FAITH AND DOUBT IN VICTORIAN BRITAIN

CONTEXT AND COMMENTARY

Series Editor: ARTHUR POLLARD

Published Titles

J. A. V. Chapple
SCIENCE AND LITERATURE IN THE NINETEENTH
CENTURY

Pamela Horn
LIFE AND LABOUR IN RURAL ENGLAND,
1760-1850

Elisabeth Jay
FAITH AND DOUBT IN VICTORIAN BRITAIN

Robin Headlam Wells
SHAKESPEARE, POLITICS AND THE STATE

Forthcoming Titles

Dominic Hibberd
THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Norman Page
THE THIRTIES

Stephen Prickett
ENGLAND AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Roger Richardson
REVOLT AND RESTORATION IN THE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Alan and Dorothy Shelston
THE INDUSTRIAL CITY

FAITH AND DOUBT IN VICTORIAN BRITAIN

Elisabeth Jay

M
MACMILLAN

© Elisabeth Jay 1986

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1986 978-0-333-37658-4

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1956 (as amended).

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

First published 1986

Published by
MACMILLAN EDUCATION LTD
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 2XS
and London
Companies and representatives
throughout the world

Typeset by Wessex Typesetters
(Division of The Eastern Press Ltd)
Frome, Somerset

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Jay, Elisabeth

Faith and doubt in Victorian Britain.—
(Context and commentary)

1. Great Britain—Church history—19th
century

I. Title II. Series

274.1'081 BR759

ISBN 978-0-333-37659-1 ISBN 978-1-349-18476-7 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-18476-7

Contents

<i>List of Plates</i>	vii
<i>Note on the Texts</i>	ix
<i>Editor's Preface</i>	xi
1. The Evangelicals	1
Evangelical Faith: 'Believe and be saved'	2
The Changing Historical Perspective	6
Practical Piety	16
2. The Oxford Movement and the Catholic Tradition	24
The Tractarian 'Temper of Mind'	25
The Life of Devotion	32
Ritualist Theology and Practice	43
Two Facets of the Catholic Tradition	47
3. The Broad Church	52
Coleridge – A Broad Church Forebear?	53
Thomas Arnold and Moral Leadership	56
Christian Socialism	61
Benjamin Jowett and <i>Essays and Reviews</i>	65
Arthur Penrhyn Stanley and the Church United in the Pursuit of Truth	68
Two Laymen Respond to Broad Church Teaching	72
4. Dissent	76
The Changing Faces of Dissent	77
Dissenting Worship	88
Separation from the World or Philistinism	95

5. Doubt	99
The Role of Myth in the Gospels	102
The Evidence of the Rocks	105
Evolution by Natural Selection	109
The Ethical and Emotional Consequences of Doubt	113
<i>Chronological Table</i>	127
<i>Bibliography</i>	130
<i>Index</i>	135

List of Plates

1. George Eliot in 1865. A drawing in chalks by Sir Frederick Burton.
Photograph © National Portrait Gallery.
2. Frontispiece to J. Purchas *The Directorium Anglicanum* (1858). See pages 43–44.
Photograph © Bodleian Library, Oxford.
3. *Christ in the House of his Parents*. Painting by John Everett Millais, 1849–50. The composition observes the Oxford Movements' sacramental view of church architecture.
Photograph © Tate Gallery Publications.
4. *Family Prayers*. Painting by Samuel Butler, 1864.
Photograph reproduced by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of St John's College, Cambridge.
5. The Metropolitan Tabernacle. See page 89.
Photograph © Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Note on the Texts

In choosing texts for this volume of Context and Commentary I have endeavoured to represent something of the variety of thought and practice within any one religious sector. This involved a mixture of seminal, and therefore better-known, texts with the less easily accessible. In selecting passages which illustrate how nineteenth-century writers imaginatively apprehended their own and others' religious faith, I have concentrated upon literary merit rather than making use of the profusion of polemically inspired poetry and fiction available.

Organising such protean concepts as 'faith' and 'doubt' into neatly divided sections carries one obvious danger: the tendency to obscure the essential fluidity of connection. Many of the writers at various periods in their lives espoused different religious positions. One work of Tennyson's, admittedly composed over seventeen years, finds a place both under Broad Church allegiances and within the realm of Doubt. John Henry Newman can be as interesting in articulating his critical reaction to a position he formerly endorsed as in his more positive statements of belief. Both John and his brother Francis were to write substantial accounts of their spiritual and intellectual journeys. The resulting books, *Phases of Faith* (1850) and *Apologia pro vita sua* (1864), make one sharply aware first of minds on the move and secondly of the agonising which accompanied the commitment to following the truth wherever it might lead. The comparative ease with which, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century, men and women effected the intellectual and social transition between the Established Church and Dissent should not lead one to assume a similar ease in transferring emotional commitments. The pursuit of doctrinal purity was a painful business, often involving material sacrifice, and the passionate or even militant nature of the 'committed' and the anguish expressed in families where conscience had decreed divergent patterns of religious allegiance are both testimony to this.

Where cross reference to another chapter might prove helpful this is indicated, at the appropriate point, by reference to the page or pages on which the relevant text appears. To clarify the chronology of the sources, references within the main text have where possible, and particularly in the case of imaginative literature, been simplified to date of composition or original publication and chapter or verse. Fuller details of the precise text used will be found in the Bibliography under Primary Sources.

Editor's Preface

J.H. Plumb has said that 'the aim of (the historian) is to understand men both as individuals and in their social relationships in time. "Social" embraces all of man's activities – economic, religious, political, artistic, legal, military, scientific – everything, indeed, that affects the life of mankind.' Literature is itself similarly comprehensive. From Terence onwards writers have embraced his dictum that all things human are their concern.

It is the aim of this series to trace the interweavings of history and literature, to show by judicious quotation and commentary how those actually working within the various fields of human activity influenced and were influenced by those who were writing the novels, poems and plays within the several periods. An attempt has been made to show the special contribution that such writers make to the understanding of their times by virtue of their peculiar imaginative 'feel' for their subjects and the intensely personal angle from which they observe the historical phenomena that provide their inspiration and come within their creative vision. In its turn the historical evidence, besides and beyond its intrinsic importance, serves to 'place' the imaginative testimony of the writers.

The authors of the several volumes in this series have sought to intermingle history and literature in the conviction that the study of each is enhanced thereby. They have been free to adopt their own approach within the broad general pattern of the series. The topics themselves have sometimes also a particular slant and emphasis. Commentary, for instance, has had to be more detailed in some cases than in others. All the contributors to the series are at one, however, in the belief (at a time when some critics would not only divorce texts from their periods but even from their authors) that literature is the creation of actual men and women, actually living in an identifiable set of historical circumstances, themselves both the creatures and the creators of their times.

ARTHUR POLLARD

For Anna and Hugo