine was drawn to working at St. George’s-in-the-East (i.e. *Mr King’s parish*) but it has not been generally appreciated that even before his father’s ultimatum he was also toying with the idea of going to a ‘middle school.’ But what exactly was a middle school? Middle schools in those days were not what they are now. They had nothing to do with age, or even academic ability as Sabine seemed to imply in *Early Reminiscences* with his use of the term ‘upper, middle and lower grades’. They were concerned with social class, although in Victorian times it was often assumed that social class and ability usually went together and curricula would have reflected this.³⁹ Middle schools were schools for the children of middle class parents. But, having already spurned the opportunity, favoured by his father, to go to Marlborough Grammar School because his uncle, the headmaster, had *no sympathy with the Anglo-catholic cause*,⁴⁰ it is evident that Sabine was only interested in a school that **was** sympathetic to the cause. The only such schools in existence in 1857 were those recently founded by Nathaniel Woodard. Thus the move to Lancing College as a probationary fellow, probably in the summer term of 1857, and thence quickly on, as an assistant master (specifically drawing master) to St John’s College, Hurstpierpoint, was not a knee jerk response to his father’s ultimatum. The ultimatum simply helped him make up his mind to follow the softer of what he saw as the two attractive options on offer. St. John’s Middle school (as Hurstpierpoint College was then called) was the Woodard school earmarked for the ‘middle’ middle classes, with Lancing college intended for the upper middle classes and Ardingley for the lower middle classes. It is possible that St. John’s Middle school was the school Sabine had in mind when writing to his mother from Pimlico. It is important to note that many years later, writing about the appointment to St John’s he wrote:

*There I was satisfied I had found the place and work I wanted.*⁴¹

A further attraction at Hurstpierpoint could have been that his idol, John Mason Neale, and the almshouses and chapel known as Sackville College, were not far away. Neale had founded the Sisterhood of St. Margaret at East Grinstead and the work he was doing with the

³⁷ Self-pollution: masturbation.

³⁸ Letter to Baring-Gould’s mother, Sophia dated ‘Easter 1857.’

³⁹ John Hunwicke, personal communication.

⁴⁰ Ron Wawman, *Never Completely Submerged*, p 63.

⁴¹ Ron Wawman, *Never Completely Submerged*, p 64.

poor in a rural community there was similar to that being carried out by Lowder and others in city slums.⁴² Because of his use of ritual and the Cross in the private chapel at Sackville College, Neale had been inhibited from preaching by Bishop Gilbert of Chichester. He was to remain inhibited for 14 years.

What follows is based on research carried out at Lancing College by Fr. John Hunwicke, during his time as chaplain there. Hunwicke delved deeply into Nathaniel Woodard's archives at Lancing College and I am indebted to him for his diligence and his incisive insights into what the Woodard schools were all about in those early days.⁴³

Nathaniel Woodard had this to say on the subject of sins of the flesh:

The people of this country have a very undeserved reputation for chastity; when, notoriously, the whole land is drenched in the sin of uncleanness, and most of our youth grow into life familiarised and reconciled to living in the most deadly sin, and can we doubt but that we will secure the love and gratitude of the next generation, if we have helped to save them from this one source of misery and desolation?

To suppose that there is no remedy for this, would make a father's life one of unceasing wretchedness, who would desire for his sons an early grave rather than that their case should be that of the common lot of our youth.

Woodard was convinced that the only practical remedy for such 'sins' as 'self-pollution' was sacramental confession. This was contrary to the generally held view of English middle class Protestants who had conveniently persuaded themselves that the sins of the flesh could and would be overcome by strength of character and willpower – with perhaps a little help from such as Dr Arnold. For by the middle of the 19th century, a system to combat the sins of the flesh had been introduced at Rugby school under the headmaster, Dr Thomas Arnold, who was a latitudinarian and openly opposed to Anglo-Catholicism. His system can be cynically boiled down to moralistic exhortation, early rising, cold baths and sport, but the Victorian middle classes were comfortable with what was called by some *Christian Manliness* and Arnold's approach quickly spread throughout the Public School system.

But this would not do for the Anglo-Catholics. *Beati Mundo Corde* – Blessed are the Clean of Heart – was the motto of the Woodard Foundation. For Woodard, nothing less than close supervision of the boys coupled with the use of the sacrament of the confession would suffice. So when in 1848 the Rev. Nathaniel Woodard founded his schools to ensure that the children of middle class parents did not miss out on the education available to the poor, this was central to his purpose. And this could be why Sabine, backed by Lowder, thought the Woodard schools would be a natural progression from Pimlico. One of the basic principles on which Woodard's schools were founded was that they should be predominantly clerical

⁴² Ruth Kenyon, *The Social Service of the Catholic Revival*.

⁴³ For the Woodard schools, the use of the confessional and Nathaniel Woodard's trials with the Bishop of Chichester see John Hunwicke, *Lancing's Lost Chaplain and the Crisis of 1851*, Lancing College Magazine, in 3 parts, 1988, vol. 76-8, no. 581, pp 34-39; 1989, vol. 76-9, no. 582, pp 28-31; 1989, vol. 76-10, no. 583, pp 31-38 and John Hunwicke: *From the Archives: Beati Mundo Corde*, Lancing College Magazine, 1988, vol 76-7, No. 580, pp. 26-32.

...having a sufficient number of clergymen attached to them to produce a moral effect. It is intended that in the First Class Schools, (ie Lancing,) there should be one clergyman to every 25 boys. Thus the middle classes will grow up in intimacy with their spiritual guides, and with a respect for, and an attachment to the clergy.

Another principle was that the headmasters and masters (even ordained masters) of his schools were not permitted to exercise spiritual oversight. This would be in the hands of special Chaplains, trained (might one say groomed?) through a period of residence in Nathaniel's own household. These chaplains would be exempt from the authority of headmasters and would be responsible *for moral and religious discipline* and accountable only to the Provost, i.e. Nathaniel Woodard. A senior chaplain was appointed and a few trusted ordained masters within the schools were also licensed to function as chaplains. The hierarchical structure was thus very different from that started at Rugby, and copied at other public schools, where the headmaster was king. At Woodard's schools the Headmaster did not even have the authority to appoint prefects and had to accept that those of his masters who functioned as chaplains were in some ways superior to him and had a direct line to Woodard. Not surprisingly this led to tensions with some headmasters, having concluded that their position was intolerable, resigning. Thus within weeks of opening St. Nicholas College, Lancing in 1848, Henry Jacobs, the first headmaster, departed with acrimony and lost no time making sure that Bishop Gilbert of Chichester was aware of what was happening at the school. This can be described as Woodard's first confessional crisis. But Woodard was a skilful negotiator who knew how to assuage, to flatter, to attract and use powerful support. He weathered this storm without too much difficulty.

Woodard's relationship with his closest collaborators seems to have been very intimate and they talked, prayed and fasted together. A network of penitents and confessors emerged with links to other Tractarians, especially members of the prudently secretive *Brotherhood of Holy Trinity* based at Oxford around Pusey. Through Pusey close links were also established with St. Saviours in Leeds. A hint of the subject of confessions within this network emerged through the use, in correspondence with Woodard, of such phrases as "*brutish failing,*" "*accursed habit*" or "*that temptation that is always with me*"

In 1843, the 32-year-old Woodard, as a newly appointed curate, had preached a fervent sermon on confession, the content of which led to his dismissal from his curacy by the Bishop of London. This experience left a deep impression on Woodard who thereafter was much less open concerning his views and how he implemented his plans. Thus he carefully avoided 'advanced' ritual, seeing this as an unnecessary and provocative adjunct to worship, but nevertheless continued to view auricular confession not as an optional extra but, to use his own words,

the strongest and best part [of my educational plans,] as an extraordinary blessing and the great stay of my mind, and the foundation of my joys and hopes in the whole undertaking

Woodard issued a set of rules the essence of which was that all boys were expected to attend the chaplain before taking communion. As communion took place weekly this meant each boy would have a private weekly meeting with the chaplain. At the meeting the chaplain might suggest that the pupil make his confession and, if he did so, he would be absolved.

Although this course of action was strictly within the provision of the Prayer Book it was by no means in accordance with current practice within the Church of England where communion was usually held no more than 3 or 4 times a year and auricular confession would not be suggested but reserved, if it occurred at all, to use by the dying and those expressing a desperate need to confess. Woodard's rules did include the proviso *that the consent of the parents be first obtained*. From the records it seems likely that this rarely if ever happened and that lip service only was paid to the suggestion that boys inform their parents when they would be seeking confession.

When complaints from parents about the use of the confessional with their children began to arise, Woodard's many opponents increasingly challenged his steadfast assertion that there was no compulsion.

Around the time of the 'Papal aggression' Woodard faced his biggest confessional crisis during which Bishop Gilbert of Chichester, in his visitational role, made strenuous efforts to pin Woodard down. These culminated in a vain attempt by the bishop, during the course of the ceremony to lay the foundation stone of St. John's School Hurstpierpoint, to wring a public commitment from Nathaniel that the practice of hearing confessions within his schools would cease. Woodard's response, as reported by a local newspaper, showed that he was a master of what Hunwicke described as *vigorously frank imprecision*:

This was a bona fide transaction. He looked on the Bishop's appointment as a divine appointment, and on episcopacy as a divine episcopacy. He looked upon the principles, and must bend to them. He must bend to those truths which were not diametrically opposed to truth and righteousness and if he found the doctrines were opposed to truth and righteousness he should withdraw.

Woodard practised what he called *not challenging the world*. He was wont to advise those who worked with him to be *as wise as serpents*. He wrote:

If you are to work with me you ought to be prepared for seeing me act in a way open to misconstruction. I shall certainly humour the prejudices of mankind, but as certainly in the end not give way to them. By some this will be considered ratting, by others Jesuitry.

Having read, what Hunwicke described as, *packet after packet* of Woodard's letters, he concluded that Woodard used a sort of code.

'Cases have occurred' meant 'often,' 'rarely' meant 'not always' 'parents are urgently requested' meant 'I hope the boy remembered to ask them,' 'I have no objection to the boys confessing' meant 'we make it very clear to them that confession is on offer.'

This was the confessional hothouse in which Sabine was to spend the next 7 years. It was to remain a hothouse in which Woodard swam nobly but vainly against the tide until his death in 1891. Then, following the death of Edmund Field, (senior chaplain) and the departure of Edward Lowe (Woodard's close and faithful associate and headmaster of Hurstpierpoint), the schools rapidly moved towards the mainstream of Public School education. The knotty problem of the status of chaplains within the schools was then neatly resolved by setting them outside the hierarchical structure altogether.

It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Sabine knew exactly what he was coming to in the Woodard schools. He would have been aware of the use of auricular confession with the children at the school and would have known that he and the other assistant masters, were also expected to be penitents. The brief entry made in his diary⁴⁴ on Maundy Thursday 24 March 1864 in which he wrote

Went into Brighton to make my confession

confirms that Sabine did use a confessor during his time at Hurstpierpoint. As far as the author is aware, nowhere in his writing did Sabine mention self-pollution or the use of auricular confession at the Woodard schools. He also did not mention the struggles Woodard had with troubled parents, with others critics and with Bishop Gilbert. Nor was there any discussion of the unusual role of the chaplains vis a vis the headmasters. It could be that, over the time he was at Hurstpierpoint, Sabine's spiritual beliefs were maturing and that he eventually became uneasy over the quasi-coercive use of the confessional in children. Nevertheless in later years, rather than offend the school he loved and tarnish the memory of well intentioned and earnest friends and associates by writing critically on these important and controversial events, he decided to ignore them altogether – even when writing at some length on the subject of auricular confession in the eleven pages of a very pertinent chapter of his book *The Church Revival*, entitled *Agitation Against Confession*.

The Final Rocky Path

In 1863 Sabine's attitudes to life would seem to have been changing. He had renounced Ruskinian dress fashions.⁴⁵ Letters to his mother revealed that he was giving serious thought to finding a wife.⁴⁶ In December of that year, after a long illness, Sabine's mother had died causing him much distress. Also in 1863 his father, in response to his wife's dying wishes, had withdrawn objection to, if not disapproval of, ordination.⁴⁷

In order to fully understand what happened around this time it is necessary to start by looking at what Sabine wrote in his diary 17 years later on 12 September 1880⁴⁸:

After eight years [that I had] spent there, [St. John's College, Hurstpierpoint] my friend Joseph Fowler⁴⁹ was offered the vacant chaplaincy. He came down to Hurst. He was very anxious to take it. I was most anxious to secure him for the place, as I feared the church tone was declining.....Fowler said he could not take the chaplaincy as he was engaged to go to Horbury to be curate to Revd. John Sharp.

⁴⁴ S Baring-Gould, *1862 Diary Notebook*, 1862-67, Devon Record Office, Ref 5203 (Baring-Gould Archive) Almond M. Also Ron Wawman, www.nevercompletelysubmerged.co.uk *Sabine's Diary Notebook*, p 31.

⁴⁵ S Baring-Gould, *Early Reminiscences*, p 285.

⁴⁶ S Baring-Gould, *Early Family Correspondence: Letters to Sabine's mother*, 8/10 November 1857 and 17 May 1858, pp 8, 12.

⁴⁷ Ron Wawman, *Never Completely Submerged*, p 65.

⁴⁸ Ron Wawman, *Never Completely Submerged*, p 64.

⁴⁹ The Rev. Joseph T Fowler: Fowler had been curate at Houghton-le-Spring since 1861. It is not known where Sabine struck up his friendship with Fowler. Before taking orders Fowler had been a medical practitioner and had been working at St Thomas's Hospital, London when he became drawn to Anglo-Catholicism. This was around the time Sabine was at St Barnabas Church, just across the river from St Thomas's. It is possible they met there.

On a sudden inspiration of enthusiasm I said "I will go and take your place if Mr Sharp will have me in deacon's orders in your room." Fowler wrote, Mr. Sharp consented to the substitution, and gave me a title for orders. I had long desired to take orders but my father and mother had constantly refused me permission and I did not like to go against them in so important a matter. They just endured me being at Hurst in a position they thought very unsuitable.

My father put it plainly before me as his determination, if I went into orders I could not hope to inherit Lew. The property was entailed on a son, but not on an eldest son, or so he informed me. The living was destined for one son, the estate for the other. If I took orders I must be content to be only rector at Lew, and Willy⁵⁰ should be squire.

Before my mother died, she withdrew her opposition and asked my father not to refuse his consent should I again solicit it.

When I had finally made up my mind, I wrote to him, to ask his consent. He gave it but again let me understand that I was cut off from the succession to the property.

This situation was also covered along broadly similar lines in *Early Reminiscences*, partly on page 297 and partly on page 336, where he stated:

I did not look out for a curacy, but remained a master at Hurstpierpoint. We had lost our chaplain, [The Rev E Field] moved to Lancing College, and I was particularly desirous to have a friend, the Rev J T Fowler, eventually Honorary Canon of Durham, as a suitable successor. He was, however, engaged to go to the Rev. John Sharp, Vicar of Horbury, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, to start a mission there in an outlying part of the parish. Accordingly I volunteered to go in his room, if Sharp would give me a nomination, and accept a deacon, waiving his claim on Fowler. Sharp raised no objection....

The Rev J T Fowler's appointment to the chaplaincy to St John's College, Hurstpierpoint was announced in the December 1863 issue of the school magazine, the *Hurst Johnian*. It is now known that in that same month Sabine wrote two letters to Nathaniel Woodard, Provost of the Woodard schools. In the first letter, written from St John's College on 3 December 1863, Sabine wrote:

Dear Sir

After much consideration I have decided on leaving Hurst at Easter, and spending a few months with my father, till the shock of my mother's loss has worn off: after which I shall take duty somewhere where I can be near him. This will relieve you from the difficulty which you seem to feel in giving me a title, and which had led me to consider whether it would not be better for me to get ~~one~~ a title where I can have more opportunities of learning parochial work.

Sabine's reference to being refused *a title* can only refer to his being refused a request to be ordained while still in a teaching post at St John's College.

⁵⁰ Willy: Sabine's younger brother, William. Born 1837.

Sabine's mother was still alive when this first letter was written. She died 3 days later on 6 December. It is probable that the letter was written immediately after learning that his mother's death was imminent and before returning to Lew to be with her. Three weeks later, on 22 December 1863, Sabine wrote the second letter to the Rev Woodard, this time from Lew House:

Dear M^r. Provost

I do not know that I can tell you yet for certain what will be my final destination, but I have decided on the following course which seems to me sufficiently rational.

I go, as I told you, to my father at Easter, and I shall remain with him at least till Michaelmas. Then, if he wishes me to continue to live with him, I shall consent to do so, if he will do what he has often talked of – settle in some town, where I can get a title for Holy Orders, and if he will give me such allowance as will, with my curacy, be equivalent to what I get at Hurst. Should he decline to meet me so far, I shall consider myself free to return, may be, to my former work.

My ultimate object is to establish a mission in Cornwall, but a few years more at Hurstpierpoint might give me opportunities of studying Theology, which I should not have if I were engaged in mission work.

I confess that I was much hurt by your declining to nominate me for ordination at Christmas, and it was your apparent reluctance to giving me a title which was one cause of my thinking of applying for one elsewhere. Your explanation that the difficulty arose from the Bishop and not from yourself, was therefore a great relief to my mind, as I could not but think that, after having worked in the Society for seven years, I had a right to ask for a title.

Three facts become very clear at this point

1. At the time that the Rev J T Fowler was appointed chaplain at St John's College, Sabine had just had his hopes of ordination at St John's College dashed and patently had no thoughts of a nomination to Horbury.
2. It was Sabine's presumption of rejection by Woodard that had triggered his thoughts of seeking ordination elsewhere rather than stay at St John's. He was intending that such an appointment would be in conjunction with entering into a supportive role with his father somewhere other than Lew. It is very doubtful that a Northern industrial town would have been considered as a likely destination for them both.
3. On learning that it was Bishop Gilbert of Chichester, who had little love for Woodard or his schools, who had rejected Sabine's application to be ordained at St John's, Sabine again felt able to entertain the thought that he might eventually return to Hurstpierpoint as a teacher after all. As late as 22 December a move to Horbury was undoubtedly not being considered.

The first intimation of a move to Horbury appeared as an entry in Sabine's diary/notebook made on 6 February 1864 when he wrote:

I believe that I am going to Horbury as curate to Sharpe, there to establish a mission, may God be with me!

How could this have come about? It is likely that Sabine's unrealistic thoughts that he and his father would set up home at some place where Sabine could be ordained, received short shift from a grieving father with whom, as we have seen, Sabine already had a difficult relationship. Could it be that what actually happened was that, on his return to Hurstpierpoint for the spring term, his good friend, Joseph Fowler, now established as chaplain at St John's, had taken his grieving and doubly rejected friend under his wing? If so Fowler may well have pointed out to Sabine that the curacy at Horbury that he had turned down was still vacant and that working with a well-known Anglo-Catholic priest and possibly being involved in the establishment of a mission there would be right up his street.

The important question remains – how was it that, not only in his Reminiscences but also in his diary, Sabine gave an account of how he came to leave his beloved Hurstpierpoint and be appointed to Horbury that was completely erroneous, if not fictitious. Such very inaccurate reporting of momentous happenings in both private and published writing, albeit several years after the event, cannot easily be explained.

This was, without any doubt, a devastatingly traumatic period for Sabine involving as it did the distressing terminal illness and death of his much loved mother, rejection by the Church and rejection by his father, Edward.

Edward had always been disappointed with his eldest son and heir. He despised Sabine's love of fantasy, his artistic and bookish interests and his espousal of the Catholic wing of the Anglican Church with its concerns for the beauty of church architecture and liturgy. It is possible that Edward saw all this as signs of effeminacy and weakness. He had therefore striven, unsuccessfully, to force such tendencies out of his son, turn him into a mathematician and engineer and mould him for a career in the army – thus making 'a man' of him!

As we have seen, Edward had made it clear to Sabine that if he persisted with his intention of being ordained then he would never inherit Lew House which would pass instead to his younger brother, Willy. Under the circumstances it is not difficult to imagine the sort of reception that Sabine's plans for them both, as expressed in the letters to Woodard, would have received from Edward at a time when he was deeply grieving for his wife. Edward may well have exploded ferociously and left Sabine in no doubt about what his father thought of him.

After considerable thought the author of this paper has reached the conclusion that over the years Sabine had suppressed these unpleasant memories of rejection by the Church. As part of the process of coping with all the bitter disappointments associated with this period in his life, Sabine would seem to have rationalised the painful and humiliating memories of it so as to allow himself to look back on his appointment to Horbury in a wholly positive light.

There is much to suggest that throughout all his life Sabine was far less self-confident than he appeared to be from his writing. He was also sensitive to criticism and the possibility of rejection. He professed not to read critiques of his work – although the presence of numerous

reviews of his books in his *Common Place book*⁵¹ suggests otherwise. His French friend, l'abbé Duine,⁵² who came to know him well, wrote:

I tried valiantly in our letters and exchanges to awake his prudence as regards the lines that he took in these areas of patient and difficult work [in his writing]. To the point where one day when I had sent him back certain pages he replied "I never read what displeases me or anything that attacks me".

Sabine was also reluctant to reveal his inner feelings to others. Thus in his published *Reminiscences* he actually wrote:

*Others will remonstrate at my digressions, yet, if I digress, it is precisely for the sake of avoiding to talk of self*⁵³

Sabine was similarly reticent in exchanges with members of his family. His half brother, Arthur, although junior to Sabine by 31 years, eventually became his curate in 1895. Through working closely with Sabine for several years, Arthur came to know him quite well, but was nevertheless compelled to write:

*The one thing he would never talk about was his inner life, his spiritual struggles, what doubts or difficulties he had conquered, how he had been led to take Orders, and what his thoughts were on his ordination.*⁵⁴

In his novel *Arminell*⁵⁵ Sabine conveniently rationalised such reticence as the outcome of the cultural demands of being a member of the upper classes:

When our temper is ruffled, we do not fret with it those we meet – when our heart is bitter, we do not spit our gall in the face of our friends – when our blood boils in our veins we are careful to let none of it squirt on and blister the hand that is extended to us. A man may smile, and smile, and be a villain – that is true, but a man or a woman may smile, and smile, and be exceedingly sorrowful, may dance and laugh with an aching heart.....So it is with all who have gone through the great discipline of culture; they no more expose their wounds and cry out for sympathy than they expose deformities....

However the personal springs of Sabine's secrecy concerning his inner life and feelings are not difficult to find. Sabine was aware from an early age that sharing his feelings and opinions with his father was likely to incur displeasure, so he learnt to keep his thoughts to himself. As a youngster he was faced, as eldest sons in the upper strata of 19th century society sometimes were, with a need to find favour with a demanding father who had high but also selective expectations. Unfortunately Edward disapproved of almost all Sabine's interests and aspirations. For Sabine the disapproval of his father would have been distressing, while the thought of overt rejection by him, with all its implications, would have been unbearable. Put simply Sabine would have been faced with three alternatives:

⁵¹ S Baring-Gould, *Common Place book*. Held in the Baring-Gould Archive 5203, Devon Record Office

⁵² Bernard Heudré, *The memoirs of abbé François Duine*, Newsletter SBGAS 63, June 2010, p 2

⁵³ S Baring-Gould, *Early Reminiscences*, p 343.

⁵⁴ Arthur Baring-Gould, An unpublished biography of Sabine Baring-Gould, p9

⁵⁵ S Baring-Gould, *Arminell, a social romance*, 1889, London, Temple Bar.

- To conform and go under.
- To rebel and go his own way.
- To stick to his personal beliefs, but strive to eventually find favour and acceptance, through his achievements.

People are inclined to describe Sabine as ‘driven’ without fully comprehending what that means. It could well be that he was driven by the consequences of the internal conflict that arose from adopting the extremely difficult third alternative. As we have seen, he took up this option in Bayonne when, at the age of 17, he committed himself the three purposes in life from which he wrote that he *never wavered*:⁵⁶

- To improve the spiritual life of the parishioners in Lew Trenchard.
- To restore Lew Trenchard church.
- To restore Lew House.

It is particularly enlightening to look at the brief glimpses of his mental preoccupations that Sabine had given in his diary/ notebook during Lent 1864.⁵⁷ This period fell between the extremely distressing events of December 1863 and his ordination at Ripon in May 1864.

On Ash Wednesday, 10 February, Sabine wrote:

This is my rule for Lent this year:

Be present at Matins daily at 7.

Say each hour of the day when the clock strikes these few prayers – *Our father.*

O Lord who hast taught us etc. O saviour of the world etc. God be merciful to me a sinner.

Subjects for meditation = *The six things that God hateth (Prov. vi. 16)*⁵⁸

Subjects for prayer. *Humility. Sincerity. A good example. A clean heart.*

Recollection. Peace.

Subjects of intercession. *Relations. Friends. The cold and indifferent.*

Restoration of Religious Orders. The Perfection of the Saints.

Then, eight days later, on 18 February he followed this up with:

Oh, Lord! I purposed to have meditated this week on Sincerity and I have not done with Humility yet! I think that one subject must last me through Lent. I am beginning to fear Pride. I never knew before its horrible nature.

The next day, 19 February, Sabine wrote:

The country white with snow. Oh Jesus! Would that thou didst snow down on me the whiteness of Thy Purity that this dark wintry heart were prepared as a bride for thee! That it were overlaid with the altar linen of Thy Virginity, whereon Thou mightest rest, when Thou comest in thy blessed sacrament to visit and abide with me. I have been looking at the beautiful little chrystals, [sic] so

⁵⁶ S Baring-Gould, *Early Reminiscences*, p vii-viii

⁵⁷ S Baring-Gould, *1862 Diary Notebook*, pp 25-33

⁵⁸ Proverbs. vi. 16-19: *There are six things the Lord hateth. Seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.*

perfect in their symmetry so immaculate in their whiteness: and how soon do they melt away with a big tear. I could not help thinking of the dear children about me – whose souls white beautiful and clean will alas! soon melt away and dissolve into – Ah! Please God it may be into – tears of repentance.

Sabine's use of the term *this dark wintry heart* gives an indication of his mood at this time.

Then, two days later, on 21 February, he added his fears concerning his ability to cope as a priest, together with his distress at the need to leave St. Johns, Hurstpierpoint and to give up some of his interests:

I feel a sinking of heart at the thought of my so soon being in the ministry. Ah! My God what cases what sorrows, are in store for me. I do feel most keenly the guilt of others and when I have that to bear as a Priest, I feel as though I should be crushed with the weight. Some years ago we had a sad case here of sin in which many of one's dear ones were involved. The discovery bowed me down, I almost sank, with sorrow, into despair. What will it be when I have so many, many sinners to deal with. The Gospel for this Sunday – the Syro-Phoenician woman – always brings me special comfort in seasons such as this – it teaches me how I can make the cause of another quite my own. The poor woman pleading for her daughter cried "Lord help me!"⁵⁹

I have been obliged wholly to give up my Icelandic studies: I cannot bear to read those dear Sagas now when I know that my hopes of ever revisiting Iceland are over. Some of the boys were looking over my sketches today. I could hardly control myself it really upset me.

I think that the life of all others which I should enjoy would be that of a hermit in some Alpine glen. I know of no earthly happiness greater than: the contemplation of beautiful scenery, and a life of prayer is one of perfect peace.

The extent of Sabine's emotional turmoil at this time is manifest in his uncharacteristic desire to escape from it all, become a hermit in an Alpine Glen and live a life of prayer and perfect peace!

It is thought that Sabine's hymn *On the Resurrection Morning* was written during the winter and early spring of 1864 as part of the process of coming to terms with the death of his mother. This belief is supported by a brief statement written in his diary on 1 May of that year:

These lines have been for some months in a portfolio

Beneath the entry Sabine had then included a draft of *On the Resurrection Morning* that was subsequently to be published in *Church Times* on 23 July 1864.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ The Syro-Phoenician woman whose daughter, possessed by a demon, was healed by Jesus. Mark vii, 25-30; Matthew xv, 21-28.

⁶⁰ S Baring-Gould, *On the Resurrection Morning*. The version of this hymn, copied into the diary and slightly revised, with new pencilled words, is very close to the version published as *Mission Hymn I* in the *Church Times*, Vol. II, p 234, on 23 July 1864.

The drafts of two other hymns were also entered in the diary around this time. *The Shepherd Good and True am I* on 15 February⁶¹ and *All the World in Sin was Lying* on 16 February.⁶²

Sabine's ongoing unhappy relationship with his father at this time could well be the explanation for the entry Sabine made in his diary notebook on Good Friday, 25th March 1864:

During Lent I have been coupling another name with mine in all my prayers.⁶³ The great longing of my heart is that he and I should learn to love Jesus with the perfect love that He alone can give. Last night I dreamed that I heard distinctly the words 'The Lord hath heard thy petition.' I have not the slightest recollection of the person who spoke – but I remember the words very clearly – everything else in connexion with the dream has vanished from my mind.

It was to be eight long years before Sabine's father relented and, in May 1872, completed a deed of settlement which at last ensured that Sabine would inherit the bulk of the Lewtrenchard estate on the death of his father. At the time the deed of settlement was completed his father appeared to be in excellent health, but either the timing was extremely fortuitous or his Lenten prayers of 1864 really were answered, as Sabine's father died from a brain haemorrhage, at the comparatively young age of 67 years, a mere eleven days after signing the settlement!

Sabine's rapprochement with his father before he died meant that in later years Sabine was able to reflect on a better relationship with his father than might otherwise have been the case. Indeed, sixteen years later, he felt able to write in his diary:

My father's face which was once hard and stern and showed little gentleness in its reserved severity, in old age became wonderfully soft and sweet and loveable. I remember when we — Grace, Mary and I were at Lew [to sign the deed of settlement.] just before my father's death. That afternoon Grace said to me "I could hardly resist kissing his hand as he put it in mine" ⁶⁴

Not surprisingly, writing in *Further Reminiscences* towards the end of his life about his induction as Rector of Lew Trenchard in 1881, Sabine was able to comment:

In a very wonderful manner the way had been opened to me for undertaking the three tasks I had aspired to execute when I was a boy of seventeen, although at that time, and for many years after, the prospect was obscure, and I could see no means whereby these objects might be attained⁶⁵

⁶¹ *The Shepherd Good and True am I* was written in November 1863 in memory of pupil at Hurst who died. It is not clear whether this hymn was published or, if so, where.

⁶² S Baring-Gould, *All the world in Sin was Lying*. Published as *Mission Hymns II* in *Church Times*, Vol.2, Page 243, 30 July 1864.

⁶³ S Baring-Gould, *1862 Diary Notebook*, p 32: Sabine gave no clue to the identity of the person whose name was coupled with his in prayer. See also R Wawman, *Never Completely Submerged, The Diary of Sabine Baring-Gould*, p 65, One reason why Sabine's father eventually changed his mind was because by 1872 he was aware that William, his second son, was gravely ill and unlikely to recover. *Never Completely Submerged*, p255.

⁶⁴ Ron Wawman, *Never Completely Submerged*, p 81.

⁶⁵ S Baring-Gould, *Further Reminiscences*, p 102.

Epilogue

After the extraordinary emotional build-up over the preceding five months, the actual process of ordination would seem to have been something of an anticlimax. Sabine had been interviewed in London on 14 March 1864 by Bishop Robert Bickersteth of Ripon. He gave the following account of the meeting in his diary:

*Saw the Bp. of Ripon at 8 o'clock in the morning, I had not a long interview as he was hungry. There was an excellent Passiontide breakfast on the table, consisting of Ham, pies, a leg of cold mutton and preparations for cutlets and stakes. Bishops are advised in the Epistle to be given to hospitality. Ripon probably differs in his opinions from S. Paul on that score, as he probably does also on every article of the Catholic faith; he certainly never invited me to breakfast with him, though he had dragged me all across London without my breakfast to see him at that unearthly hour.
Returned in the evening to Hurst.*

In *Early Reminiscences*⁶⁶ Sabine gave a somewhat different account of this interview. In it he wrote that the bishop had already eaten when they met. Where in London the interview took place is not recorded. To be *dragged... all across London*, the venue must have been at some distance from 13 Ashley Place, Victoria Street, London, where Sabine's great uncle, General Edward Sabine lived and with whom Sabine had stayed the previous night.

The actual ordination at Ripon on Whit-Sunday, 15 May 1864 was not recorded by Sabine in his diary, nor was his arrival at Horbury the next day. However aspects of the account of an ordination given by him in *The Church Revival*⁶⁷ which purported to be the ordination of an unnamed 'friend' at an unnamed location by an unnamed Bishop, are so close to the above account, as well as to the brief and less forthright account that Sabine gave in *Early Reminiscences*⁶⁸ that the author is convinced that what Sabine wrote in *The Church Revival* was an account of **his own** ordination experience not that of a friend. Here he wrote:

The candidates were expected to lodge in the town and to walk out some considerable distance in the morning to the palace, where the examination began at 10 a.m. At noon a meagre refectation was served to us, ham-sandwiches and very small beer, in the hall, of which we partook standing. Meanwhile lunch was being carried into the dining room for his Lordship, chaplains and family.....At length we were suffered to return to the palace, when the comestibles had been carried from the dining room in which we were examined, but from which the smell of the meal had not been dissipated.

Nothing could have been more unsuitable for drawing out the knowledge of a candidate than the papers we were required to answer. They were keys to taps from which might flow a stream of unctuous twaddle. Our principal examiner was a man considered a burning and shining light of the Evangelical school, if that can be called a school where there is no scholarship..... We were ordained in the private chapel of the palace robed in black gowns, and the Bishop

⁶⁶ S Baring-Gould, *Early Reminiscences* p 336.

⁶⁷ S Baring-Gould, *The Church Revival*, pp 203-204

⁶⁸ S Baring-Gould, *Early Reminiscences*, pp 337, 340

preached empty nothingnesses to us for an hour. After that we were invited to lunch with him.

It is worth commenting that in his published writing Sabine did occasionally pass off his own experiences as those of ‘a friend’ if he thought the account could prove embarrassing to a party to the event. Thus when describing the manner in which he had helped one of his masons at Lew Trenchard to recover from what was probably a depressive illness by encouraging him to make the mouldings for the ceiling of his newly created ballroom in 1896, he attributed the new ballroom to ‘a friend’⁶⁹

Whatever the personal problems that may have troubled the months leading up to what he clearly regarded as a shambles of an ordination at Ripon, there can nevertheless be no doubt that Sabine’s move to Horbury on the Whit-Monday did have very positive connotations. The unhappy thoughts, characteristic of diary entries in the preceding months, suddenly disappear never to recur.

The Anglo-Catholic world was small and Sabine would have known all about the Rev. John Sharp, son of Samuel Sharp and all he had achieved as Vicar of Horbury. He would have been aware of John Sharp’s status as a leading High Church clergyman in the North of England and that he was a descendant of Archbishop John Sharp of York who had been adviser on religious matters to Queen Anne. Believing Queen Anne to be a staunch defender of the Catholic faith against the Reformation, Sabine had a high regard for that monarch as he did also for Charles I. This probably explains the presence of portraits of both monarchs at Lew House. Sabine would have regarded Sharp’s pedigree as impressive.

Sabine would also have known of Sharp’s successful struggles to remove the box pews from his church in Horbury and that, in 1858, he had built a magnificent Gothic ‘House of Mercy’ in which good works were being carried out by the Sisterhood he established there.⁷⁰ Furthermore he was very aware of Sharp’s intention to establish a mission in the outskirts of his parish and knew that he had a good chance of being asked by Sharp to take this on.

Sabine did eventually open a mission amongst the mills at Horbury Bridge and there he was at last able to put into practice the skills he had acquired in London with Fr. Lowder. It is, however, likely that, under the shrewd eye of John Sharp, many rough corners were rubbed off the uncompromising style of Anglo-Catholicism to which Sabine had become accustomed at Pimlico and Hurstpierpoint, while his attitude to auricular confession probably now became closer to customary practice in the Church of England. Nevertheless Sabine never lost his deep personal reverence for ritual. Indeed he privately practiced this into great old age and, while at Horbury, actually wrote ritualistic hymns such as ‘*Daily, Daily*’ and ‘*Hail the Sign*’. But he knew that to be a successful priest who could attract and influence his parishioners and not attract hostility he had to be pragmatic, even entertaining (his skills as a colourful actor and story teller had been well honed at Hurstpierpoint) and to feed them a diet they could digest – a recurrent theme in much of his theological writing.

A good example of this dietary theme in Sabine’s theological writing is to be found in the 1899 pamphlet *The Present Crisis: a letter to the Bishop of Exeter*, where Sabine wrote with

⁶⁹ S Baring-Gould, *An Old English Home*, 1898, London, Methuen, pp 93-96

⁷⁰ Keith Lister, *Half My Life – The Story of Sabine Baring-Gould and Grace*, 2002, Horbury: Charnwood Publications p. 30 – 31.

some heat about recent strictures from the Archbishop of Canterbury on the use of incense. Sabine wrote as:

*one who has never been in the habit of using incense in public worship.*⁷¹

While agreeing that, on the grounds of prudence, the church might willingly accept *advice* from the Archbishop of Canterbury that it should abjure the use of incense, he vigorously objected to the Archbishop's opinion that the use of incense should be *banned* because of the provisions of a 1559 Act of Parliament. For him this smacked of state control. In the pamphlet Sabine suggested that the Archbishop might instead have followed his own very different approach:

It is possible, nay rather probable, that the mediaeval elaboration of ritual, such as may content a Latin, may be more than a cold Anglo-Saxon can understand and stomach. Long privation from food requires that the administration of indispensable nourishment should be in spoonfuls, and not poured down the throat in pailsful. I knew an old woman, who was given roast duck on her eighty-first birthday. Roast duck is excellent and savoury meat, but it killed the old woman, because she could not digest it. The English people have for a long time been fed upon wind, and we cannot expect them at once to appreciate and to assimilate the invigorating and edifying diet that the Church possesses in her stores.

As for the Ministry of the Keys, in 1914 this is what Sabine wrote in *The Church Revival*:

*That which led many right-minded men to speak against Confession was the dread lest it should be made compulsory. A little inquiry would have shown them that this fear was groundless. Any one who has lived abroad in Roman Catholic countries will have learned how mischievous, how perilous to souls is the Roman insistence on private Confession before Communion, and the Anglican rule is so clearly defined that no doubt can exist as to what the mind of the Church is—that Confession is to be made in private only when the conscience is stirred with remorse, but that otherwise public Confession and Absolution suffice. Doubters might have learned from common sense that Confession can only be a voluntary act, and, in fact, it is only as such that it is ever urged.*⁷²

Anyone reading this would find it difficult to reconcile this position with what Sabine had to say in the selfsame book about the use of the Ministry of the Keys at St Saviour's, Leeds. They would also be surprised that such a statement could be made by someone who had, over a long period of time, been willingly associated with regimes that used private auricular confession before communion with children.

Nevertheless these two quotations leave the author in no doubt where Sabine stood throughout most, if not all, of his ministry in the Church of England. He became a pragmatic and successful minister whose parishioners, certainly in Horbury and Lew, would seem to have been content with the 'roast duck free' diet he fed them.

⁷¹ S Baring-Gould, *The Present Crisis; a letter to the Bishop of Exeter*, 1899, London: Skeffington.

⁷² S Baring-Gould, *The Church Revival*, p. 304

At Lancing, in the same year that Sabine was ordained, Woodard had laid the foundation stone for his own towering Gothic Chapel – the biggest in the Northern hemisphere! This was not to be consecrated until long after his death in 1891. At Horbury Bridge in 1884, John Sharp presided over the consecration of the newly built church of St. John the Evangelist. This building gave the barest nod to Gothic architecture, but can nevertheless be seen as the fulfilment of the pioneering missionary work started there by Sabine twenty years previously.